

## **Boosting Our Local Economy**

In our Community Plan we have identified the following Community Goals to help us to **Boost our Local Economy**:

- More Quality jobs and increased employment opportunities in a strong, prosperous self reliant economy;
- Towns, villages, streets and homes that have been improved and revitalised, through new development which is sympathetic to our environment;
- Vibrant Communities with a long-term viable future.

In order to measure progress in achieving the Community goals, the 'critical sign' that has been set for the Community Theme is to:

***Reduce the proportion of our population that live in the most deprived 10% of wards in Wales by 10% from 31.8% to 21.8% by 2014.***

The Community Plan is currently being reviewed and it is proposed that it is updated to reflect changes in Rhondda Cynon Taf over the last few years with a revised Community Plan, including measures of performance, being available in 2010.

The full list of measures of success within the theme and progress against these measures are included in the Performance Indicator tables in Appendix 2. Many of the Council's services contribute to **Boosting our Local Economy** Goals, particularly our Development and Regeneration Service.

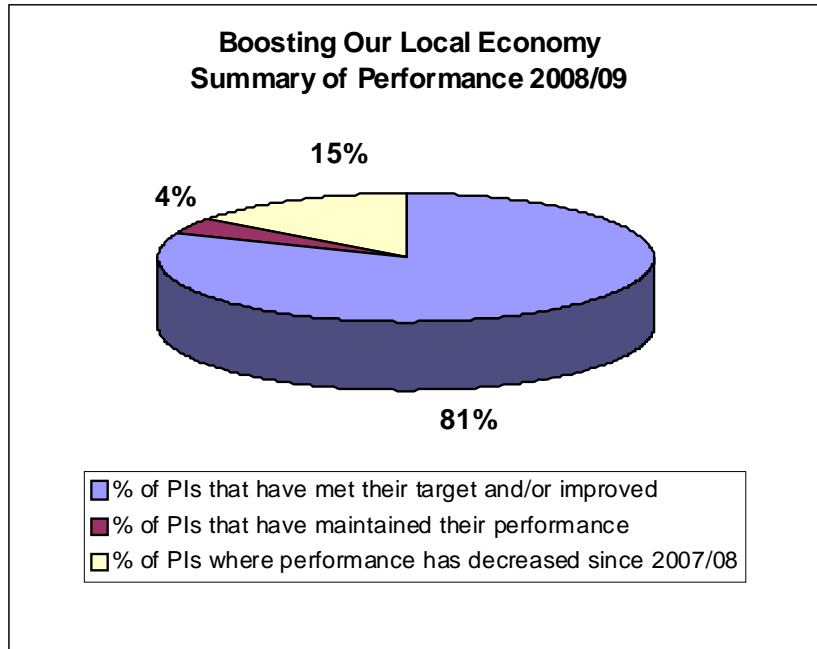
In this section we will show:

- How we have improved **Boosting our Local Economy** in 2008/09
- How our Key Performance Indicators and other measures are contributing to achieving the Community Plan Goals;
- Which of the service areas have been subject to a Regulatory Inspection and the outcomes from the Inspection;
- How consultation with local people has helped to improve **Boosting our Local Economy**;
- The Improvement Actions that have been identified as critical to the delivery of the Council's Improvement Priorities in 2009/10.

## How we have improved Boosting our Local Economy in 2008/09

### Managing our Performance

In **Boosting our Local Economy**, there are currently 36 Performance indicators that measure our performance. The Chart below indicates the extent to which the Council met its targets and/or improved its performance against 27 indicators where trend information is available.



### What all our performance measures are telling us about our progress in 2008/09

This theme is principally concerned with increasing employment opportunities and developing vibrant communities that are sustainable in the long term.

We have made great strides to improve our services to those people in need of our help.

- It now takes an average of 303 calendar days to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), 143 days less than in 2007/08 (446).
- Delivery of adaption works in private dwellings now take 3 days less than last year (from 107 to 104 days)
- More people are taking advantage of our community alarm services, which has increased by 9% (from 3,050 in 2007/08 to 3,339 in 2008/09).
- We are also supporting more adults (under 65) with learning disabilities to live at home, and ensure that all our adult clients receive a written statement of their needs and how they will be met.
- We have provided 438 clients with electronic assistive technology as part of their package of care a 7% increase in last year (410)
- Our turnaround time has improved from 21% to 38% for Major planning applications (determined in 13 weeks) and from 57% to 58% of Minor planning applications (determined within 8 weeks), also 97% of first time 'full plan' applications have been accepted, 3% better than in 2008/09.

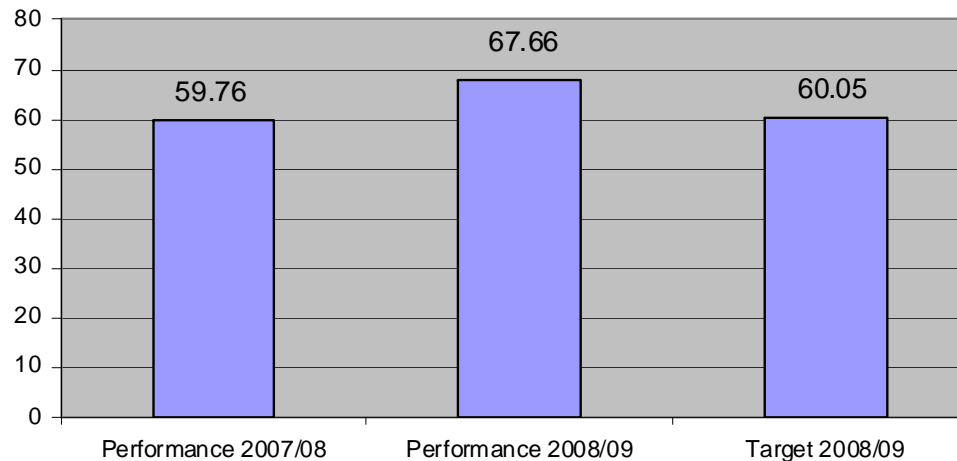
The Council continues to work with small businesses with 65 business grant applications supported in 2008/09 and 11 Business Club events held, including an annual gala. We continue to secure local employment opportunities through our contract procurement process and in partnership with the contractor, Costain, have secured employment for thirty-one long-term unemployed people on the Church Village By-Pass Scheme.

Grants have also been secured for improvements as part of the Aberdare Townscape Heritage Initiative (£950k), and Wattstown Day Centre (£469k). We have also procured a £1.95m contract to deliver housing improvements in the Treherbert and Tynewydd, Miskin and Penrhiwceiber Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs).

The Charts below illustrate the progress of the measures which have been identified as Key Performance Indicators in the delivery of the Community Theme.

### Our Key Performance Indicators

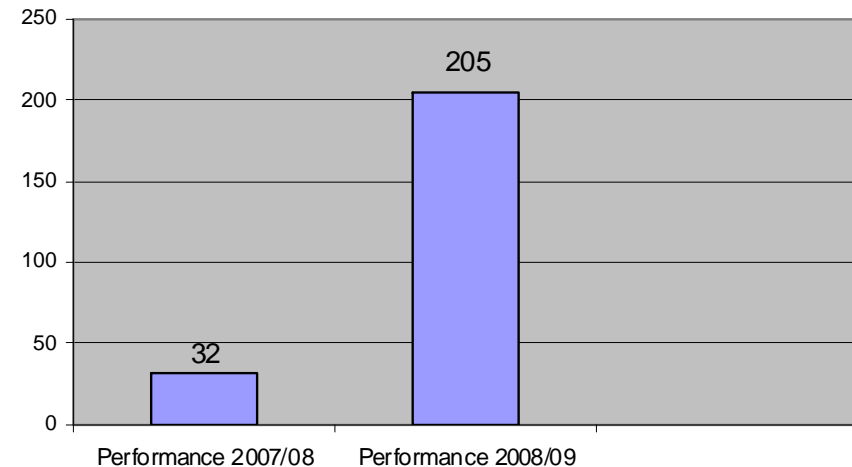
**% Creditor payments to local business using post codes CF, SA & NP**



Performance has exceeded target with payments made to local businesses increasing by 14% (£160.3m compared to £140.2m in 2007/08). Key areas of Capital Expenditure for 2008/09 include the Church Village Bypass Scheme; Dolau School extension and the rebuild of Ynyshir School. The Council continues to support the Welsh Assembly Initiative of ‘Spending Public Money Locally’.

**(LPR0101)**

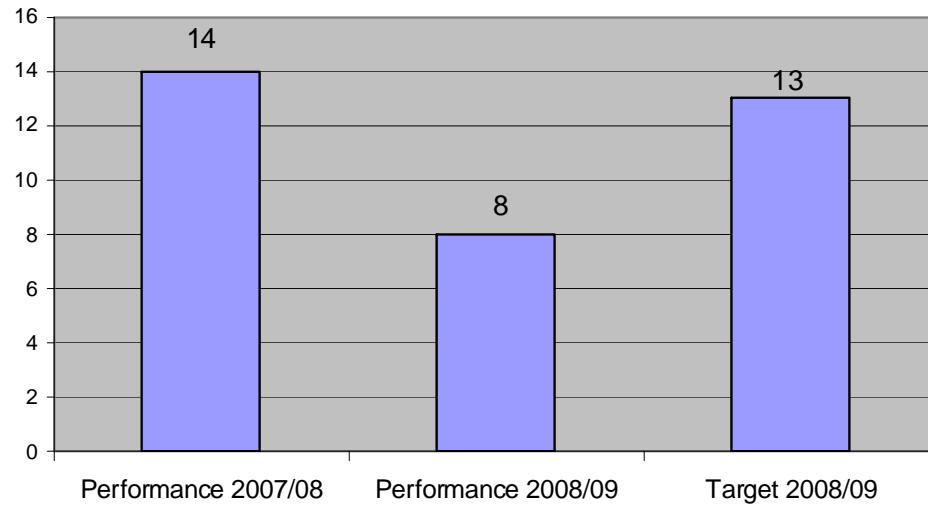
**Number of Work Experience Placements supported by the Council**



As one of the largest employers in RCT (approx. 11,500 staff) the Council continues to offer valuable work experience opportunities, assisting in the career decision making process through the placement of students and young people in relevant departments in which they wish to pursue a career. Such areas include catering, finance, planning and recreation. It also allows the Council to demonstrate its potential as a future employer, providing an insight into Council work activities.

**(LCHR106)**

**The number of homeless families with children who have used Bed and Breakfast accommodation during the year, except in emergencies**



The number of families with children using bed and breakfast accommodation has again significantly reduced during 2008/09 as the Council remains focused on improving outcomes for children across Rhondda Cynon Taf and eliminating the use of bed and breakfast accommodation by 2010.

**(HHA/014a replacing HHA/001a)**

Achieving our Service Objectives

In the Improvement Plan for 2008/09 we set out a number of objectives and performance targets to guide our work. Set out below is an update of our progress to date.

Community Plan Goal... "More "quality" jobs and increased employment opportunities in a strong, prosperous, self-reliant local economy.			
Objective	Action	Update	Measures
Aim to meet the housing needs for our residents and promote a range of housing opportunities to ensure all have a decent and affordable home and can live as independently as possible	AHOU070801 Pilot a Loan Scheme to assist eligible homeowners not entitled to grant assistance to access to low cost loans to maintain and improve their properties	Homeowner loan scheme not implemented this year due to current economic financial climate.	
	AHOU070802 Introduce Home maintenance packages for home owners	Home maintenance packages introduced to assist elderly residents identify repair work required at their property and agencies that can assist/support them with remedial work	
	AHOU070803 Expand the existing property leasing scheme to increase the availability of properties to assist with the housing of homelessness families within the RCT, further reducing the number of families placed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation	We have worked with a local housing association to increase the number of homes available as part of the property leasing scheme, providing more options and choice for homeless people.	Reduced the number of homeless families with children having used bed and breakfast accommodation from 13 to 5 <b>HHA/014a</b>
	AHOU070804 Continue to ensure that the Housing Advice Service performance compares favourably to other Welsh Authorities, whilst focusing on reducing the number of repeat presentations accepted from homeless households	The service continues to measure itself against the performance of other Welsh Authorities and compares well against the full suite of indicators used to assess performance. Whilst there has been a slight increase in the percentage of repeat homelessness cases, the Councils effective preventative strategy for dealing with homelessness has had a negative affect on the repeat presentation performance indicator.	Reduced the % of households accepted as statutorily homeless during the year to whom a full homelessness duty has been discharged by the same authority within the last 2 years from 13 to 9 people. <b>HHA/011</b>
	AHOU070805 Work in partnership to develop and implement accommodation strategies for older people and young people within RCT, to ensure accommodation is appropriate of high quality and meets identified need	Worked in partnership with social housing providers to develop and implement accommodation strategies for older and young people within RCT, to increase the number and type of affordable housing options available.	
The effective delivery of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Economic Regeneration Strategy and its specific Action Areas	ADNR070801 ERS Support local job growth	Progress has been reviewed against accepted national measures of economic growth and performance.	7% Increase in local job growth by sector
	ADNR070802 ERS Reduce the number of people who are economically inactive		9% Reduction in numbers of economically inactive
	ADNR070803 ERS Provide job related training to employees and self-employed people		10% Increase in number of employees and self-employed receiving job related training
	ADNR070804 ERS Increase investment in land and premises for business assets		3.2% Increase in value of investment in land and premises for business assets
	ADNR070806 ERS Increase the level of inward investment		42% Increase in inward investment
	ADNR070805 ERS Enable local suppliers to win contracts		Established baseline data to inform the number of local suppliers (with CF, NP, SA Postcodes) applying for RCT tenders. 194 local suppliers requested tender documents in 2008/2009.

Community Plan Goal... "More "quality" jobs and increased employment opportunities in a strong, prosperous, self-reliant local economy.			
Objective	Action	Update	Measures
Create more varied and stronger businesses (Provide an integrated business support and advice scheme to businesses in Rhondda Cynon Taf)	ADNR070807 Hold 7 RCT Business Club events and an annual Awards Gala to provide local businesses with focused help and support.	Eleven Business Club events held including the topics, 'Developing a Marketing Strategy'; 'Devising a Marketing Plan'; 'Choosing Marketing Tools' and 'Setting a Budget'. An annual RCT Business Club Gala Dinner & Awards was also held to celebrate business success.	11 Business Club events held
	ADNR070808 Increase Business Club membership through market research, implementation of marketing strategy and associated programme of events.	Continued positive progress of the RCT Business Club with increased membership during the year. The Business Club Website (www.rctbusinessclub.co.uk) has been particularly successful in publicising events and activity.	217 Businesses in Business Club 5% increase on last year (207 in 2007/08)
	ADNR070809 Provide grant advice to the small business sector	Provided grant advice to the small business sector including marketing sponsorship opportunities . Grants available include Commercial/Industrial Improvement Area, Community & Prominent Buildings, Regeneration, E-Commerce, Business Start Up and the Local Investment Fund.	65 Grant applications supported
	ADNR070810 Provide environmental advice to the small business sector	Appointed a Business Environmental Co-ordinator to provide advice and support on environmental improvement, operational efficiency and sustainable development. Also partnership working with relevant groups and organisations (including industrial estate owners to undertake landscape/ public realm improvement initiatives; Business Eye; Resource Efficiency Wales & Town Centre Forums).	76.5 FTE Jobs created 147 FTE Jobs safeguarded (estimated)
Formulate and produce a Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan (LDP) and see the timely progression of the plan through the relevant statutory stages to adoption	ADNR070811 Production of Deposit Draft LDP by May 08	Produced Draft Deposit Draft LDP by Sept 2008	
	ADNR070812 Present Deposit Draft LDP to Members by Summer 08	Presented Deposit Draft LDP to Full Council in Jan 2009	
	ADNR070813 Undertake Full public consultation on Deposit Draft LDP by Nov 08	Undertook full public consultation on Deposit Draft LDP in Feb/Mar 2009	
	ADNR070814 Advertise new or alternative site proposals following Consultation on Deposit Draft LDP by Mar 08	Consultation on Alternative Sites to be undertaken June/July 2009.	
Support the development and well managed delivery of high quality strategic economic regeneration projects	ADNR070815 Develop and test a project management framework, to support physical regeneration projects that focus on economic regeneration outcomes	Project management framework in place to support physical regeneration projects, and regular meetings of the Project Management Group responsible for taking forward the development and implementation of the physical regeneration schemes within town centres have been held.	
	ADNR070816 Assemble European Convergence Programme (ECP) Package to help the growth of small business	Convergence funding for the South East Wales Local Investment Fund was approved in September 2008. The grant programme for businesses aims to generate new jobs and positive economic outputs.	
	ADNR070817 Assemble ECP Package for Town Centre and physical regeneration	An European Convergence Programme (ECP) Package for Physical Regeneration of Town Centres is being developed for Aberdare, Ferndale, Mountain Ash, Pontypridd and Treorchy.	
	ADNR070818 Assemble ECP Package for Social Economy Development	A sub-regional package of assistance for community, economic and social enterprise development is being progressed.	
	ADNR070819 Assemble ECP Package delivering skills and access to jobs for young people	'Building the future together', a project providing a package of support for 11-19 year olds has been developed and is currently under assessment.	

Community Plan Goal... "More "quality" jobs and increased employment opportunities in a strong, prosperous, self-reliant local economy.			
Objective	Action	Update	Measures
Support the development and well managed delivery of high quality strategic economic regeneration projects	ADNR070820 Assemble ECP Package for Employment and training opportunities for adults and people who are economically inactive	Bridges into Work' a joint project with Torfaen, Bridgend, Merthyr, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Borough Councils to address economic inactivity was approved in November 2008. It provides a collaborative approach to engage, support and prepare the economically inactive, including those who are unemployed or on incapacity benefit, to acquire appropriate skills to become job ready and to gain sustainable employment.	
	ADNR070821 Assemble Programme of area based regeneration activity to benefit from The Heads of the Valleys Programme.	A package of Heads of the Valleys Strategic Regeneration Fund capital projects have been approved worth in excess of £1.3 million.	13 Projects approved
	ADNR070822 Develop a programme of area based project activity linked to the opportunities offered by the National Lottery and Heritage Lottery Fund, including Ynysangharad Park, Aberdare Townscape Heritage Initiative and Llantrisant Castle.	£950,000 grant approved from the Heritage Lottery Fund for Aberdare Townscape Heritage Initiative and £469,000 from the Big Lottery Fund for Wattstown Day Centre. A Conservation and Management Plan has been completed for Llantrisant Castle and development work is ongoing for the Ynysangharad Park Lido proposal.	
	ADNR070823 Develop a programme of financial support for organisations operating within the third sector, to support job creation and sustainable communities.	Pilot fund launched September 2008 in preparation for Convergence funded Social Economy grant scheme. Other financial support for third sector organisations include the Welsh Church Act and Grants to older persons.	16 Pilot Fund Projects approved totalling £548,331

Community Plan Goal... "Towns, villages, streets and homes that have been improved and revitalised, through new development which is sympathetic to our environment"			
Objective	Action	Update	Measures
Implement Rhondda Cynon Taf Town Centre Regeneration Strategy	ACAM070801 Complete the Pontypridd Experimental Driving Scheme	Completed the Pontypridd Experimental Driving Scheme which ran for 18 months from Nov 2007. This scheme included the removal of traffic from the town centre from 11am to 4pm Monday to Saturday. Exemptions are still in force allowing certain vehicles into the town e.g. bullion and post office vehicles. Public and business consultation was undertaken during the first 6 months of scheme allowing objections and comments to be logged. This feedback was considered and used to inform the decision to implement the <u>Permanent Traffic Order</u> .	
	ACAM070802 Prepare Cabinet report to take the Pontypridd Experimental Driving Scheme forward (to include comments/objections received from the public during the first 6 months operation)	Permanent Traffic Order for Pontypridd implemented in October 2008 as an outcome of the Pontypridd Experimental Driving Scheme. This Order for traffic removal forms the basis of the design for the future public realm works. Removing the bulk of the traffic in the town has resulted in a more attractive, accessible and shopper/visitor friendly public realm enhancement scheme, it anticipated that this will bring greater benefits for the town in terms of increased visitor numbers resulting in increased economic benefits.	
	ACAM070803 Develop phased proposals for Pontypridd streetscape improvements for public consultation (proposals dependant on Convergence Funding)	Development work to inform improvements to Pontypridd streetscape have progressed as expected this year and include surveys and trench examinations. The public exhibition on proposals has been postponed until outcomes of Convergence funding bid have been agreed.	
	ACAM070804 Conclude negotiations with Riverside Developers	A revised scheme to address the external appearance of the Pontypridd Taff Vale Precinct has been submitted by developers and a potential submission for planning is proposed for June 2009.	

Community Plan Goal...			
Towns, villages, streets and homes that have been improved and revitalised, through new development which is sympathetic to our environment			
Objective	Action	Update	Measures
Implement Rhondda Cynon Taf Town Centre Regeneration Strategy	ACAM070805 Following negotiations with Riverside Developers, identify funding package to take redevelopment of the Taff Vale Precinct forward	A further funding package to assist in the redevelopment of the Taff Vale Precinct is being prepared. It is expected that physical progress will be made during the next financial year.	
	ACAM070806 Complete Ynysangharad Park Heritage Lottery Fund Bid.	Discussion with Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the Ynysangharad Park improvement bid has taken place and a preferred two phase funding approach agreed. Stage one will concentrate Ynysangharad Lido. This work is dependant on agreements relating to cost and funding sources. A report is currently being prepared to take the revised scheme forward.	
	ACAM070807 Review Pontypridd Regeneration Strategy and produce a delivery plan.	Delays in undertaking necessary Paramics (transport planning) work to inform the Pontypridd Regeneration Strategy and delivery plan. It is anticipated that the final document will be available in the early part of 2009.	
	ACAM070808 Agree Pontypridd convergence funding delivery package. The decision on the level of funding available will be made by Welsh European Funding Office.	Baseline data to inform a revised Grant Expression of Interest (EOI) for Pontypridd Regeneration has been submitted to the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO). Work on the next stages to Business Case will commence once a response from WEFO has been received.	
	ACAM070809 Complete Millfield Depot negotiations to finalise the sale transfer of the site from RCT Estates to the proposed developer. The developer will then enter into discussions with Council's Planning Dept to agree details of their scheme.	The Developer for Millfield Depot has withdrawn from the sale and negotiations have terminated.	
	ACAM070810 Complete Pontypridd Highways/ Transportation and Cultural Industries Studies	Completed the Pontypridd Cultural Industries Stage One study. The Highways/Transportation Study has been delayed due to Paramics work mentioned above.	
	ACAM070811 Update Pontypridd Business Plan to include outcome of studies and spend priorities from Convergence funding.	Pontypridd Business Plan update has been delayed to due Paramics work to inform the traffic scheme.	
	ADNR070824 Undertake Tonypany town centre study to include a fully costed regeneration strategy that includes social, economic and environmental issues and ameliorisation.	Commissioned consultants to undertake regeneration strategy for Tonypany. Report available mid 2009. Work has been done to repair street furniture and implement a 'Hanging Signs scheme' and the town has been subjected to a clean up through the 'Street Blitz' programme. Baseline footfall data is also being collected to inform success of regeneration activity.	
	ADNR070825 Undertake Treorchy town centre study to include a fully costed regeneration strategy that includes social, economic and environmental issues and ameliorisation.	Consultants commissioned to undertake regeneration study for Treorchy. Initial draft findings submitted. Baseline footfall data is also being collected to inform success of regeneration activity.	
ADNR070826 Undertake Aberdare town centre study to include a fully costed regeneration strategy that includes social, economic and environmental issues and ameliorisation.	Consultants commissioned to undertake regeneration study for Aberdare. The study will feed into the development of the Convergence package for Physical Regeneration within the town centre.		

Community Plan Goal...			
"Towns, villages, streets and homes that have been improved and revitalised, through new development which is sympathetic to our environment"			
Objective	Action	Update	Measure
Promote a positive image by encouraging economic regeneration and inward investment through physical development projects	ACAM070812 Deliver a cost effective joint marketing and promotional campaign for the region, in partnership with the 9 other Local Authorities in South East Wales and the Department for Economy and Transport (DE&T).	Working with partners, completed a promotional brochure for golf courses and undertaken other campaign activities mainly including advertising in appropriate press/magazines.	
Improve where we live (by the delivery of Group Repair to Private Sector Housing with associated social, economic and environmental regeneration of Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRA))	AHOU070806 Procure new contract to deliver an assistance programme worth £1.95m in the Treherbert and Tynewydd, Miskin and Penrhawceiber Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs), concentrating on the more deprived areas with poor quality housing stock.	Procured new contract to deliver an assistance programme worth £1.95m in the Treherbert and Tynewydd, Miskin and Penrhawceiber Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs), concentrating on the more deprived areas with poor quality housing stock. The new Contract commenced April 09.	
	AHOU070807 Carry out block improvements to housing and complementary environmental schemes in targeted areas (resulting in significant improvements to the local area community and to the well-being of residents).	Carried out block improvements to housing and complementary environmental schemes	5 non-housing schemes implemented. 82 houses improved by NRA grant aid

Community Plan Goal...			
"Vibrant Communities with a viable long term future"			
Objective	Action	Update	Measure
Increase the levels of income available to Rhondda Cynon Taf residents, therefore reducing poverty and deprivation	AFOP070801 Undertake further campaign to promote benefit take-up and notification of changes in circumstances in addition to other welfare benefits and related matters	Promoted the take-up of benefits through targeted campaigns, advertising, leaflets and posters. In partnership, worked to address the barriers to take-up and agreed an action plan to take forward into 2009/10 as part of the Child Poverty Initiative. The increase in benefits caseload (3.7% increase with over 1,000 claimants) this year as a result of the economic downturn has forced RCT to review it's planned activity with the mobile advice centre.	
	AFOP070802 Work with partners and stakeholders to initiate joint projects to encourage benefit take-up; speed up the application process or collect information in support of a claim	Joint projects have been initiated, with Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the with Community Services Group. New posts have been created to focus on availability of benefits and take-up of those benefits. Both projects will run for at least 2 years	2 joint projects initiated
	AFOP070803 Increase amount of benefit correctly paid through introduction of a new performance measure 'the right benefit indicator'	Increased the amount of benefit correctly paid through the introduction of the new performance measure 'the right benefit indicator'. Increased claims during the year, as a result of the economic downturn have resulted in a 20% increase on the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) target	32,005 change events (DWP target 2008/09 - 26,629)
	AFOP070804 Introduce the Local Housing Allowance (a new government scheme which could allow a maximum of £15 excess benefit per week for claimants) promoting choice and responsibility.	The Local Housing Allowance (a new government scheme which could allow a maximum of £15 excess benefit per week for claimants) promoting choice and responsibility was introduced in April 2008 with minimal problems.	Excess benefit of £126,272k awarded to 646 customers in Local Housing Allowance claims.
	AFOP070805 Introduce e-claiming through internet to complete forms and make claims.	A full feasibility and cost benefit analysis is being carried out to introduce e-claiming through the internet to complete forms and make claims.	
	AHOU070808 Review of Discretionary Housing Payments- DHP (a stand alone payment that can be paid in addition to HB/CTB where exceptional circumstances apply) to ensure fairness and consistency of award.	The Discretionary Housing Payments Policy (DHP) (a stand alone payment that can be paid in addition to HB/CTB where exceptional circumstances apply) was reviewed and revised at the beginning of the year to ensure fairness and consistency of award.	£23,506 awarded in Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

Community Plan Goal... "Vibrant Communities with a viable long term future"			
Objective	Action	Update	Measure
Improve Development Control (Planning Services) customer satisfaction via quality communications and information systems	APLA070801 Review and develop customer feedback systems to inform improvement.	Reviewed the Planning and Development Control customer feedback system including the content of the questionnaires and the level of response from customers. In addition, 35 letters from the public have been received through the year expressing thanks e.g. helpful and informative staff	77% of customers stated Development Control keeps them well informed during the application process 98% of Building Control customers satisfied with standard of service
	APLA070802 Develop new customer satisfaction survey for the enforcement function to inform service delivery.	Developed a new customer satisfaction survey for the enforcement function.	
	APLA070803 Increase the number of electronic interactions with customers	Increased the number of electronic applications received by almost 50%, from 67 in 2007/08 to 129 in 2008/09.	71% electronic interactions (as measured against the Government's Pendleton Criteria)
	APLA070804 Develop the information the public can access through the Council's website, including publicising current applications..	Developed the information accessible through the Council's website to include a weekly list of planning applications received so that interested parties can view recent submissions. Increased the number of hits on the Web pages with Planning and Building Control information from 48,000 to 64,000	
Raise the awareness of planning enforcement and deliver a more proactive and collaborative service	APLA070805 Publish customer information leaflets explaining and targeting enforcement issues.	Published the Enforcement Policy document in February 2009 on the Council's website and made it available at the Council Open Days. This policy contains comprehensive information on the workings of the enforcement section. Also published a leaflet aimed at the general public which has been made available at the Councils One4All Centres.	76.73% of enforcement complaints resolved within 12 weeks <b>PLA/005</b>
	APLA070806 Assess effectiveness of enforcement policies and procedures by undertaking customer satisfaction exercise.	Undertook a customer satisfaction exercise to assess the effectiveness of enforcement policies and procedures. From the limited responses received, 88% were satisfied with the service that they received from the enforcement team.	88% satisfied with service received from the Enforcement team

Community Plan Goal...			
"Vibrant Communities with a viable long term future"			
Objective	Action	Update	Measure
To protect the rights of the consumer, maintain a fair trading environment for local businesses, support and encourage local businesses through effective enforcement, regulation and business support	APPN070817 Take action against the shadow economy through enforcement of copyright laws and sale of misdescribed goods	Targeted persons operating in the shadow economy who gain unfair advantages over genuine traders by: *Officers taking formal action involving prosecutions, cautions or warnings, on 28 occasions against persons operating in the shadow economy. *Undertaking 22 joint enforcement exercises involving shadow economy traders. *Releasing 13 press releases to publicise and raise awareness of the enforcement action taken against shadow economy traders	28 prosecutions and warnings given to shadow economy traders
	APPN070818 Test the accuracy of claims made by traders when providing services or carrying out repairs, that work was carried out safely and as described	Carried out 11 checks into the accuracy of claims made by traders providing a public service, resulting in the identification of 9 incorrect claims. These include garages installing lights into vehicles (1); itinerant furniture sellers misdescribing their furniture as being leather (3) and itinerant property repairers exaggerating and misdescribing the building/repair work that they have carried out (5).	11 claims tested and 9 incorrect claims identified
	APPN070819 Identify and analyse complaints against Internet websites within the Authority	Carried out test purchasing exercises of goods for sale over the internet, via the use of a covert credit card, to ensure compliance of sellers with the Distance Selling Legislation and for the detection of Trade Mark infringements. *Targeted businesses, including web designers, local economic development and enterprise companies that offer advice and assistance to website operators. Commenced visits to ensure that correct information is provided to their clients. *Monitored complaints received via the FLARE database on a monthly basis to identify and analyse complaints regarding Internet websites within the Authority. Of the 82 complaints logged on the database, 18 related to businesses within the County Borough. Action taken by the Authority includes, 13 on-going investigations, 9 traders advised and sites corrected, 12 refunds obtained, 16 referrals to Home Authority, 5 informal cautions /prosecutions and 2 web sites shut down.	

Community Plan Goal... "Vibrant Communities with a viable long term future"			
Objective	Action	Update	Measure
Enable a local housing market that responds effectively to the housing needs and aspirations of all sectors of our society, while promoting health & well being and without compromising the needs of future generations, through improvement in the housing stock, delivering affordable homes and providing housing services for those who are in need or vulnerable	AHOU070809 Introduce a Policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance for the provision of Affordable Housing	First draft of Affordable Housing Delivery Statement finalised and external and internal consultation undertaken. The Affordable Housing Delivery Statement will be approved by Cabinet in May 2009.	3.67% Private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action by the local authority
	AHOU070810 Increase the number of dwellings returned to useful occupation to increase the provision of affordable homes	Empty Property Strategy has been drafted which is a sub-strategy of the local housing strategy and outlines the strategic direction of the Council in tackling empty properties and includes details of the range of measures available to the Council in order to do so.	3.14% additional affordable housing units (as a % of all additional housing units provided during the year) <b>PLA/006</b>
	AHOU070811 Integrate the Housing Health and Safety Rating System into property eligibility criteria to ensure that investment targets deficiencies of significant health impact	First draft of New Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy completed and currently being consulted on internally and through the Local Housing Partnership.	
To ensure that Rhondda Cynon Taf is promoted as a short break destination to the UK market	ATOU070801 Continue to implement the Rhondda Cynon Taf 6 Year Tourism Strategy:	All actions completed as detailed in the 2008/09 Action Plan. Dare Valley Marketing Review and Marketing Plan completed and in consultation stage.	
	ATOU070802 Continue to develop and implement short break offers to promote Destination Rhondda Cynon Taf and encourage visitors to the Borough	Developed and promoted three short break offers including Heritage; Do, Dare, Delight and developed the Valleys Golf Breaks further to encourage visitors to the County Borough.	3 Short Breaks developed
	ATOU070803 Produce the annual marketing plan utilising both established marketing methods and the new website.	Produced the annual marketing plan. Key initiatives have included the promotion of the Visitors Guide to Rhondda Cynon Taff in key tourism publications i.e. Holiday Finder Guide and Annual Breaks 2008 and the completion of a promotional video 'Valleys of South Wales' which is included on the Britain's Best Breaks website and via the Sky Information Channel	35,767 website hits
	ATOU070804 Promote Dare Valley Country Park as a Tourism Gateway for Rhondda Cynon Taf	Dare Valley Marketing Review and Marketing Plan completed and in consultation stage. Completed construction of the Visitor Centre at Dare Valley Country Park. New facilities include toilets, a café, interpretation and booking area.	
	ATOU070805 Improve tourism information at key locations through signage and information points	Improved tourism information at key locations by updating 10 x RCT based Tourism Information Points (TIPS) and populating key tourism influx points, such as Cardiff International Airport with up to date literature including 15,000 visitor guides.	

## **The Outcomes from Regulatory Inspections during the year**

In the last twelve months there have been no inspections within this theme.

## **How Consultation has helped to improve services to local people**

The following consultation was undertaken in 2008/09 relating to services that contribute to **Boosting Our Local Economy**. Following the consultation results, each service identified improvements actions in their service business plans for next year.

### **Planning Forums for Agents;**

In 2008/09, two Planning Forums were held to assist small and medium sized planning consultants/agents with submission of planning applications by providing an opportunity to meet the planners, developing a dialogue which aids planning submissions that are 'right-first-time', as well as discussing changes in legislation and other professional issues. Topics covered this year include Development and Flood Risk, presented by the Environment Agency; Conservation and the issues associated, and the requirements of Design and Access statements.

### **Customer satisfaction survey in Planning for the Enforcement function to inform service delivery;**

A customer satisfaction survey for the enforcement function within Development Control was developed to assess the effectiveness of the enforcement policies and procedures currently in place. There have been a limited number of responses to these surveys but of those that returned a response, 88% were satisfied with the service received from the enforcement section.

### **Proposed restoration of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Pontypridd**

In June 2008, 2 days of public consultation was held to discuss the proposals for the Heritage Lottery Bid to restore the lido in Ynysangharad Park in Pontypridd. One day was spent in the park and one day in Pontypridd centre. During this time approximately 200 questionnaires were completed.

### **Regeneration of Pontypridd**

In November 2008, four days of public consultation was held in Ty Pennant, Pontypridd in relation to the proposals contained within the emerging regeneration strategy for Pontypridd. The public were invited to view the proposals, discuss issues with team members and complete questionnaires. Almost 300 people viewed the proposals and 100 questionnaires were completed.

### **Public consultation on the Deposit Draft Local Development Plan (LDP) proposals**

The Council undertook 6 weeks public consultation on its Deposit Draft Local Development Plan (2006-2021). Consultation was held with all key stakeholders, community groups and the public and sought to obtain their views on the Council's land use framework. A series of mobile exhibitions and consultation events were held across the County Borough and postcards were delivered to every household, advertising the consultation. This supported a co-ordinated programme of consultation, which included internet survey, bill board advertising and press advertisements.

### **Plans for 2009/10 Consultations**

#### **Public consultation on Alternative sites as a result of Deposit Draft Local Development Plan (LDP) proposals**

In the summer of 2009 the Council will undertake 6 weeks public consultation on the Alternative Sites that emerged for further consideration as a result of the 2008/09 Public consultation on the Deposit Draft Local Development Plan (LDP) proposals, consulted up on in 2008/09, see above. This second stage of consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's agreed LDP Delivery Agreement.

#### **Public consultation on enhancement proposals for Pontypridd Town Centre**

The timing and nature of the consultation is dependent on confirmation of funding approval from the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO).

### **Plans for 2009/10 Improvement**

How we plan to address our Improvement Priorities in 2009/10 and how our progress will be measured is set out below.

**Key Priority: REGENERATION OF OUR COMMUNITIES PHYSICAL REGENERATION - town centre enhancement, bringing derelict land back to life and widening housing choice and affordability for all.**

<b>What we are trying to achieve:</b> To Regenerate Former Industrial Sites (Note: The Council has limited control and influence in this area)
<b>Measure</b>
Progress in assisting to bring forward the former Industrial Sites in Rhondda Cynon Taf identified in this plan. This progress to be outlined in a fourth quarter statement.
<b>Critical Improvement Actions</b>
Ensure that land at the former industrial sites are allocated for development in an adopted Development Plan by 2010.
Facilitate negotiations with developers / land owners of former industrial sites.
Engage with the developers / land owners of former Industrial Sites to promote awareness of the opportunities presented by the Convergence Programme.
Development and implementation of a programme of environmental enhancement of former Industrial Sites.

<b>What we are trying to achieve:</b> Improving the Physical Environment of our Town Centres
<b>Measure</b>
The critical measure of initial success will be to achieve the funding packages to deliver the priorities of the business cases as set out below. At approval a set of output targets will be agreed such as area of redundant floor space being brought back into use, area of the public realm being improved and gross new jobs created.
A single way of evaluating the impact of the delivery of the improvements across all of the town centres will be undertaken which will measure the wider economic, social and environmental benefits.
<b>Critical Improvement Actions</b>
Regeneration of Pontypridd Town Centre. Preparing Business Case for submission.
Regeneration of Aberdare Town Centre – Preparing Business Case for submission
Regeneration of Ferndale Town Centre - Preparing Business Case for submission
Regeneration of Mountain Ash Town Centre – Submission of EOI. Delivery dates not yet known.
Regeneration of Treorchy Town Centre Developing EOI. Delivery dates not yet known.

**Key Priority: REGENERATION OF OUR COMMUNITIES PHYSICAL REGENERATION - town centre enhancement, bringing derelict land back to life and widening housing choice and affordability for all.**

<b>What we are trying to achieve:</b> In Partnership, ensure that a range of good quality housing is available across the County Borough					
<b>Measure</b>	<b>08/09 Data</b>	<b>09/10 target</b>	<b>All Wales Data</b>		
			<b>Quartile</b>	<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Welsh Avg.</b>
Projected spend on Private Sector Housing in total	£10.5m	£10.5m			
<b>Number of Grants Completed</b>					
Disability facility grants	380	387			
Renovation Grants	49	43			
Maintenance and Repair Assistance.	872	850			
Group Repair in Renewal Areas.	82	87			
Minor works of adaptation	2158	1800			
Number of new affordable housing units delivered	112 units	130 units			
The percentage of private sector dwellings vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action by the local authority (PSR/004)	4%	2%	1	5	2.61%
<b>Critical Improvement Actions</b>					
Increase awareness of housing options in the County Borough by: Developing a comprehensive housing advice guide Ensuring the Council's website includes information on all housing services provided by the Council and links to other housing providers and housing related services					
Increase choice and availability by:- Undertaking a review of the Common Housing Register and Allocations Framework to increase choice and ensure it meets needs of the customer. Increase the number of properties let through the Social Lettings Agency					
Establish an assessment criteria for use in prioritising funding for new social housing developments that takes account of the following sustainability principles.					
Publish an Empty Property Strategy that focuses on bringing back into use empty properties through - Awareness raising; Provision of grants, and Enforcement					
Introduce a monitoring framework to report progress of Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners in bringing all social housing stock up to required Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2012					
Ensure that land for 14,850 dwellings is allocated in an adopted Development Plan by 2010.					

**Key Priority: REGENERATION OF OUR COMMUNITIES SOCIAL REGENERATION - Income maximisation initiatives, help with employability, skills training, tackling labour market disadvantage.**

<b>What we are trying to achieve:</b> Address the barriers to take-up of means tested benefits (including Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Free School Meals), so that household income is maximised thereby improving the quality of life of individuals and families.			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>08/09 Data</b>	<b>09/10 Target</b>	<b>Welsh Average</b>
Maintain the time taken to process housing benefit & council tax benefit (HB/CTB) new claims and changes in circumstances, due to the increased volumes received due to the recession.	13.9 days	13.9 days	11.1 days
Encourage take-up of HB/CTB by pensioners claiming Pension Credit but not HB/CTB		1,200 cases to be reviewed	
% of children qualifying for free school meals that have registered their eligibility	NEW	To be set following baseline analysis	
% eligible children actually 'taking up' their free meals in school	64%	To be set following baseline analysis	
<b>Critical Improvement Actions</b>			
Improve customer access by introducing e-claims			
Use data provided by the Pension Service to maximise take-up for 1,200 pensioners who are not claiming HB/CTB.			
Review approach to Welfare Advice of the Council's 9 Welfare Officers based in 2 Service Groups, to ensure best use is made of resources and establish consistent, coordinated delivery of advice and benefits take-up activity across the Council and with the voluntary sector			
Work with Communities First to raise awareness of claims processes and improve provision of information so that claims (and queries) can be dealt with faster			
Develop strategies to improve 'take-up' of Free School Meals			

**Key Priority: REGENERATION OF OUR COMMUNITIES SOCIAL REGENERATION - Income maximisation initiatives, help with employability, skills training, tackling labour market disadvantage.**

**What we are trying to achieve:** A 3 year project (Apr 2009 – Apr 2012) working with the People & Work Unit to develop 'model' community programmes within the Communities First areas linked to Ponty High & Porth County Community Schools, to provide support to 80 children aged 10-16, parents and the community, that will promote positive attitudes towards learning, improve school attendance and educational achievement

Measure	08/09 Data	09/10 Target	All Wales Data		
			Quartile	Ranking	Welsh Avg.
To work with a group of 80 children aged 10 -16		80			
Improve School Attendance: Improve attendance of 20 children (25%) of the group of 80 by the end of Autumn term 2010 using currently available school statistics.		Target by March 2010 needed			
<b>Improved Educational Achievement:</b> To improve educational achievement of at least 20 of the supported children (over 3 years), using key stage assessments from schools.		4			
<b>Family Involvement in Learning</b> :Deliver 6 'pilot' programmes of educational and 'family' events to engage young people and their families within Glyncoch and Porth areas, to build relationships of trust with the aim of integrating them more fully into mainstream services		6			
Annual survey report (undertaken in December) to measure the shifts in the attitude of young people toward education. Report will be fed-back by April each year					
<b>Critical Improvement Actions</b>					
Secure demo project funding from Communities First Outcomes Fund and agree Service Level Agreement with People & Work Unit to manage the pilot project.					
Set up project in 2 School clusters – Porth County & Pontypridd High – to be fully operational by end of academic year 2009 – 2010					
Create an attitude of greater parent/secondary school engagement in each area					
To increase by the number of parents attending at least one Year 7 parents evening event					

**Key Priority: REGENERATION OF OUR COMMUNITIES SOCIAL REGENERATION - Income maximisation initiatives, help with employability, skills training, tackling labour market disadvantage.**

**What we are trying to achieve:** To reduce unemployment in the longer term by working with people from specific target groups\* who haven't worked for some time, and supporting them to gain the confidence, skills and qualifications they need to find work in the future. (\* - see measure 1 below) (GENESIS 2 PROJECT)

Measure	08/09 Data	09/10 Target	All Wales Data		
			Quartile	Ranking	Welsh Avg.
The number of people we aim to work with (To take on 60 people each quarter)		240 (60 per Qtr)			
The proportion of people we aim to work with from specific target groups:					
Economically inactive		67%			
Females		85%			
Lone parents		73%			
Work limiting health condition or disability		40%			
16-18 year olds, Not in Education, Employment or Training [NEETs]		20%			
The proportion of people we work with, who we aim to achieve specific results for					
Gaining accredited qualifications		20%			
Entering employment		5%			
Entering further learning		40%			
Gaining other positive outcomes		40%			
<b>Critical Improvement Actions</b>					
Recruit additional Advisors					
Ensure organisations and professionals we work with fully understand the project, and refer appropriate people to us.					
Continue to run existing entry-level personal development courses to engage with clients and build confidence ('Mum Matters' & 'STEPS to Excellence'). Develop new course aimed primarily at NEETs.					
Reduce waiting list					