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(Tel: 01443 864246 Email: [lloydj4@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:lloydj4@caerphilly.gov.uk))

**Date: 2nd November 2022**

To Whom it May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee** will be held in Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams on **Tuesday, 8th November, 2022 at 5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days. A simultaneous translation will be provided on request.

Members of the public or Press may attend in person at Penallta House or may view the meeting live via the following link: <https://civico.net/caerphilly>

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Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy', enclosed in a large, loopy oval shape.

**Christina Harrhy**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## AGENDA

	Pages
1 To receive apologies for absence.	

A greener place Man gwyrddach



2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

To approve and sign the following minutes: -

- 3 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 27th September 2022. 1 - 8
- 4 Consideration of any matter referred to this Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.
- 5 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme. 9 - 22
- 6 To receive and consider the following Cabinet Reports\*:-
1. Caerphilly County Borough Council – Response to the Cost of Living Crisis – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
  2. Provisional Revenue Budget Outturn for 2021-2022 – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
  3. Update on Agile Working – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
  4. Shaping the Policy on Cash Collection – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
  5. Annual Report on Corporate Complaints received for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
  6. Interim Joint Protocol for Mileage Rates in Local Authorities – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
  7. Foundation Living Wage 2022 – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
  8. Workforce Capacity and Associated Challenges – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

*\*If a member of the Scrutiny Committee wishes for any of the above Cabinet reports to be brought forward for review at the meeting please contact Julie Lloyd, 01443 864246, by 10.00 a.m. on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022.*

To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports:-

- 7 Proposal for the Development of Community Hubs 23 - 40
- 8 Update on the Procurement Reform Agenda and to Extend the Councils' Programme for Procurement (Strategy) for a period of up to Eighteen (18) Months. 41 - 64
- 9 Audit Wales Report, Springing Forward - Assets July 2022. 65 - 96

**Circulation:**

**Councillors** M.A. Adams, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, C.J. Cuss, G. Enright, D. Ingram-Jones, G. Johnston (Chair), C.P. Mann, B. Miles (Vice Chair), A. McConnell, D.W.R. Preece, J. Reed, J. Taylor, C. Thomas, A. Whitcombe, L.G. Whittle and C. Wright

And Appropriate Officers

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## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 5.30 P.M.**

#### PRESENT:

Councillor G. Johnston – Chair  
Councillor B. Miles – Vice Chair

#### Councillors:

M. Adams, G. Enright, D. Ingram-Jones, C. P. Mann, A. McConnell, D. Preece, J. Reed, C. Thomas, L. G. Whittle, and C. Wright.

#### Cabinet Members:

Councillor Mrs. E. Stenner and Councillor N. George.

#### Together with:

Officers: C. Harry (Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), L. Donovan (Head of People Services), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), L. Lucas (Head of Customer and Digital Services), L. Dallimore (Unison Branch Secretary), S. Pugh (Head of Communications), S. Ford (Communications Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer), and J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance: Councillors S. Morgan and J. Pritchard.

### **RECORDING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live-streamed and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here to View](#).

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Councillors Mrs. E.M. Aldworth, C. Cuss, J. Taylor, and A. Whitcombe.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Scrutiny Committee noted that Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services, would not be present during agenda item no. 6 'Workforce Capacity and Associated Challenges' as the subject of the report had a potential impact on the Corporate Directors. No further declarations were received.

## **3. MINUTES – 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022**

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 8 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **4. CALL-IN PROCEDURE**

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

## **5. POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report which outlined the reports planned for the period September 2022 to March 2023 and included all reports that were identified at the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022. Members were asked to consider the Forward Work Programme, alongside the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, prior to publication on the Council's website.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 11 for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme be published on the Council's website.

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

## **6. WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND ASSOCIATED CHALLENGES.**

The Scrutiny Committee noted that Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services, would not be present during agenda item no. 6 'Workforce Capacity and Associated Challenges' as the subject of the report had a potential impact on the Corporate Directors.

The Chief Executive presented the report to Members which provided an update of some of the major issues and challenges currently impacting on workforce capacity and included some initial proposals to provide additional resources into key areas.

Members were advised that since the beginning of the pandemic, the Council, its staff and elected members have been attempting to manage a pandemic response, to maintain service

delivery, to oversee the introduction of new services such as Caerphilly Cares, and to recover from the pandemic, whilst also seeking to transform the whole organisation and the communities it serves.

Members were informed of the proposed options available to the Council in order to manage the challenges detailed within the report. This included the development of an internal recruitment team, the creation of additional posts of Deputy Chief Executive and Deputy Section 151 Officer, and to endorse the recent appointment of a Cost-of-Living Co-ordinator.

The UNISON Branch Secretary offered her comments for Committee consideration. The union representative highlighted the reduction in staff numbers at Caerphilly County Borough Council over the 17 years that she had worked for the council. Members heard about the pressures faced by a significant number of employees as some vacancies were not filled due to austerity and vacancy management. It was outlined how an internal recruitment team was fully supported as it was necessary to attract the best candidates for new roles and the union requested regular progress reports on this matter. The branch secretary also welcomed how the proposals in the report were to be funded through the use of existing budgets.

A Member requested a breakdown of the leavers table contained in 5.13 of the report. The Member also asked about the emerging themes of the exit survey process and for details on the current structure of the Council's recruitment team. The Head of People Services advised Members that a breakdown of leavers would be circulated to the Committee outside of the meeting, and analysis of the exit survey would need to be collated and then provided when the process had been in place for 3-6 months and that currently there was no specific dedicated recruitment team within Human Resources.

A Member queried the creation of new posts at the higher end of the salary scale whilst cutting front-line services. The Member also sought clarification on not filling the 3 vacant Head of Service posts. The Chief Executive recognised the sensitivities outlined and advised Members that the priorities and pace for implementation set by Councillors and communities demanded greater capacity within the leadership structure. It was also highlighted that within the Corporate Management Team there were three statutory officers and that currently there was only a deputy for one of those positions.

A Member queried the need to create two new posts to deputise for statutory officers at the Corporate Management level. The Member also sought more information on the specific responsibilities associated with the new positions. The Chief Executive advised that there was not sufficient capacity within the Financial Team to designate Deputy Section 151 Officer responsibilities. It was also outlined that if one of the three Corporate Directors were designated with Deputy Chief Executive duties there would not be enough capacity at a leadership level to deliver the priorities at the pace demanded. Members were also given comparative details on the Corporate Management structure of other Local Authorities which were higher than the current leadership team at Caerphilly County Borough Council. The Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer advised Members that the role and responsibilities of his proposed Deputy were set out in sections 5.35 – 5.39 of the report. Members heard how he needed support to deliver the Council's agenda at a time of significant financial challenges, he also outlined how having a Deputy would allow him to concentrate on the Council's strategic focus.

A Member asked if figures were available so that a comparison could be made between the model of using an external recruitment agency and having an internal recruitment team. The Head of People Services outlined how a recruitment agency had been used to fill one post and that the associated costs of using them would be circulated to Members. Members heard how suitable candidates for other posts within the Council would be missed if a recruitment

agency was used on a post-by-post basis. The Member queried the use of only one recruitment agency. The Head of People Services outlined how a procurement process had been undertaken before engaging a recruitment agency and the procedure had been deemed too costly which then prompted the plans to develop an internal recruitment team.

A Member asked about the links to local colleges as part of the workforce development strategy. The Head of People Services outlined how there were current links with external providers and that this had proved very beneficial when implementing the apprenticeship scheme. Members heard how the proposed recruitment team would build on these existing links. The Member then asked about offering students work placements, the Head of People Services outlined how this was already happening and would be developed further in the future.

A Member queried why a moratorium could not be paid to officers to act-up and meet the statutory requirements of Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer on a temporary basis as required. The Member claimed that the Council had a shortage of staff at lower salary levels, and he could not support the proposed creation of the two new senior posts. The Chief Executive outlined how it was in her professional opinion that additional capacity at a senior level was needed in order to deliver priorities such as positive intervention on the cost-of-living challenges and climate change at the pace demanded by Members. It was outlined how the organisation had not progressed during the leadership of an Acting Chief Executive as the Corporate Director given the temporary responsibility also had to run two large directorates. The Chief Executive advised that this was a choice for Members but outlined how it was her professional opinion that the Council was at risk of not meeting statutory requirements if this additional capacity was not put in place.

A Member thought that the report lacked a reshaped management model so that Committee Members could make a more informed opinion and queried how the associated services would be run in the future if the three vacant Head of Service posts were not filled as their budget had been redirected to fund the proposals under consideration. The Chief Executive gave Members an overview of the current responsibilities of the Corporate Management Team and outlined how priorities would be redistributed in the future if Members were minded to approve the proposed changes.

A Member advised that he could not recall the vacant Heads of Service posts being expressed as saving in previous budget reports but welcomed the use of associated funding to the creation of the proposed new positions.

A Member sought clarification relating to sickness/absence in the report. The Member requested a fuller breakdown including comparisons with other local authorities and also claimed that the data contained in the sickness/absence chart did not add-up. The Member also requested a breakdown of the oncosts highlighted in the salary range in section 5.34. The Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer advised that oncosts of 36% were paid on salary ranges. Members heard how the figure in the report was £137,000 for the post in question and that all proposals were subject to agreement at Full Council. The Head of People Services advised that the figures in the sickness/absence chart were not calculated in a way that allowed them to add-up to the totals given and that more information would be provided on these calculations outside of the meeting.

A Member sought further information on the proposed recruitment team in regard to how the total number of 7 posts was reached and also the grading structure for these new positions. The Head of People Services advised that the number of team members was based on the potential workload of the Recruitment Team and that the grading structure reflected the duties and responsibilities for each post and would be set out in the specific job descriptions.



A Member commented on the impact of managing sickness better on delivering services and also queried the potential role of a Deputy Chief Executive. The Chief Executive outlined how additional capacity was needed to lead on the cost-of-living crisis, the climate change agenda, the Corporate Plan priorities and also helping to oversee the Place Shaping programme. Members also heard how Audit Wales had played a monitoring role and had recognised the risks currently carried and believed that for an organisation the size of Caerphilly County Borough Council, additional resilience was needed within the management structure.

Having noted the content of the report, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 6 for, 3 against and 2 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

3.1 (iii) Introduce additional staffing resource as detailed in 5.18 – 5.40 of the report, consisting of:

- The development of an internal recruitment team.
- The proposal to create an additional post and designate as a Deputy Chief Executive.
- Proposal to create an additional post and designate as Deputy Section 151 officer.

3.2 Endorse the recent appointment of a Cost-of-Living Co-ordinator as detailed at paragraph 5.50.

3.3 Members are asked to endorse the financial implications as detailed in paragraphs 8.1 – 8.3 and specifically note that the proposals will not result in any additional financial resources being required as they will be fully funded through the virement of existing budgets.

## **7. UPDATE ON AGILE WORKING.**

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property introduced the report that updated Members on the progress of embedding Agile Working principles across the organisation and outlined the steps necessary to formalise these practices.

Members were advised that during the pandemic, staff who were requested to work from home, were still able to deliver key services to the public even when the communities were 'locked down'. The democratic process was initially suspended at the very beginning of the pandemic, however through Microsoft Teams, the Council were able to reinstate its decision-making process, with elected members able to fully participate in the decision-making from their homes.

Members were informed of this working practice that has continued over the last 24 months and the introduction of legislation that now makes hybrid meeting capabilities, a requirement of Council business across the Council.

Members were advised of the current benefits of the new ways of working which included, a reduction in unproductive time spent travelling to and from work and to meetings across the borough, reducing CO2 emissions, employees finding a better work/life balance that includes caring responsibilities, increasing service resilience in relation to snow days and red weather warnings, and reducing the number of administrative buildings in operation.

Members were informed of the results of recent staff surveys which demonstrated that approximately 80% of staff either preferred to mostly work from home or split their working

days equally between work and home. Members were also advised that a future capacity planning exercise had been carried out during the Spring of 2022 for Heads of Service to establish staff working patterns and capacity requirements for buildings against the needs of the citizens.

Members were informed that the report gave them a position statement on the Councils' current approach to agile working, setting out some of the potential benefits in formalising agile working and the work of the Agile Corporate Review Team on the development of an agile hub at Ty Penallta. Members were referred to paragraph 5.15 of the report which provided Members with information on workstreams, projects and estimated completion dates.

The UNISON Branch Secretary offered her comments for Committee consideration. The union representative outlined that UNISON was supportive of agile working but had concerns over the outcome of pieces of work referred to in the report which had not been shared with the trade unions. Members heard that these were a future capacity planning exercise, a categorisation exercise, scoping work on initial designs to reconfigure Penallta House and the assumed cost savings associated with the release of surplus buildings and facilities. The Branch Secretary advised that she would like the outcomes shared with trade unions and Scrutiny Members.

A Member queried what would happen to surplus office furniture in Council buildings. The Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services advised that a flexible working space was planned for floor one at Penallta House and this would involve recycling furniture to create this new working environment. The Member also raised the issue of costs associated with working from home such as the use of additional heating and asked if there would be any compensation for staff. The Head of People Services advised Members that discussions at a national level were taking place on issues such as a Home Working Allowance, and that Members would be advised of the outcome.

A Member asked about the impact of the proposals on the carbon footprint and queried why sickness levels were still high after two years of agile working. The Member also asked if the proposed Hubs could also be used by outside organisations as a way of attracting additional revenue. The Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services outlined the reduction in commuting miles which was having a positive impact on the carbon footprint, highlighted factors outside the Council's control such as Covid-19 which had an impact on sickness levels and welcomed the opportunity to attract additional revenue which would be kept under review.

A Member highlighted the frustration of not being able to speak to an officer when their landline had been diverted due to working from home. The Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services advised that back-office telephony was a challenge that was being addressed by an ongoing project referred to in the report.

A Member highlighted the social benefits of working in an office and interacting with colleagues as opposed to working alone from home and expressed his concerns. The Head of People Services advised that management arrangements were the same whether an employee worked in the office or at home. Members heard about "My Time" one-to-one conversations between managers and staff, how workplace working was still an option and also how staff surveys showed satisfaction with the support they received. The Chair asked the UNISON Branch Secretary for her opinion. The Branch Secretary advised that Member Surveys had shown that the vast majority welcomed the flexibility of working from home. However, a significant number preferred a hybrid system of both working from home on some days and the workplace on others.

A Member highlighted the importance of ensuring that the workplace environment was attractive for those members of staff who preferred to work in the office. The Member believed it was important for such people to have their own desk as opposed to a shared alternative.

The Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services advised that zones would be established for existing teams. These zones would have a mixture of both fixed and hot desks.

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report, as per the recommendations. It was also noted that no negative comments were received on the intention to develop Ty Penallta as an Agile Working Hub.

## **8. SHAPING THE POLICY ON CASH COLLECTION.**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance introduced the report, which provided Members with an update on the payment methods currently utilised by residents and Members were requested to consider the recommendations to Cabinet in respect of the future policy on cash payments.

Members were advised that the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on income levels for the Council, which had been due to the temporary closure of income generating services, the closure of Customer Services Offices, and the economic impact of the pandemic on residents and businesses.

Members were advised that the Welsh Government had funded much of the income lost as a consequence of the pandemic through the Covid-19 Hardship Fund, with funding totalling £6.087m received for the 2020/21 financial year, and £2.237m for 2021/22. The Hardship Fund ceased on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 with Local Authorities now having to manage any ongoing income losses through their own revenue budgets.

Members were also advised that the footfall at the Customer Services Offices was currently being kept under review and that if there is an increase in demand, the opening hours will be subject to further review. Staff are currently travelling to the offices to call handle or deal with online requests as it is these channels where demand is being experienced.

The UNISON Branch Secretary offered her comments for Committee consideration and acknowledged that cash payments fell during the pandemic but advised Members that people earning less than £10,000 per annum were fourteen times more likely to be dependent on cash than those who earn more than £30,000 per year, primarily for budgeting reasons. Also, according to the Financial Inclusion Commission in 2015 circa 2M adults in the UK did not have a bank account. The Branch Secretary advised that as the Council considered developing alternative payment mechanisms the Integrated Impact Assessment should adequately reflect the implications on those with lower incomes. UNISON was broadly supportive of the report but highlighted that it would not support the removal of the ability to pay in cash in its entirety.

The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer highlighted to Members that cash payments can still be made in different ways at no cost to the payee. Post Office Payment Cards were offered as an example and Members heard how payments by this method was up 44.27% on pre-pandemic transaction levels, and Members were advised that there are currently 4,146 active users of the Post Office Payment Cards.

A Member queried how cash payments could be made in in Schools, Tourism Venues, Leisure Centres, Libraries and Social Services establishments; and yet not in Customer Services Offices as it should be a personal choice for individuals. The Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services reiterated that cash payments could still be made at post offices and also highlighted the additional costs involved with accepting such payments in Customer Services Offices, which was included in the report.

The Chair suggested to Members that the future free school meals policy for Primary Schools would also have an impact on cash collections in schools.

Having considered the content of the report, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendation be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 8 for, 0 against and 2 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

3.1.1 That Cabinet agrees that due to the move to alternative payment methods experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic, cash payments will not be re-introduced in Customer Services Offices.

3.1.2 That Cabinet notes that cash payments will continue to be accepted in Schools, Tourism Venues, Leisure Centres, Libraries and Social Services establishments, and that opportunities to move to alternative payment mechanisms will be fully explored wherever possible.

The meeting closed at 7.43 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022, they were signed by the Chair.

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CHAIR



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022**

**SUBJECT: POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND  
CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To report the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

### **2. SUMMARY**

2.1 Forward Work Programmes are essential to ensure that Scrutiny Committee agendas reflect the strategic issues facing the Council and other priorities raised by Members, the public or stakeholder.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 That Members consider any changes and agree the final forward work programme prior to publication.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 To improve the operation of scrutiny.

### **5. THE REPORT**

5.1 The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee forward work programme includes all reports that were identified at the scrutiny committee meeting on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The work programme outlines the reports planned for the period November 2022 to March 2023.

5.2 The forward Work Programme is made up of reports identified by officers and members. Members are asked to consider the work programme alongside the cabinet work programme and suggest any changes before it is published on the

council website. Scrutiny committee will review this work programme at every meeting going forward alongside any changes to the cabinet work programme or report requests.

5.3 The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1, which presents the current status as at 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The Cabinet Work Programme is attached at Appendix 2. A copy of the prioritisation flowchart is attached at appendix 3 to assist the scrutiny committee to determine what items should be added to the forward work programme.

#### 5.4 **Conclusion**

The work programme is for consideration and amendment by the scrutiny committee prior to publication on the council website.

### 6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions are necessary.

### 7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 As this report is for information only an Integrated Impact Assessment is not necessary.

### 8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising as a result of this report.

### 9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no specific personnel implications arising as a result of this report.

### 10. **CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been included in this report.

### 11. **STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 The Local Government Act 2000.

Author: Mark Jacques, Scrutiny Officer jacqu@carphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer  
Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Legal Services

Councillor Gary Johnston, Chair Policy and Resources Scrutiny  
Committee  
Councillor Brenda Miles, Vice Chair Policy and Resources Scrutiny  
Committee

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 2 Cabinet Forward Work Programme
- Appendix 3 Forward Work Programme Prioritisation Flowchart

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## Forward Work Programme - Policy & Resources

Date	Title	Key Issues	Author	Cabinet Member
08/11/2022 17:30	Community Hubs	Is the current model fit for purpose and can it be improved post covid to provide an improved service to residents?	Jenkins, Gareth;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
08/11/2022 17:30	Procurement Reform Update	How will Procurement reform and the new Procurement Bill impact the organisation?	Lucas, Liz;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
08/11/2022 17:30	Audit Wales Report - Springing Forward Assets	To received Audit Wales report on how we are managing our assets with a focus on office accommodation and buildings	Pearce, Joanna;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
08/11/2022 17:30	Information Item - Revenue budget monitoring reports for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance (Period 5)		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
12/12/2022 17:30	Draft Agile Working Policy Update		Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
10/01/2023 17:30	Capital Strategy Annual Report		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
10/01/2023 17:30	Treasury Management Strategy Annual Report		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
10/01/2023 17:30	Springing Forward Workforce		Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
21/02/2023 17:30	Whole-Authority Revenue Budget Monitoring Report (Period 9) P&R		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
21/02/2023 17:30	Annual Reserves Report		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
21/02/2023 17:30	Strategic Equalities Plan Annual Update Report		Richards, Sue;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
21/02/2023 17:30	Information Item - Capital budget monitoring reports (Period 7)		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
21/02/2023 17:30	Information Item - Revenue budget monitoring reports for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance (Period 7)		Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
04/04/2023 17:30	Community Empowerment Fund		Edmunds, Richard 'Ed';	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
04/04/2023 17:30	IT Security Update	Seeking assurance on the Councils Cyber Security arrangements.	Lucas, Liz;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
04/04/2023 17:30	Digital Update	Understanding how the Council is using Automation to enhance customer service	Lucas, Liz;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
04/04/2023 17:30	Information Item - Employee Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 24 (6-month update)		Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
04/04/2023 17:30	Information Item - Workforce Development Strategy 2021 – 24 (6-month update)		Donovan, Lynne;	Cllr. George, Nigel;

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Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author:	Cabinet Member:
16/11/2022 13:00	Notice of Motion - Wyllie Bends	For Cabinet to consider the proposals put forward by Cllr. Janine Reed/Cllr. Jan Jones.	Emma Sullivan - Cllr. Jan Jones/Cllr Janine Reed	
16/11/2022 13:10	Street lighting	Review of current street lighting part night lighting policy in view of increasing carbon reduction targets and the declared climate emergency.	Marcus Lloyd;	Cllr. Julian Simmonds;
16/11/2022 13:20	Redevelopment of the former Ty Darran Care Home by Caerphilly Homes	For Cabinet to approve the contract, cost plan, procurement, design and environmental credentials of the scheme.	Jane Roberts-Waite; Nick Taylor-Williams Nick;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;
16/11/2022 13:30	Caerphilly Homes (Development) Forward Work Programme	To discuss the next set of sites that will be brought forward as part of the Caerphilly Homes development programme and Caerphilly Homes governance arrangements.	Nick Taylor-Williams; Jane Roberts-Waite;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;
16/11/2022 13:40	The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Ecosystem Resilience Duty	To consider and approve a report on the actions taken to help maintain and enhance biodiversity prior to publication in accordance with the biodiversity duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.	Robert Hartshorn; Philip Griffiths;	Cllr. Chris Morgan;
30/11/2022 13:10	Electric Vehicle Update & Policies	An update on progress with work to transition our fleet to electric vehicles, including details of phase I of the infrastructure works, with recommendations on policies relating to the use of Council charging points by employees and residents.	Paul Cooke; Sue Richards;	Cllr. Jamie Pritchard;
30/11/2022 13:20	Cyber Security Strategy	To recommend endorsement and implementation of the Strategy.	Liz Lucas; Ian Evans;	Cllr. Nigel George;

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author:	Cabinet Member:
30/11/2022 13:30	Programme for Procurement	To extend the Council's existing Programme for Procurement, which is due to expire in May 2023 for a period of up to 12 months to consider and where applicable incorporate aspects of the UK Procurement Bill and Social Partnership & Public Procurement (Wales) Bill in the Council's new Procurement Strategy (the new Procurement Strategy will replace the existing Programme for Procurement).	Liz Lucas; Ian Evans;	Cllr. Nigel George;
30/11/2022 13:40	Education Strategy	For Cabinet to consider and approve the Education Strategy proposed from September 2022 – August 2025.	Keri Cole; Paul Warren;	Cllr. Carol Andrews;
30/11/2022 13:50	Christmas Closedown arrangements	For Cabinet to consider the proposals for the Christmas closedown arrangements.	Lynne Donovan;	Cllr. Nigel George;
14/12/2022 13:00	Agile Working Policies	For Cabinet to agree HR policies to support agile working.	Lynne Donovan	Cllr. Nigel George;
14/12/2022 13:10	Low Cost Home Ownership (Decision)	The LCHO (Low Cost Home Ownership) report will document the formulation, implementation and the publication of a new policy which governs the process by which the Council will sell homes to people living and/or working in the borough wanting to access homeownership but cannot afford to do so without some form of public subsidy.	Nick Taylor-Williams; Jane Roberts-Waite;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author:	Cabinet Member:
14/12/2022 13:20	HRA Charges (Rent Increase)	Members to agree the level of rent increase for council tenants effective from April 2023.	Lesley Allen;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;
14/12/2022 13:30	Council Tax Base 2023/24	For Cabinet to agree the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the 2023/24 financial year.	Sean O'Donnell;	Cllr. Eluned Stenner;
18/01/2023 13:00	Draft Budget Proposals for 2023/24 and Updated Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	To present Cabinet with details of the draft budget proposals for the 2023/24 financial year and an updated MTFP, to allow for a period of consultation prior to final decision by Council on the 28th February 2023.	Stephen Harris;	Cllr. Eluned Stenner;

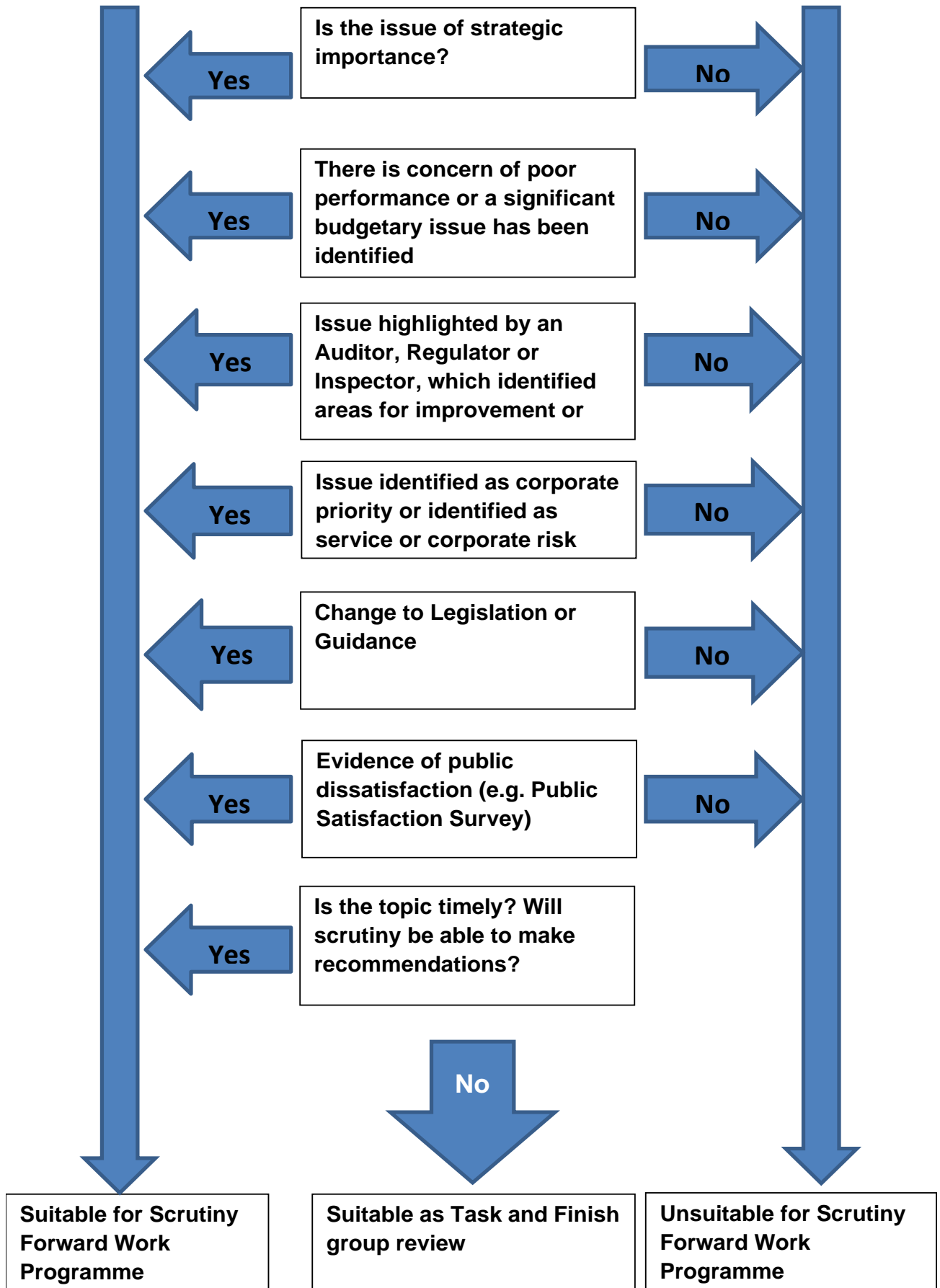
Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author:	Cabinet Member:
25/01/2023 13:00	Pontllanfraith Indoor Bowls	To provide an update on the management of the Islwyn Indoor Bowls Centre and to recommend a revised approach moving forward.	Mark S Williams;	Cllr. Chris Morgan;/Cllr. Nigel George;
08/02/2023	No items currently scheduled			
22/02/2023 13:00	Budget Proposals for 2023/24 and Updated Medium -Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	To seek Cabinet endorsement of the 2023/24 budget proposals prior to final determination by Council on the 28th February 2023, and to note the updated MTFP.	Stephen Harris;	Cllr. Eluned Stenner;
22/02/2023 13:10	HRA Business Plan 2022/23	To update the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on the latest Housing Business Plan position in advance of submitting the plan to Welsh Government by 31/3/23, which is a requirement under the terms of the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) grant. The Housing Business Plan is a 30 year plan and will include rental increase assumptions and forecasted borrowing requirements to enable the HRA to maintain viability while meeting its core objectives.	Lesley Allen;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author:	Cabinet Member:
22/02/2023 13:20	Empty Property Grant Approval (Decision)	The new Welsh Government National Empty Property Grant Programme will launch in September 22 and ask for bids from LAs to issue grants up to a Max of £25K to owner occupiers to bring empty properties back into use. Caerphilly Homes will administer the grant for Caerphilly with an expectation that in years 2 and 3 of the 3 year programme, there will be a 35% contribution from each participating LA. The grant will be awarded on a first come first served basis.	Nick Taylor-Williams; Claire Davies;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;
08/03/2023 13:00	Biodiversity and Grass Cutting Regimes	To seek Cabinet approval in relation to proposals to enhance and promote biodiversity in our grass cutting regimes across the county borough and following consultation with local members.	Mike Headington;	Cllr. Chris Morgan;
08/03/2023 13:00	Empty Homes Strategy (Decision)	To seek Cabinet approval of the proposed strategy	Claire Davies; Mark Jennings;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;
22/03/2023 13:00	No items currently scheduled			

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**Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme Prioritisation**



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the climate emergency has refocused the concentration of the whole public sector on the most efficient use of building assets.

- 2.4 The proposal considers the future configuration and use of our front-facing asset base, and this report makes recommendations to develop the Community Hub model of future service delivery.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The recommendations of this report are that scrutiny members:

1. Consider and provide comment on the proposal.
2. Support the proposal to implement the Tier 1 Community Hub model incrementally
3. Make any additional recommendations for taking the proposal forward.
4. Agree that co-production with communities is the best most sustainable method for developing Community Hubs, and that engagement with communities and organised groups in the locations should be a key.
5. Agree that discussions should begin with staff working from the locations to gain their feedback and understanding of the proposal.
6. Agree that the concept of 'one public sector estate' and a shared commitment to carbon reduction principles, allowing shared use of spaces with our main public sector partners should underpin the proposal.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To develop a modernised presence in communities that makes best use of our assets in providing a wider range of services and, at the same time, opening up our spaces for use by communities and partners.
- 4.2 The creation of Community Hubs in town centres will make a contribution to carbon reduction as it will enable a rationalisation of office space and reduce travelling to access office facilities.

### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The proposal appended to this report describes a high-level future pathway to develop a network of Community Hubs across the county borough in our main town centre anchor locations, with a further hub at the Ty Penallta office.
- 5.2 The proposal pathway has been developed through a thorough data analysis of our front-facing asset base; the services offered from those locations, the building condition, tenure and available space, accessibility and proximity to public transport, their location in relation to other public sector assets, customer throughput and data and the budgets associated with each building.
- 5.3 The proposal has been developed as one of the corporate reviews to meet three high level outcomes as agreed by Cabinet in July 2020:
- Our customers can access multiple services and facilities from a single location.

- The location of buildings is optimised in communities to drive footfall and improve commercial opportunities in town centres.
- The council reviews its asset use in communities with a view to rationalisation.

5.4 In developing the proposal for Community Hubs the focus has been on a more holistic delivery of Council services in community locations that support commercial activity, providing digitally enabled services, opening up our assets for use by the community and sharing our estate with our public sector partners.

The vision is to provide unique services delivered in multi-functional, multi-service locations, aided by digital delivery and multi-skilled staff with the aims of:

- Unifying the customer offer
- Supporting our town centres
- Providing multiple services in a single location
- Reducing the public sector carbon footprint
- Providing assisted digital services
- Being the front-face of the council in communities- supporting ongoing customer engagement through the Consultation and Engagement Strategy
- Supporting agile working
- Providing digitally enabled spaces for use by the community and partners e.g. Gwent Police

5.5 The proposal identifies six Tier 1 locations for development as Community Hubs, those being our main town centre libraries and Ty Penallta. Due to the availability of Welsh Government Transformation Capitol Programme funding in the last financial year an opportunity was taken to bid for the development of the Idris Davies Community Learning Hub at Rhymney Library (report to Cabinet 9.3.22). The successful bid will see the library site developed as a Hub with a reconfiguration of the library space, provision of Customer Services, a learning suite and training rooms, new space to house the Welsh language collection and Idris Davies archive, a refreshment area, printing and scanning facilities and a new laptop lounge for use by the community. In addition, there will be bookable spaces for agile working and appointments with customers.

5.6 The Idris Davies Community Learning Hub is an example of the principles at 5.4 in action. All of the locations suggested as Tier 1 hubs have the potential to provide similar services, in some cases with minimal reconfiguration. At its simplest, the proposal would see spaces in our buildings opened up for wider use by the community and partners, and an extension of the use of the spaces by the council services that meet clients of customers out in the community.

5.7 Our Gwent Police partners provided their support to the bid at Rhymney Library in response to their need to be closer to communities with an intention to deliver face to face engagement in the Hub, and at around the same time, took the opportunity to extend their community engagement activities to the shared use of the council's space at Caerphilly Library.

- 5.8 The development of the Hub at Rhymney Library will allow the Council to test and refine the approaches set out in the proposal. An important element of developing the Hub at Rhymney was co-production of the design and proposed use of the space with services users, local elected members, and members of the local community, the Integrated Impact Assessment hyperlinked below gives more detail on how this was achieved. This approach will be a key element in taking the proposal forward for the development of other Hubs.
- 5.9 Our Library Service and Customer Services have been co-located at our main library sites for a number of years. The development of the Community Hub model is based on the delivery of an agreed 'customer offer' i.e. what can customers expect and delivery of this offer relies on front facing staff who are skilled and able to provide the service. Integral to the delivery of the model is the managerial leadership of the staff and it is therefore proposed that this responsibility rests with one Head of Service.
- 5.10 Improving our accessibility for customers and rationalising our access points will support our Customer and Digital Strategy, including the rationalisation of contact points/numbers and digitisation of customer services. Building on this approach, the delivery of other Council services from the Community Hubs will maximise the use of our town centre assets.
- 5.11 Providing agile working spaces for staff and partners in communities will support the ongoing rationalisation of council assets while at the same time supporting increased foot fall in town centres.

#### 5.12 **Conclusion**

The proposal document appended this report sets out a pathway for the development of Tier 1 Community Hubs. The corporate review considered smaller community assets as Tier 2 and Tier 3 facilities. However, the current focus will be the development of the Tier 1 locations.

### 6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 The reconfiguration of the space at Rhymney Library as the Idris Davies Community Learning Hub does involve work to the building and redesign of the space. Not all of the proposed Hubs will entail this amount of work and an organic approach to delivering services from our locations in a different way will be employed. However, for any reconfiguration work that is required the availability and capacity of design and building services will need to be considered as part of the development programme.
- 6.2 The availability of external grant funding is not usually known other than in each financial year. However, where possible, and aligned to the aims of the proposal, external funding will be accessed where at all possible.

### 7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 As the programme develops each location will be supported by an integrated impact assessment. As an example of the detail required for each the Idris Davies Community Learning Hub sets a benchmark:

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The financial implications will depend on the development of each proposed location.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct personnel implications in this report.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 The views of all consultees to this report and the appended proposal have been included.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Local Government Act 1972

Author: Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager, [peterk@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:peterk@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Consultees: Cllr Sean Morgan, Leader of the Council  
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance  
Cllr Gary Johnston, Chair Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr Brenda Miles, Vice Chair Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive  
Ed Edmunds, Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services  
Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director Children's Services- Review Lead  
Sue Richards, Head of Transformation  
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services  
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services  
Stephen Harris, Head of Corporate Finance and Section 151 Officer  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Jeff Reynolds, Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager, co-author of proposal  
Karen Pugh, Libraries: Resource and Customer Engagement Manager

Background Papers [Cabinet 9.3.22- Community Learning and Support Hub at Rhymney Library](#)

[Cabinet 21.7.20 Strengthening Team Caerphilly](#)

Appendix 1 Proposal for the development of Community Hubs

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APPENDIX 1  
CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PROPOSAL  
FUTURE PATHWAY  
FOR  
COMMUNITY HUBS



STRATEGIC PROPOSAL FOR FRONT-FACING COMMUNITY SERVICES  
FUTURE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY HUBS

**Contents:**

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**THE RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSAL**.....

**WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HUB?**.....

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**FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**.....

**INFORMING THE PROPOSAL**.....

**ESTABLISHING A NEW FACILITIES FRAMEWORK FOR FRONT-FACING COMMUNITY SERVICES** .....

**DEVELOPING THE LOCATION OPTIONS WITH COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS**.....

**SPECIFIC FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS** .....

**Reconfiguration of Existing Facilities**.....

**New Facility Considerations** .....

**Other Facility Considerations**.....

**NEXT STEPS**.....

## **INTRODUCTION.**

The council has commenced a programme of strategic reviews aimed at ensuring the services it provides are modern, fit for purpose and support the requirements of its residents; whilst also acknowledging the changes that have occurred to the ways in which our residents interact with the council and the way in which we, and our partners, use our spaces due to changes brought by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The delivery of council services and engagement with residents has changed considerably and it is essential that the council acknowledges these changes and is flexible enough to adapt and accommodate new ways of providing services.

Maximising the use of the resources the council owns or leases, while at the same time striving to improve the 'offer' to residents have been the fundamental underpinning aims of this proposal.

Recognising the changing landscape and operating context, the review established three intended outcomes, namely:

- **Our customers can access multiple services and facilities from a single location.**
- **The location of buildings is optimised in communities to drive footfall and improve commercial opportunities in town centres.**
- **The council reviews its asset use in communities with a view to rationalisation.**

## **THE RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSAL**

- The council has embarked on a journey of transformation and improvement as encompassed in the Team Caerphilly principle- *to work better with communities*.
- In rising to future challenges, in a more digitally-connected world it is clear that we will need to do things differently but still be present and available within our communities – providing holistic services in locations that are accessible and meet the needs of our residents.
- To be successful the council must review its unique role for the future i.e. what we do, the services we will provide, and how we will provide them.

- Our future role in providing front-facing services will be centred on co-production, collaboration with partners, engaging with digital transformation and, where appropriate, enabling or supporting residents to help themselves.

## **WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HUB?**

Community Hubs may be provided by a council, a community organisation, or the third sector, to provide a community focal point and shared spaces. In the context of a council provided hub, for the provision of services in communities, hubs are about a location from which to provide council services.

However, this future pathway for council-run Community Hubs proposes elements of both:

- Access to council services
- Learning/library services
- Spaces for community use
- Spaces for partner use

The vision is to provide unique services delivered in multi-functional, multi-service locations, aided by digital delivery and multi-skilled staff with the aims of:

- Unifying the customer offer
- Supporting our town centres
- Providing multiple services in a single location
- Reducing the public sector carbon footprint
- Providing assisted digital services
- Being the front-face of the council in communities- supporting ongoing customer engagement through the Consultation and Engagement Strategy
- Supporting agile working
- Providing digitally enabled spaces for use by the community and partners e.g. Gwent Police

## **CLARIFYING THE COUNCIL'S UNIQUE ROLE**

The council's front-facing community services role is to provide the link point and support for our communities to access a wide range of council run services. Council Libraries have

been linked with Customer Services provision in our main town centres for several years. Providing a holistic community hub model, as set out in this proposal, will see much used and well-supported access services aligned to a single point of access that will be underpinned by improvements in our digital interaction with our residents.

The council owns or leases 'anchor' buildings in several of our town centres that act as a focal point for visitor and customer interactions. In a digitally enabled world the spaces in these buildings have become opened-up and thereby offer opportunities to invite communities in to use and share our spaces. Provision of public Wi-Fi, access to laptops, scanners and printers, alongside study and co-working space, with the provision of refreshments, would extend the offer.

We know that sharing the public sector estate with our partners to allow them to interact better with communities brings benefits in reducing the carbon footprint of the public sector as a whole and helps our partners maintain a physical presence in our anchor buildings. Joint working will be supported leading to a more holistic range of services through the community hub model.

Many of our own services are interacting with residents in different ways and the provision of bookable spaces in hubs affords us the opportunity to meet with the recipients of our services in locations closer to their homes. Video-conferencing or remote meetings between the public and our teams can also be supported by digitally enabled spaces in our buildings.

## **FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**

**Developing this proposal for community hubs relies upon some fundamental principles:**

1. Ensure effective involvement, input and engagement with communities and elected members to strengthen the principle of co-production in designing our proposed Community Hubs
2. Securing support from across the council to manage and monitor delivery of the proposals, including securing investment in delivery.
3. Ensure that there are clear links to the Council's medium-term financial plan by providing improved facilities able to service a wide range of customer needs and, where appropriate, a reduction in the council's ownership of under-utilised assets.

4. Ensure the proposals are developed sustainably using the principles in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

## **INFORMING THE PROPOSAL**

In order to properly inform the proposal, data has been gathered on all 'walk-in' services run by the council; the location of those services, their association with neighbouring council owned buildings, accessibility and proximity to public transport, the nature of the services provided, the throughput, customer data, tenure of the buildings and associated budgets, the size and scope of the buildings most closely associated with town centres and the options to bring more services together in a single hub model have all been considered.

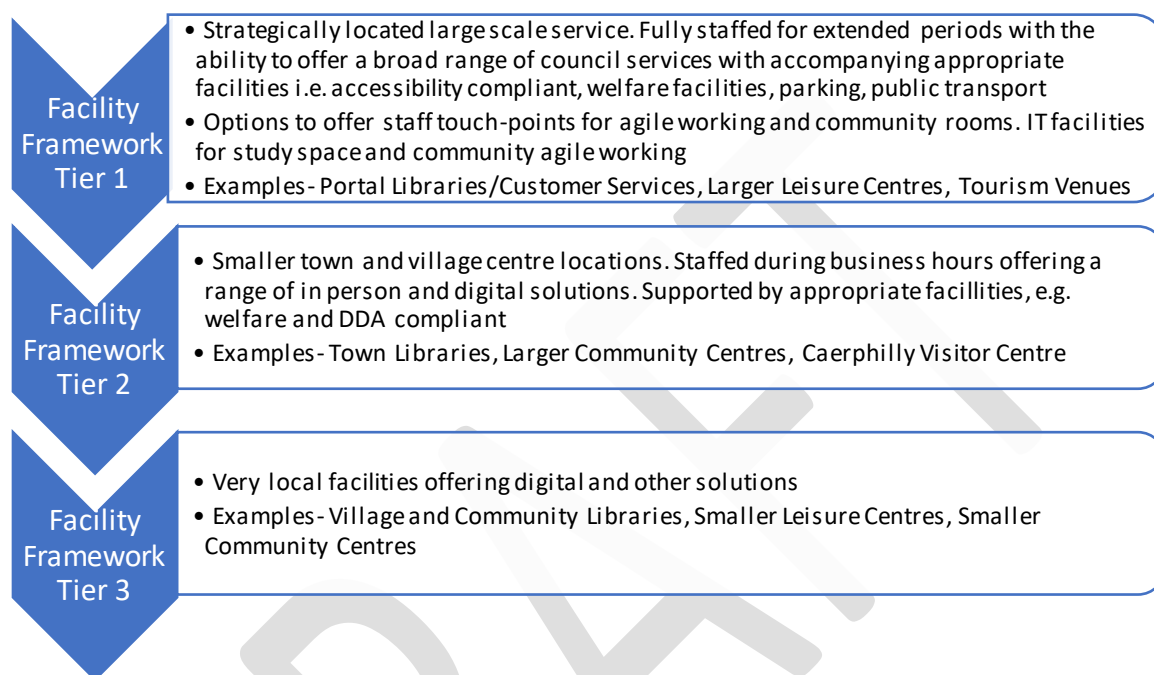
A pilot opportunity has been presented by the availability of Welsh Government Transformation Capital Grant funding to develop a community hub at the Rhymney Library site. Additional funding has been allocated from the Place-shaping and Well-being budget and from the Library Services budget, development of the Hub is now underway with tenders having been issued for the build and fit out.

In developing the Idris Davies Community Learning Hub co-production mechanisms have been used with the community to scope out what the community hub could, and should, provide to local residents. The principles of co-production and designing future community hubs with local communities and elected members, taking on board the views of partner agencies, will be essential in ensuring they meet the needs of particular geographical communities.

While this strategy sets the overall direction of the future provision of community hubs it will be important to work at the geographical level in designing and developing each proposed location. The views and needs of communities will differ, and our buildings differ in the scope of what can be offered at them. However, the definition of a Community Hub as set out above will be common to all of them.

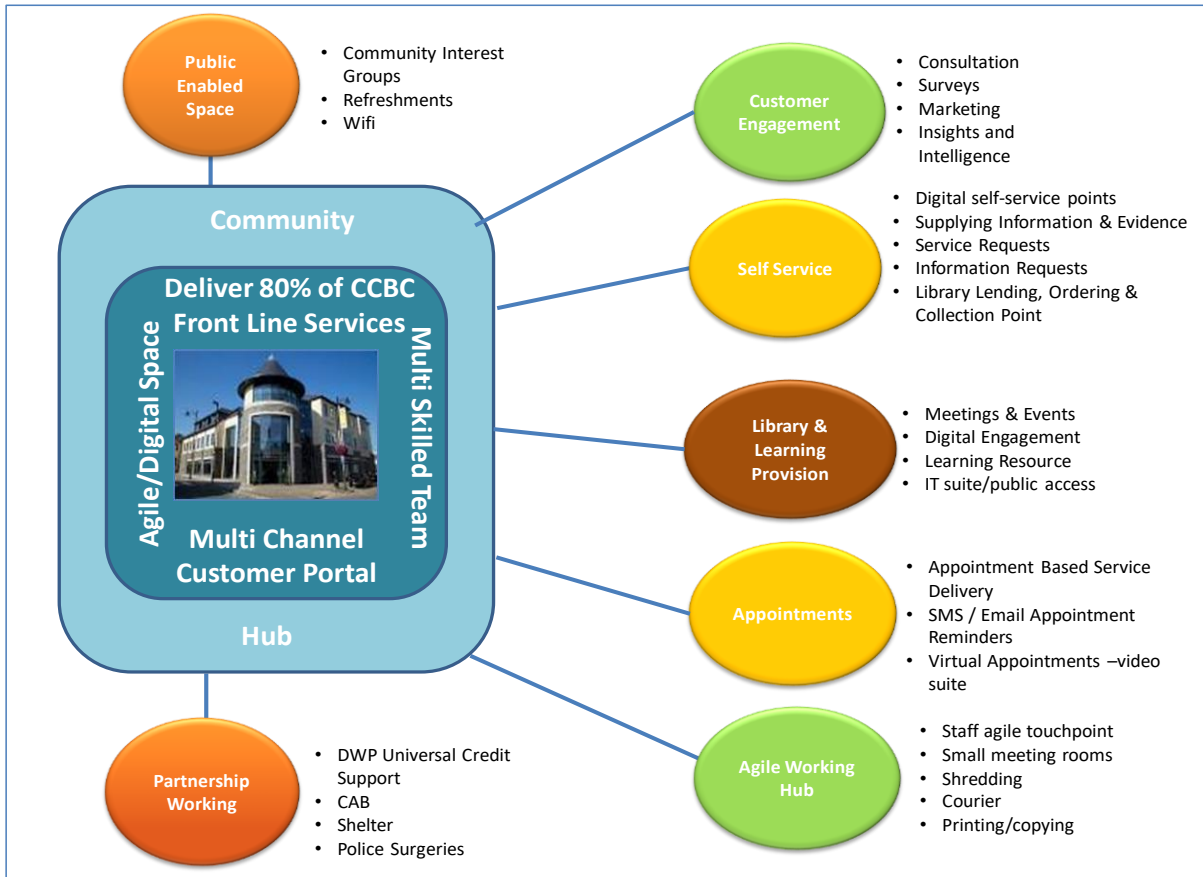
## ESTABLISHING A NEW FACILITIES FRAMEWORK FOR FRONT-FACING COMMUNITY SERVICES

In gathering the data to inform the review we have considered our community facing assets in three tiers:



In scoping the services that could potentially be run from each tier the following proposed models for Community Hubs have been developed. Acknowledging that co-production with communities will determine the exact specification for each location.

**TIER 1**



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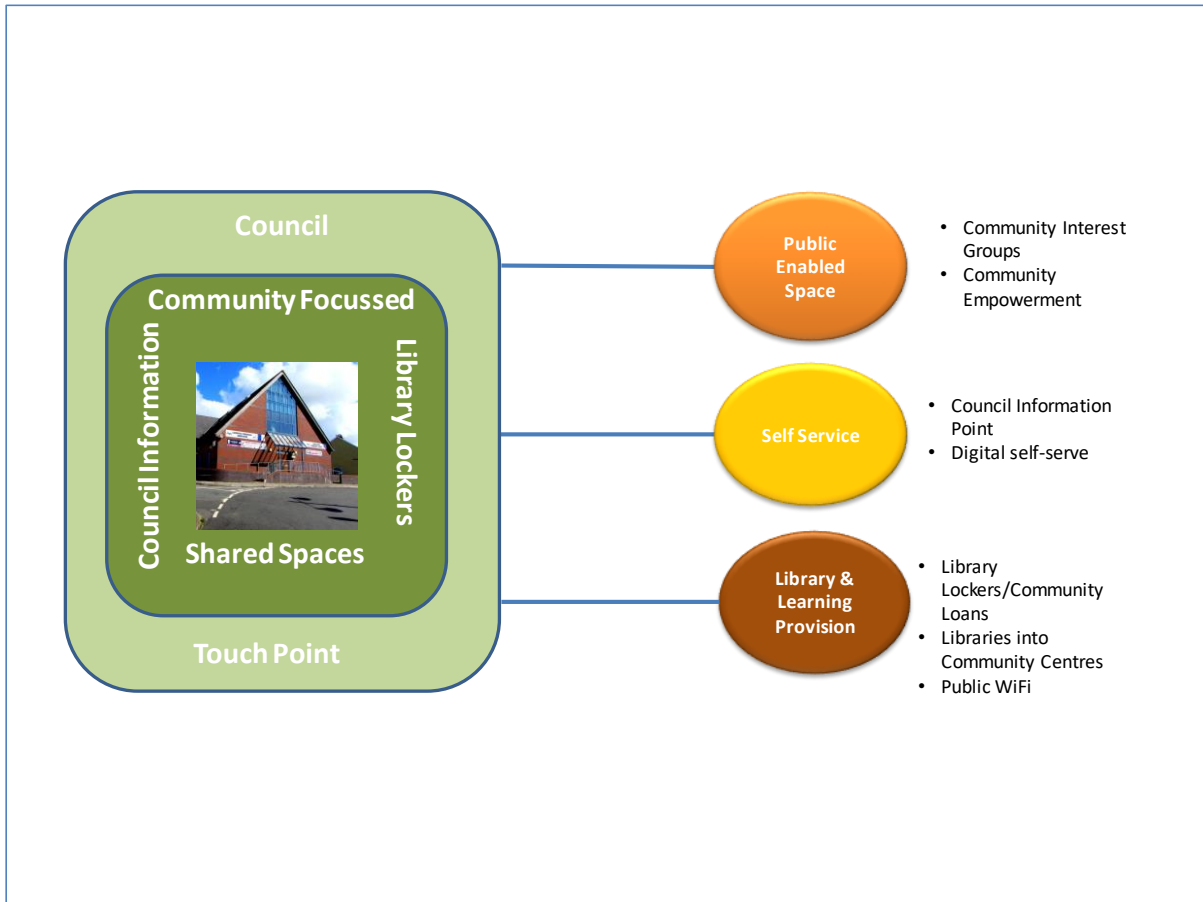


**TIER 2**



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### TIER 3



### SPECIFIC FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

In scoping the options for Tier 1 locations it is recommended that the locations are at

Rhymney Library\*  
Bargoed Library  
Blackwood Library  
Ty Penallta  
Caerphilly Library  
Risca Library

There are existing shared locations at the main portal libraries with spaces already used by Customer Services. The Community Hub proposal would build upon the offer and reconfigure buildings to maximise the space available for hub delivery, increasing the space available for use by the community, and our partners and at the same time making bookable spaces available for agile working.

**\* Pilot opportunity supported by Welsh Government funding.**

### **Reconfiguration of Existing Facilities**

Development of the Tier 1 locations would follow the full-scale Community Hub model. Using Rhymney Library and the development of the Idris Davies Community Learning Hub as a pilot location will allow the learning to be transferred to the development of the other sites on a rolling programme. It is possible that not all Tier 1 options can be developed at the same time and therefore decisions may be required on programming the work. Developing village libraries and larger community centres as Tier 2 hubs would follow the same pathway.

### **New Facility Considerations**

Design of Tier 2 locations will need to consider the existing facilities in an area and whether a proposed building can adequately accommodate a hub model. It is possible that development of new or extended facilities may be required to properly realise the proposal. In each case an options appraisal, with community views, would be submitted for political consideration.

### **Other Facility Recommendations**

Tier 3 model Touch Points will be primarily based in well used community centres, with the agreement of the management committee, and in village libraries. Libraries are a statutory service and so any changes in delivery will be subject to community consultation.

One of the outcomes of the review is for the Council to consider its asset base and whether what was historically required is likely to be so in the future. This consideration is linked to ongoing reviews on agile working and the use of our office spaces in the digitally enabled operating environment that was accelerated by the pandemic. 80% of our staff live within the county borough, the creation of agile working drop-in spaces in Tier 1 hubs will offer facilities to staff that will allow them to use office spaces, printing, shredding, courier facilities etc. This will allow less reliance on space in the larger corporate offices and a lower carbon footprint.

Some services are moving to a more agile contact model with their customers and the Tier 1 hubs will support this happening, potentially negating the need for dedicated physical building assets from which to run those services.

Should buildings be identified for disposal they may be considered as options for Community Asset Transfer, where the building has community value, that is, if not selected for commercial sale and a suitable community group is able and willing to step up to take on and manage the facility.

**NEXT STEPS**

**Deliver the Community Hub proposal subject to the recommendations being considered by Scrutiny and Cabinet.**

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## POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE PROCUREMENT REFORM AGENDA AND TO EXTEND THE COUNCIL'S PROGRAMME FOR PROCUREMENT (STRATEGY) FOR A PERIOD OF UP TO EIGHTEEN (18) MONTHS**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Scrutiny Members with an update on the UK Central Government and Welsh Government Procurement reform agenda via The Procurement Bill and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.
- 1.2 To inform Scrutiny Members on the recommendation to extend the Council's Programme for Procurement ('Strategy'), **Appendix A** for a period of up to eighteen (18) months prior to presenting to Cabinet on 30 November 2022. This will allow the future Strategy to incorporate the requirements of The Procurement Bill and Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.

### 2. SUMMARY

#### UK PROCUREMENT BILL

- 2.1 On 11 May 2022, The Procurement Bill ('the Bill') was introduced in the House of Lords. The Bill is the next step in the Government's plan to reform procurement policy in the UK following Brexit. The Bill aims to establish a single legal framework for the award of public contracts, utilities contracts, concession contracts, and defence and security contracts by contracting authorities such as the Council. Many of the features of the new rules will be substantially the same as the current rules, but a number of significant changes are proposed.
- 2.2 It is anticipated there will be broader transparency obligations under the new rules, which should mean that it will be easier to find out information about planned and completed procurements. There will be enhanced powers to exclude suppliers from procurements with key changes including: the introduction of a central list of debarred suppliers and broader rights to exclude suppliers for prior poor performance (including failure to meet KPIs) and fewer, more flexible award procedures.
- 2.3 The Bill still needs to pass through the Houses of Parliament and the Government has indicated that there will be a period of at least six months between the Bill becoming law and the new rules entering into force, which is likely to be during 2024

at the earliest. Since the introduction in the House of Lords in excess of 540 amendments to the Bill have been tabled.

## **SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT (WALES) BILL**

- 2.4 On 7 June 2022 the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill ('SPPP Bill') was introduced before the Senedd Cymru. The aim of the SPPP Bill is to establish a statutory Social Partnership Council, creates new social partnership duties on specified public bodies in Wales such as the Council, promotes fair work and creates a duty for socially responsible public procurement. Also, to improve the economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being of Wales (including by improving public services) by embedding the principle of social partnership in the operation of public bodies in Wales.
- 2.5 A socially responsible procurement duty will apply to certain public bodies such as the Council, who will be required to seek to improve economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being when carrying out procurement, to set objectives in relation to well-being goals, and to publish a procurement strategy. Public bodies will also be expected to carry out contract management duties to ensure that socially responsible outcomes are pursued through supply chains.
- 2.6 The socially responsible public procurement duties cover the full procurement cycle i.e. planning, procurement, contract management, review and compliance. Public bodies and Welsh Government will have reporting duties in relation to the social partnership duties and procurement duty. It is anticipated that the SPPP Bill will follow similar timings of The Procurement Bill becoming law and the new rules entering into force, which is likely to be during 2024 at the earliest.

## **PROGRAMME FOR PROCUREMENT ('STRATEGY') 2018-2023**

- 2.7 The Council's Programme for Procurement ('Strategy') 2018-2023 was endorsed and implemented following a Cabinet meeting on 16 May 2018. The Council has been committed to ensuring that we achieve value for money from our third-party procurement expenditure. Having recognised the value of using procurement to support our wider cultural, social, economic and environmental objectives in a way that offers real long-term benefits to the Community we serve and the people of Wales whilst balancing the issues of Value for Money.
- 2.8 A living Strategy, which has evolved since 2018 in order to adapt to our ever-changing environment and the developing procurement landscape as a result of Brexit, procurement reform, best practice and Welsh Government's continuous reviews of procurement. Importantly the Strategy is fit for purpose in the current climate and continues to be relevant across a number of cultural, social, economic and environmental objectives.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That Scrutiny Members notes the current status of The Procurement Bill and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.
- 3.2 That Scrutiny Members supports the recommendation to Cabinet to extend the Council's existing Procurement Strategy for a period of up to eighteen (18) months.

## **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To inform Scrutiny Members of the significant changes to the procurement rules over the next twelve (12) to eighteen months (18), which will impact the Council's approach to its third party spend across all Directorates.
- 4.2 To ensure the Council has a current and fit for purpose Strategy post May 2023 that will continue to support the Council's Wellbeing Objectives and Corporate plan.
- 4.3 To ensure the Council fully considers the requirements of The Procurement Bill and Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill in the next iteration of the Procurement Strategy.

## **5. THE REPORT**

### **UK PROCUREMENT BILL**

- 5.1 In December 2020 the UK Government set out proposals for shaping the future of public procurement with the publication of "Green Paper: Transforming Public Procurement", following Brexit. The UK Government believed the current procurement rules, which were derived from a patchwork of EU Directives were too restrictive and complex and this was an opportunity to overhaul the rules.
- 5.2 The UK Government is therefore aiming to create a regulatory framework which simplifies procurement processes, places value for money at the heart, and generates social value.

The reforms have also been shaped by:

- the UK's obligations as a member of the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Government Procurement;
  - the UK's commitments under bilateral trade agreements, including the EU/UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement; and
  - feedback from over 500 stakeholders (Including Welsh representatives).
- 5.3 The Bill aims to establish a single legal framework for the award of public contracts, utilities contracts, concession contracts, and defence and security contracts by contracting authorities such as the Council. Many of the features of the new rules will be substantially the same as the current rules, but a number of significant changes are proposed.
  - 5.4 EU public procurement rules are based upon general principles derived from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union: transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination and proportionality. The UK Government has chosen to maintain the principles of transparency, equal treatment and non-discrimination in the new rules. However, contracting authorities will also be required to have regard to a number of ambitious objectives when awarding public contracts, including value for money, maximising public benefit and integrity.
  - 5.5 To enable procuring authorities to take these new objectives into account during procurements, the Bill introduces subtle changes to terminology and existing concepts. For example, the Bill requires contracts to be awarded to the Most Advantageous Tender, rather than the Most Economically Advantageous Tender. In addition, the Bill provides Ministers (Welsh Government) with the ability to publish a

statement setting out the Government's strategic priorities in relation to procurement, to which contracting authorities must have regard.

- 5.6 It is anticipated there will be broader transparency obligations under the new rules, which should mean that it will be easier to find out information about planned and completed procurements. There will be enhanced powers to exclude suppliers from procurements with key changes including: the introduction of a central list of debarred suppliers and broader rights to exclude suppliers for prior poor performance (including failure to meet KPIs).
- 5.7 There will be fewer, more flexible award procedures. The current regime provides procuring authorities with a choice of five procedures to carry out competitive procurement exercises. This can cause confusion as different rules apply under each of those procedures with respect to matters such as minimum time limits, the structuring of the award phase, and the extent to which discussions and negotiations with bidders are permitted.

The Bill provides for two types of competitive tendering procedure:

- a single stage tendering procedure without a restriction on who can submit tenders; or
  - such other competitive flexible procedure as the contracting authority considers appropriate, which may involve limiting the number of participants across multiple stages.
- 5.8 This means that contracting authorities will have considerable leeway to design procurements in a way that suits their needs, subject to ensuring consistency with the procurement principles and objectives. There will continue to be a special regime for certain social, health and education services, specifically identified by secondary legislation, which may be procured as 'Light Touch Contracts', leaving room for authorities to design procurement procedures that are more appropriate for these types of services. These Light Touch Contracts are still subject to the necessary safeguarding requirements.
- 5.9 Procurement is a dissolved function and Welsh Ministers did have the ability to dis-apply the Bill. Representatives of Welsh Government and stakeholders across Wales have been extensively consulted on the Bill and Welsh policy drivers and initiatives have helped shape the Bill. Subsequently, in August 2021 Welsh Government's Finance Minister issued a written statement confirming that Welsh contracting authorities such as the Council will be covered by the Bill. However, there can be subtle differences with how the Bill is applied in Wales due to legislation and policy drivers such as the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill and Wales Procurement Policy Statement amongst others.
- 5.10 Further consultation with stakeholders is expected as the UK and Welsh Government develops secondary legislation and guidance to provide the additional detail on how the new rules will operate in practice. The Council as per other contracting authorities will need to consider the Bill carefully, as well as the secondary legislation and guidance when published. The UK Government has confirmed that there will be a period of at least six (6) months following the Bill becoming law and the new rules coming into force.

#### **SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT (WALES) BILL**

- 5.11 The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill ('SPPP Bill') was introduced to by the Welsh Government before the Senedd, Cymru on 7 June 2022.



It is intended to complement other legislation, specifically the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBGFA 2015) and provides a framework for enhancing the well-being of the Welsh people by improving public services through public partnership, promoting fair work and socially responsible public procurement.

- 5.12 The SPPP Bill establishes a statutory Social Partnership Council (SPC), creating new social partnership duties. The SPC will be made up of members from the Welsh Government, nine (9) representatives of employers and nine (9) representatives of workers in Wales, nominated by the Wales TUC. The SPC's core function will be to provide information and advice to Welsh Ministers on a range of matters included in the SPPP Bill. There is also a requirement to establish a public procurement subgroup that will aid the SPC in providing additional expertise and support about the functions placed on contracting authorities and Welsh Government under the Socially Responsible Procurement duties.
- 5.13 The SPPP Bill further establishes a statutory Social Partnership Duty that will apply to specific public bodies such as the Council, to improve the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being when carrying out procurement, with both workers and employers involved. It will require public bodies to seek consensus or compromise with their recognised trade unions or other representatives of its staff (where there is no recognised trade union) when setting well-being objectives and making decisions of a strategic nature under the WBGFA 2015. The intention is to promote co-operation, strengthen policy and improve outcomes, through dialogue between social partners.
- 5.14 There are two (2) specific contract management duties set out, to strengthen the link between procurement exercises requirements and due diligence in major construction supply chains and outsourcing contracts. This is in consideration of including social public works clauses and social public workforce clauses, within those specified contracts. The first duty is to strengthen the Workforce (two-tier) Code of Practice. It states that contracting and retendering processes involving staff transferring from public bodies should be carried out to ensure terms and conditions of staff are protected and pensions remain generally similar. It also states new joiners to a transferred-out workforce are employed on terms that are no less favourable.
- 5.15 Welsh Government are under a duty to publish model clauses and are currently running a number of workshops on developing associated clauses. If any relevant bodies decide they do not want to include the socially responsible clauses in outsourcing contracts, the SPPP Bill places a duty on those relevant bodies to notify Welsh Government of that decision well in advance of when the contract is advertised. The exception notices will be reviewed by Welsh Government representatives to assess whether it is reasonable not include the clauses and the SPC may also be consulted to provide external expertise.
- 5.16 The other contract management duty addresses the need for greater due diligence in applying socially responsible contract terms throughout supply chains specifically in the construction sector where there is a risk of poor compliance with social obligations. These include unfair and unlawful employment practices that can be hard to address when dealing with long and complex supply chains. The duty is similar to that referred to in paragraph 5.15 above, in that a relevant body must notify the Welsh Ministers, in advance, if they do not intend to include socially responsible clauses in major contracts.
- 5.17 Major contracts are defined as construction contracts or call-offs from frameworks with an estimated value of £2 million or more (including VAT). Where socially responsible procurement clauses are included in major contracts, these contract

clauses must be are extended through the supply chain and a process established to ensure it happens. This will give greater assurance to agreed standards, including for workers and the environment. It also gives bidders more confidence that they and their competitors will be held to contractual obligations.

- 5.18 The focus is currently on the construction industry and on larger contracts in order to test the application of this duty and to make the best use of resources, but Welsh Government may extend this duty to other sectors and commodity areas in the future. Further consultation with stakeholders is expected as Welsh Government develops secondary legislation and guidance to provide the additional detail on how the new rules will operate in practice. The Council as per other contracting authorities will need to consider the Bill carefully, as well as the secondary legislation and guidance when published.

### **PROGRAMME FOR PROCUREMENT ('STRATEGY') 2018-2023**

- 5.19 The Council's Programme for Procurement ('Strategy') 2018-2023 was endorsed and implemented following a Cabinet meeting on 16 May 2018. A living Strategy, which has evolved since 2018 in order to adapt to our ever-changing environment and the developing procurement landscape as a result of Brexit, procurement reform, best practice and Welsh Government's continuous reviews of procurement.
- 5.20 The Strategy details a clear structure for Leadership and Governance and highlights the tools which will facilitate the process with the Council. The Strategy has four (4) strategic themes which supports the Authority's Well Being Objectives and the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
- Culture
  - Economics
  - Environment
  - Social
- 5.21 A five (5) year timescale had initially has been set for the delivery of the Strategy, however, the key strategic goals were far reaching, and it was envisaged that the Strategy will take the Council beyond 2023 timeline.

### **Conclusion**

- 5.22 There will be significant changes to procurement rules and the Council will need to consider both Bills carefully, together with any secondary legislation and guidance when published. There will be need to plan an approach on implementation and communication within the Council ensuring key constitutional documentation, systems, policies and procedures are updated before the new laws come into force.
- 5.23 The existing Procurement Strategy continues to be fit for purpose and can be extended beyond its current timeline of May 2023. The Strategy continues to demonstrate the Council's commitment in supporting wider cultural, social, economic and environmental objectives in a way that offers real long-term benefits to the Community we serve and the people of Wales whilst balancing the issues of Value for Money.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 All details stated within this report and Strategy are reflective of all issues known as of September 2022.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The Strategy positively impacts all aspects of the IIA, however a full IIA will be completed in parallel to developing the new Procurement Strategy.
- 7.2 Procurement is one of the seven corporate areas for change in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('Act') statutory guidance and must be a key area of focus for public bodies in meeting their obligations under the Act.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected within this report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

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evansi1@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property,  
Christina Harray, Chief Executive,  
Richard (Ed) Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services,  
Elizabeth Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services,  
Derek Morris, Contracts Manager,  
Natasha Ford, Business Relationship Manager.

Background Papers:

Appendices:

Appendix A Programme for Procurement ('Strategy') 2018-2024

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Caerphilly County Borough Council

# Programme for Procurement 2018 - 2024

■ Culture ■ Economic ■ Environment ■ Social



# 1. Introduction

Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Council) has set out its vision for developing and managing the living environment that it aspires to create for the residents and businesses within the County Borough in its Well-being Objectives.

The procurement function will support the Council's Well-being Objectives and Welsh Government's programme for Governance with its Programme for Procurement.

The Council is committed to ensuring it achieves value for money from its third-party procurement expenditure, circa £251 million per annum. It also recognises the value of using procurement to support its wider Cultural, Social, Economic and Environmental objectives, in ways that offer real long-term benefits to the community it serves and the people of Wales, whilst balancing the issues of value for money

Our Programme for Procurement needs to be a living strategy, flexible, adaptable and alive to the changing environment; modular in nature so that it is easy to review and update annually in line with developments in the procurement landscape. Our approach will be continuous improvement to bring about real change and to improve the lives of those who live and work within our borough.

The Programme for Procurement will build on the Council's success to meet the overarching Well-being objective.

## 2. Definition of Procurement

Procurement is defined as the process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment. (1)

The Procurement function within the Council is a centralized team of procurement professionals. Welsh Governments fitness check concluded that the function was "***Mature with an overall maturity rating of developing towards advanced***".

(1) Procuring the Future, 2006

### 3. Procurement Leadership and Governance Structure

The leadership and governance structure for procurement within the Council is:-

Leadership through Cabinet Members and specifically the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property.

- A Corporate Procurement Unit, which sits within the Education and Corporate Services directorate.
- A professionally qualified Head of Procurement who oversees all procurement activities over £75,000, reporting to the Director for Education and Corporate Services
- Clearly defined processes and procedures along with formal delegation of authority in respect of procurement activities embodied in Standing Orders for Contracts, the Procurement Code of Practice and Financial Regulations.
- All procurement over £10,000 to be managed via our Proactis eProcurement system. A fully transparent electronic procurement system which is embedded for all procurement over £10,000 with built in procedures and controls which are aligned to predetermined authorisation criteria. All procurements under £10,000 are devolved for efficiency of process: with common and repetitive spend being managed by pre-established arrangements which have been set up for such purposes.

## Strategic Theme – Culture

Strategy – the Council will manage all third party influenceable spend (including Commissioning) via open, fair and transparent procurement, applying the principles of the UK Procurement regulations. The Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, Social Services Act and Welsh Government’s Public Procurement Policy where applicable. Officers will work within the established governance structures of the Council with a clear understanding of the rules and regulations and the standards expected. Our approach will be one of continuous improvement with the goal of influencing the real change that the Council aspires to bring to the lives of those living and working in the county borough. The Council will apply a category approach based on directorate plans. The Council’s Supply Positioning Model, Appendix A will be used to plot financial value of the requirement against market risk to assist in the decision-making process whilst determining away forward.

Strategic Goals (what we want to achieve)	Steps already taken towards strategic goal	What success looks like/will be measured by?	How to be achieved	When
Officers will work within the principles of the Council’s Customer Service Standard for all customers	This is a new Standard to be adopted across the service area.	A uniform approach to servicing customer needs evidenced by annual customer survey scores. <b>Measurement:</b> by corporate score card.	Officer training and development. Standards to be embedded into the procurement processes Results monitored, measured and reported to SMT. Annual reviews	Implement December 2017. Yearly reviews.
Third Party spend will be procured via National, Regional and local arrangements. Collaboration will be embraced where appropriate. Alternative delivery models considered when appropriate.	5-year procurement plan established. Use of collaboration where applicable and benefits are deliverable to the Council.  Limited outsourcing and partnering approaches in place.	An agreed Gwent programme for procurement which supports National, Regional and Local procurement. <b>Measurement</b> by corporate score card, Council wide spend analysis tools which reports spend activity. With annual reviews.  Develop collaborative working models with external (third party suppliers) where appropriate. To develop areas such as Information transparency – data sharing with suppliers. An understanding of collaborative models’ options to create financial benefits.	All Wales programme for procurement. WLGA Sourcing strategy. Collaboration – Developing new models for integrating and partnering with external contractors and service providers.  Fit for purpose contracting models.  The right model for the right environment.	Start 2017 with Annual reviews       2025 Phased approach required resource risk and knowledge risk to the type of contracting required



		<p>Explore alternative collaboration models such as Virtual joint venturing, labour and process fluidity, operating/collaboration model fluidity.</p> <p><b>Measurement:</b> within service improvement plan.</p>		
Project risk profiling and mitigation through the development and use of Supplier Positioning models, Dunn and Bradstreet searches and other risk mitigation strategies	Discrete qualitative approaches such as supplier audits, risk registers, heat maps etc.	<p>A developed set of quantitative risk metrics such as Total Cost of Risk at the supply chain, category and supplier level.</p> <p>Total risk mitigation investment across the supply chain.</p> <p>The right price of risk transfer to suppliers, customers and third parties such as insurance companies.</p> <p><b>Measurement:</b> as part of service improvement plan and Key performance indicators</p>	<p>Manage procurement risk in a comprehensive, continuous manner with regular monitoring and assessment of high-risk factors.</p> <p>Risk mitigation and support via engagement with financial services companies.</p>	2025 – Need to understand this is a large change and will require a phased and control approach
We will be in touch with and promote the management of Procurement in the age of social transparency	Traditional procurement process, electronic and paper based. Limited exposure to social media reactions.	<p>A robust process and appropriate contracts documentation that mitigates against inappropriate social media and customer interactions</p> <p><b>Measurement:</b> within service improvement plan</p>	<p>Effective communications and transparent processes.</p> <p>Policy/wording in the tendering process documentation prohibiting disclosure of information via social media or by other means</p>	phased approach to 2020
A modern, flexible and innovative procurement function staffed by procurement professionals with the knowledge, skills and expertise needed to challenge the status quo and support the business operations of the future across all disciplines	<p>Limited and reducing resource with limitations in knowledge of legal and finance so heavily reliant on others in these disciplines.</p> <p>Buying consortium dysfunctional and not value for money.</p> <p>Utilisation of the EU Directives Light Touch Regime (LTR), wider increased</p>	<p>A more rounded procurement capability with commercially skilled Procurement officers able to take balanced risk decisions that are supportive of change.</p> <p>Procurement specialists with broader financial toolset so that they are able to assess wider</p>	<p>Targeted development and support aligned to the business need.</p> <p>Training to include Self funding, direct borrowing, third party financing etc. Risk</p>	Phased approach to 2023

	use of Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS), Soft market engagement, market engagement activities	organisational issues. Procurement and finance to understand the different ways of financing each aspect of the supply chain for large complex project. Longer term stability in contracts that are flexible in nature. Service user, community and marketplace consultation / research to redefine needs and create opportunities for delivering social value. <b>Measurement:</b> through the service improvement plan and customer feedback.	management and profiling.  Full engagement with market and stakeholders prior to tendering to establish appropriate and proportionate contracts. Wider use of innovative procurement tools, such as LTR and DPS processes.	
Where appropriate include Social Benefit Clauses in the Contract Terms and Conditions	Applied Community Benefits Clauses in relevant contracts (Core and Non-Core).	The establishment of a recording and monitoring system that ensures that where social benefits have been included in contracts, they are being delivered. More locally focused procedures for below threshold contracting.  <b>Measurement:</b> through the service improvement plan.	Establish and define appropriate clauses, KPIs and recording and monitoring system – Wider use of CMM to Contract Manage. Adapt procedures to allow for a minimum number of quotations to be requested from local businesses alongside others.  Ensure application of Future Generations Act (Wales) is considered where appropriate.  Review TOMs Methodology is embedded where appropriate.	2017 with Annual reviews to ensure social benefits remains fit for purpose and in line with Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

# Strategic Theme – Economic

Strategy – The Council will leverage the value of its third party spend to bring greater social and economic regeneration to the communities we serve. We will work to identify opportunities for local businesses to work with us; we will explore every opportunity to bring innovation into our procurement processes and practices in order to achieve better outcomes and greater social value for all our customers.

Constant drive for best value, taking a whole life approach which will explore opportunities for circular and foundation economies.

A circular economy is an alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of each service life. The Foundational Economy is a grand name for those business activities that we use every day and see all around us. It includes businesses like retail, care and food industries. We need to consider the wider application of such activities as mitigating effects of Brexit by establishing a secure basis of supply through our local economy.

Strategic Goals (what we want to achieve)	Steps already taken towards strategic goal	What success looks like/will be measured by?	How to be achieved	When
<p>Build on our electronic systems to further streamline and improve processes and procedures to make the experience of doing business with the Council as efficient, easy and uncomplicated as possible. Our electronic procurement systems will be developed as dynamic information highways with information flowing into and out of the organisation, providing all parties with timely information that helps make our business interactions easier and more efficient. Development of the Council's Passport to Trade solution will form part of this process</p>	<p>Our eProcurement system is already used for 60% of the Council's tenders.</p> <p>A single corporate end to end eProcurement system has been in place for many years.</p> <p>All orders are sent to suppliers electronically and an increasing number of invoices are being received electronically.</p> <p>A fully integrated comprehensive Contracts Management system is in use.</p> <p>Use of Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS) and other methodologies such as Passport to Trade to reduce the burden on bidders through the use of technology.</p>	<p>Procurement requirements are proportionate and do not create unnecessary barriers to small or medium enterprises, social enterprises, and voluntary groups.</p> <p>Annual KPIs showing that the percentage of expenditure with local suppliers continues to reflect positively (subject to procurement activity in a given year aligning with the strengths of the local supply base).</p> <p>Robust system to manage and support full supply chain information flow.</p> <p>Innovative use and development of new technologies.</p> <p>Ease of use for suppliers.</p> <p><b>Measurement:</b> through service improvement plan and key performance indicators reported to SMT via corporate scorecard</p>	<p>Through investment of time and resource and Closer working with our technology supply partners to embrace more agile and mobile solutions.</p> <p>Potential extension of the principles introduced through the DPS process to develop a Passport to Trade solution that minimises the need for suppliers to submit pre-qualifying information in successive tender bids.</p>	<p>phased approach to 2025</p>

<p>Alongside the more traditional emphasis on cost and compliance in commercial decision making, we will more actively embrace wider factors such as economic development and social benefits.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Council's Community Benefits Model. Provision of supplier relationship support to help local suppliers prepare for doing business with us. The Council's commitment to developing and supporting the local economy.</p> <p>Other supportive tools such as Pre-Qualification Questionnaires and evaluation methodologies.</p> <p>Forward Works Plans established.</p>	<p>% of spend with the local supply chains monitored and benchmarked on an annual basis. Suitable and simplified KPIs developed and tested to ensure that measures taken are cost effective for both suppliers and for the Council. All contracts will be future mapped to identify where social value and well-being goals lie giving a better understanding of our contracts on the Forward Work Plans to earmark suitable contracts. Closer working links with commissioning. <b>Measurement</b> through the service improvement plan and corporate scorecard KPIs.</p>	<p>Robust social and economic methodologies that can evidence results. Commitment to the supply chain.</p> <p>Community Benefits Tool kit supporting the Community Benefits Model (WG Community Benefits Calculator where relevant). Contract Management. Future Mapping of Forward Work Plans.</p> <p>Evaluate and apply if appropriate. TOMs Methodology to ensure robust performance measure.</p>	<p>By 2020</p>
<p>Develop methodologies that demonstrate that the work undertaken by procurement creates and delivers greater value to the organisation when weighed against the financial cost of the function. Create a meaning of value which incorporates but is not dominated by savings.</p>	<p>Limited appreciation and reporting of value. Established directorate work programmes and annual feedback. Entrenched view of the value that the procurement discipline delivers</p>	<p>Organisational acceptance that 'value' is more than savings. A more balanced understanding of supply chain value.</p> <p>Development of outcome based on commissioning.</p>	<p>Through closer working with Finance and other senior stakeholders and providing evidence to support a redefined understanding of value outcome-based contracting.</p>	<p>2018</p>
<p>Increased use of analytical expertise and data management to help achieve a target of 90% of spend with suppliers that we have contracts with.</p>	<p>Detailed knowledge of spend profile from Spike Cavell spend analysis. Currently developing more interactive spend analysis with Proactis tools. Access to current and historic spends analysis used to drive directorate plans which are in development</p> <p>Use of financial assessment tools e.g. D&amp;B</p>	<p>Spend analysis and forward work programmes used to help identify significant areas of spend that needs to be better managed e.g. total value of "off contract" uncontrolled spend.</p> <p>Increased value of spend in the local economy - Categories of spend identified that could be bought locally. Promote this to the local supply chain and helped develop to be able to bid.</p>	<p>Proactis spend analysis, Robotic technologies Understanding and Training.</p> <p>Proactis spend analysis reporting tools.</p>	<p>2025 Progressive approach required. Work to start 2018</p>

		<p>Take a no purchase order, no payment approach.</p> <p>Automatic payment process.</p> <p><b>Measured</b> though service improvement plan and corporate score card KPIs.</p>	<p>Introduce clear process and procedures for raising orders.</p> <p>Utilize systems to bring about automatic/lean payment systems.</p>	
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## Strategic Theme – Environment

Strategy - The Council will recognise environmental issues and address them through the procurement process and procedures. We will strive to develop the procurement function in a way that balances economic and social values in equal measure, embracing sustainable development and putting The Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 at the heart of all procurement decisions. The Well-being and Future Generations Act defines Sustainable Development in Wales as: "The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals". We will do all we can to help the Council in its efforts to balance the five ways of working needed for Public Bodies to achieve the seven well-being goals set out in the Act.

Strategic Goals (what we want to achieve)	Steps already taken towards strategic goal	What success looks like/will be measured by?	How to be achieved	When
Responsible business through procurement activity that works to help and not hinder the duty of care incumbent on us to be fair and considerate in all aspects of our business activities.	Adoption of the Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Code of Practice and commitment to The Future Generations Act.	Full implementation of the Council's Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Code of Practice Action Plan. Tangible evidence that procurement activity is supportive of The Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act. Development of a circular economy as an alternative to the traditional linear economy of make, use and dispose. <b>Measurement</b> through service improvement plan	Include a copy of our Policy on Ethical Employment in all procurements along with appropriate supporting requirements in the tender documentation. Developing Pre-Qualification Questionnaires, Tender Quality criteria and Evaluation Methodologies that take account of the needs of Future Generations and the need to keep resources in use for as long as possible, extracting the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recovering and regenerating them at the end of each service life so that they go on to be of value in a different form.	2020

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<p>Develop an understanding and strengthen procurement capacity to realise the value of utilising sustainability strategies in the way we do business</p>	<p>A standard pretender Sustainable Risk Assessment process adopted and applied to all appropriate procurements.</p>	<p>A more robust Sustainability Risk Assessment incorporated into the pre-sourcing phase of procurements with a greater emphasis on the need for sustainable alternatives to be specified within a broader definition of product requirements. <b>Measured</b> though service improvement plan</p>	<p>Review of the standardised approach already adopted and the development of more bespoke Sustainable Risk Assessments that addresses the need to promote sustainable alternatives in procurements prior to being issued to the market.</p>	<p>2018</p>
<p>Understand and manage the impact of globalisation and the consequences for our supply chains</p>	<p>Adoption of Ethical Employment in Supply Chains CoP Action Plan.</p>	<p>Developed buyers that are supply chain/market specialists who understand their area of expertise and are capable of maximising or minimising the impacts that trading in globalised markets can have on our supply chains.</p> <p>Contract Managers capable to ensuring that throughout the life of a contract it delivers the outcomes intended. <b>Measured</b> though service improvement plan.</p>	<p>Education and training in respect of implementation of the EESC CoP Action Plan and integration of the Code objectives into procurement standard documentation. Recognition of the need to actively review and manage contracts.</p>	<p>2020</p>

## Strategic Theme – Social

Strategy – The Council will use its procurement processes to foster positive social change where appropriate. The Council has adopted the Ethical Supply Chain Code of Practice and we will apply this to foster fair working conditions for all. In addition to this we will embrace all current and future legislation or political change brought about by the Brexit process that will assist in delivering more social value to our communities. The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. As required by the Act, we will work as far as we are able in the arena of public procurement to achieve all of the goals that we are able to influence, not just one or two.

Strategic Goals (what we want to achieve)	Steps already taken towards strategic goal	What success looks like/will be measured by?	How to be achieved	When
Adopt all elements of the Ethical Supply Chains Code of Practice, ensuring that in all our procurement activity that we meet the commitments documented in the Caerphilly Code of Practice Commitments 'Action Plan'.	Code of Practice adopted, and Commitments Action Plan produced.	<p>Full acceptance and implemented Ethical Supply Chains Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible new KPI - % of contracts that have social value outcomes included?</li> </ul> <p>Awarding of contracts taking into consideration Modern Slavery, Blacklisting, False Self Employment and Unfair use of zero-hour contracts. Acknowledgement of the importance of the many outcomes required not just best price.</p> <p><b>Measured</b> though the service improvement plan.</p>	<p>WG Ethical Supply Chains Policy, Council Action Plan.</p> <p>Development of tender documentation.</p>	December 2018
Develop robust measures of social benefits to be able to track the success of outcomes achieved through procurement activities	We have been proactive in many areas including requirements for apprentices, local recruitment and training; packaging of contracts to make more attractive to local SMEs and VCSEs and pre-tender market engagement/ consultation. WG community Benefits tracker used. Limited or no measurement in place generally.	<p>Recognition within the Council that social benefits have a positive impact on communities and are to be valued. Customer satisfaction evidenced through surveys and case studies.</p> <p>Reported and <b>measured</b> though the service improvement plan.</p>	<p>Robust policy, terms and conditions and effective monitoring to ensure delivery.</p> <p>Review TOMs Methodology and apply where applicable.</p>	2018



<p>Where appropriate, ask bidders to detail and demonstrate the social value outcomes and measures that they can deliver when providing the goods, services and works specified. Where appropriate, include weightings in the tender evaluation model to assess the social value offers submitted by bidders</p>	<p>Some use of weighting to date where core benefits are concerned. Lack of enthusiasm in the organisation for this type of approach</p>	<p>Bid evaluation model in use capable of quantifying and valuing that element of social value that is inherent in a suppliers tender bid. Greater acceptance of the value that more locally based trading arrangements can have on sustainability in our communities.</p> <p><b>Measured</b> though our service improvement plan.</p>	<p>Development of appropriate weighting models for use in the tender process and evaluations.</p>	<p>2018</p>
<p>Business support to form an integral part of the procurement process</p>	<p>Steps taken towards the use of pretender technical dialogue meetings with the supply chain and client departments to understand market trends and strategies.</p>	<p>Standardised collaborative approach from clients and the supply chain to evidence social value.</p> <p><b>Measured</b> thought service improvement plan and corporate score card KPIs.</p>	<p>More intelligent and dynamic engagement with market participants.</p>	<p>2018 with annual review</p>

# Appendix A

## Strategic Critical

### Strategic Security

High supply risk

Strategic Security might be goods obtained from a monopoly supplier or items with a very tight or 'bespoke' specification. These items are critical to the operation, but are low in cost. For most councils this will include materials and parts used in property maintenance governed by old specifications and also some contract services such as specialist teachers and carers where there is a very high specification but a low demand.

Strategic Critical are categories that are high cost and either have a specialist nature or are sourced from a difficult market in which there are relatively few supplies or suppliers. These are critical to the overall profitability, competitiveness or capability of an organisation to deliver services. In most councils this will include a significant amount of spend on waste and outsourcing and social care, where specifications are tight and there is a supply shortage. From that base data, Caerphilly selected the categories that they felt were Strategic Critical to them. These are the categories that are of strategic importance to Caerphilly and have a high potential cost of replacement should they no longer be available. Caerphilly added a number of categories that did not appear in this quartile in the exercise carried out in the 10 LA's in the South East. These were included on that bases that they were of strategic importance due to the potential risk to health and reputation (e.g. food & drink) in the event of a supply chain problem.

### Supply Positioning Model (Kraljic)

Low cost

High cost

Tactical Acquisition categories will be of low value and with a low business exposure because they have no special quality, safety, reliability or environmental implications and there are probably many suppliers in the market able to meet the demand. For the most authorities, this would include stationery items, IT consumables and some catering supplies.

Tactical Profit categories are of relatively high cost but where there are no quality, safety, reliability or environmental issues and where there are likely to be plenty of suppliers. Purchases here are unlikely to contribute directly to the provision of services and often include items such as vehicles, contract services, IT equipment and utilities.

### Tactical Acquisition

### Tactical Profit

Low supply risk

## **Appendix B - Procurement Strategy Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

*The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) listed below will be used to demonstrate how effectively the Council is achieving against the Strategic Goals. The KPIs will be subject to refinement by the Head of Procurement during the term of the Strategy.*

1. Demonstrate that the Principals of the Customer Service Standards are being met via Annual Customer Surveys
2. % of Annual Corporate Spend with Suppliers based:
  - Locally, Caerphilly Borough;
  - Regionally, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal;
  - within Wales.
3. % Corporate Spend Channelled through Collaborative Arrangements
4. % Contracts Tendered Electronically across the Council
5. Spend via Purchase Card
6. e-Invoicing – No. of Suppliers participating
7. e-Invoicing – Value of Transactions
8. No. Contracts that include Community Benefits and/or Social Value Clauses
  - Core Clauses in Contracts, Measured via National Themes, Outcomes and Measurers (TOMs) Framework (or equivalent);
  - Non-Core Clauses.
9. No. Suppliers signed up to the Welsh Government Code of Practice, Ethical Employment in Supply Chains
10. % of PDR's undertaken in Procurement

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## **POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022**

**SUBJECT:           AUDIT WALES REPORT, SPRINGING FORWARD – ASSETS  
                          JULY 2022**

**REPORT BY:       CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **1.     PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1    To present Scrutiny with the 'Springing Forward – Assets' report July 22 written by Audit Wales following their review of how we manage our assets.
- 1.2    The Council has many assets, this report focus's specifically on building assets.

### **2.     SUMMARY**

- 2.1    Audit Wales conducted a national review of how authorities were strategically using their experience post covid, to manage or transform their Assets. The full report is attached as Appendix A
- 2.2    Specifically Audit Wales wanted to review how councils were strengthening their ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services, including those delivered in partnership with key stakeholders and communities.
- 2.3    The overall finding was that "In driving forward its intended significant changes to assets, informed by its experiences of the pandemic, the Council requires a longer-term approach.

### **3.     RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1    Members review the attached document (Appendix A) and are invited to discuss, challenge and scrutinise the information contained within.

### **4.     REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1    Scrutiny members are part of the Council Performance Framework and are a critical part of scrutinising, reviewing and being involved in making suggestions for further improvement activities.

## **5. THE REPORT**

5.1 Audit Wales provided the Council with a project brief which comprised of three aims for the review:

- to gain assurance that councils are putting in place arrangements to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services.
- to explain the actions that councils are taking both individually and collectively to strengthen their arrangements; and
- to inspire councils and other organisations to further strengthen their arrangements through capturing and sharing notable practice examples and learning and making appropriate recommendations.

5.2 The review sought to answer the question: “Is the Council’s strategic approach to its assets effectively helping the Council to strengthen its ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of its services in the short and longer-term?”

5.3 The review method was held through a combination of desk top assessments and document reviews and workshops with the relevant officers. This was carried out from October 21 to February 2022 with reports to individual councils between April and May 22 and following the standard management responses procedure the report was issued July 2022

5.4 The overall conclusion from Audit Wales was that “ in driving forward its intended significant changes to assets, informed by its experiences of the pandemic, the Council requires a longer-term approach. We reached this conclusion because:

- although the Council is planning to make significant changes to services and office accommodation, it does not have a fully integrated longer-term asset strategy.
- the Council’s understanding of longer-term trends and involvement of residents in shaping its strategic agenda is currently underdeveloped.
- the Council’s arrangements support active consideration of its statutory duties; however, insufficient staff capacity may constrain the delivery of its intended changes; and to reflect its increasing ambition the Council can strengthen its use of data to inform its understanding of performance.

5.5 The report (Appendix A) identifies three recommendations by Audit Wales to support the suggested improvements identified in para 5.4. The report attached (on page 18) shows the Councils response and intended actions in response to the recommendations.

### **5.6 Conclusion**

The report recognises the council has ambition to make significant changes, and in doing so would benefit from a longer-term integrated approach.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions were thought to be required in this report.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 There was no impact assessment completed for this report as it is a presentation on the work carried out by Audit Wales on the Council's approach to Asset Management.

## **8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 8.1 Asset Management activity contributes to the Well-being goals of
- A prosperous Wales
  - A resilient Wales
  - A healthier Wales
  - A more equal Wales
  - A Wales of cohesive communities
  - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language
  - A globally responsible Wales

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 This report is for information and has no decision-making requests, so the Council full Equality Impact Assessment process does not to be applied.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no financial implications identified within this report

## **11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no personnel implications within this report, however the Audit Wales report notes in its overall assessment that "insufficient staff capacity may constrain the delivery of its intended changes"

## **12. CONSULTATIONS**

- 12.1 Any consultation responses have been included with in this report.

## **13. STATUTORY POWER**

- 13.1 Local Government and Elections (Wales) 2020 Act

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Appendices:

Appendix A Springing Forward Assets (July 2022)  
Appendix B Updated Management Response (Oct 2022)



## Springing Forward – Assets – Caerphilly County Borough Council

Audit year: 2021-22

Date issued: July 2022

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This document has been prepared for the internal use of Caerphilly County Borough Council as part of work performed/to be performed in accordance with Section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, and Section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015].

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# Summary

## What we reviewed and why

- 1 We reviewed the Council's arrangements for managing its assets with a primary focus on office accommodation and buildings from which the Council delivers services to its residents. We looked at how the Council strategically plans the use of its assets, how it monitors the use of its assets and how it reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of its arrangements.
- 2 We delivered this review as the world moves forward, using the experiences from the global COVID-19 pandemic, to look at how councils are strengthening their ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services, including those delivered in partnership with key stakeholders and communities.
- 3 When we began our audit work under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 we recognised that it would take time for public bodies to embed the sustainable development principle, but we did also set out our expectation that over the medium term we would expect public bodies to be able to demonstrate how the Act is shaping what they do. It is now approaching seven years since the Well-being of Future Generations Act was passed and we are now into the second reporting period for the Act. Therefore, we would now expect public bodies to be able to demonstrate that the Act is integral to their thinking and genuinely shaping what they do.
- 4 This project had three main aims:
  - to gain assurance that councils are putting in place arrangements to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services;
  - to explain the actions that councils are taking both individually and collectively to strengthen their arrangements as well as further embed the sustainable development principle; and
  - to inspire councils and other organisations to further strengthen their arrangements through capturing and sharing notable practice examples and learning and making appropriate recommendations.
- 5 The Council's asset base is one of the largest across the Welsh public sector and in 2021 had a valuation of £1.18 billion and comprised of the asset types set out in Exhibit 1.

## Exhibit 1: asset base

The table below sets out the Council's asset base in 2019 and 2021.

Asset type	Number in 2019	Number in 2021
Core Corporate Offices	– 11	– 12
Schools	– 87	– 87
Leisure centres	– 11	– 11
Other Operational Buildings and Sites <sup>1</sup>	– 223	– 235
Leased Out (buildings, part buildings, business units and ground leases where building owned by others) <sup>2</sup>	– 423	– 435
Total number of buildings	– 755	– 780
Non-op/Surplus buildings	– 16	– 14

Source Audit Wales analysis

6 We undertook the review during the period October 2021 to February 2022.

## What we found

7 Our review sought to answer the question: Is the Council's strategic approach to its assets effectively helping the Council to strengthen its ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of its services in the short and longer-term?

<sup>1</sup> These include: civic amenity sites, community centres, community education centres, countryside service buildings, Flying Start buildings, libraries, museums and tourism venues, social services operational buildings and sports pavilions.

<sup>2</sup> These include 343 economic development units including industrial and business units, building leases to other organisations and ground leases where the buildings are owned by other organisations

- 8 Overall, we found that in driving forward its intended significant changes to assets, informed by its experiences of the pandemic, the Council requires a longer-term approach. We reached this conclusion because:
- although the Council is planning to make significant changes to services and office accommodation, it does not have a fully integrated longer-term asset strategy;
  - the Council's understanding of longer term trends and involvement of residents in shaping its strategic agenda is currently underdeveloped;
  - the Council's arrangements support active consideration of its statutory duties, however, insufficient staff capacity may constrain the delivery of its intended changes; and
  - to reflect its increasing ambition the Council can strengthen its use of data to inform its understanding of performance.

## Recommendations

### Exhibit 2: recommendations

The table below sets out the **recommendations** that we have identified following this review.

Recommendations	
<b>Develop a longer-term asset strategy</b>	
R1	<p>In developing its asset management strategy, the Council should ensure that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• takes account of longer-term trends that may affect service provision and the efficient use of assets;</li><li>• ensures alignment with the outcomes of other relevant strategic documents, including decarbonisation and digital strategies;</li><li>• sets out the Council's intended outcomes over the short, medium and longer term;</li><li>• sets out SMART performance measures that provide insight to decision makers; and</li><li>• revises the Service Area Management Plan criteria to include active consideration of residents' needs over the medium to longer term.</li></ul>

## Recommendations

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### Secure Resources

R2 Secure sufficient and skilled resources to deliver the strategic vision effectively, including to:

- manage the disposal or transfer of surplus assets;
  - implement digital solutions; and
  - engage with and involve communities around their needs.
- 

### Evaluate the benefits of partnership working

R3 Collaborate with public sector partners across Gwent to evaluate the potential benefits of developing a strategic long-term approach to a single public estate.

## Part one: detailed report

In driving forward its intended significant changes to assets, informed by its experiences of the pandemic, the Council requires a longer-term approach

Although the Council is planning to make significant changes to services and office accommodation, it does not have a fully integrated longer-term asset strategy

### Why setting a clear vision is important

- 9 A clear asset management strategy and well-developed delivery plans are important to identify the intended usage of assets over the short and longer-term; the funding available to maintain and develop assets, as well as the anticipated future level of demand for, and cost of, providing services. It is also important to identify how the asset management strategy aligns and is integrated with other relevant strategies including, agile working, workforce, digital and carbon reduction. Learning from the changes brought about by the global Covid-19 pandemic, can help Councils strengthen their ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services.

### What we found

- The Council's 2019-2024 Asset management strategy (the strategy) sets out its existing vision for assets which is<sup>3</sup>;
  - 'to have the appropriate land and property, in the right place, operating in the right way, to facilitate safe and effective delivery of the Council's services.'
- For buildings, the strategy notes the following two objectives:

<sup>3</sup> Caerphilly County Borough Council (May 2019) [Asset Management Strategy- Property and Land](#)



- to retain sufficient well maintained, accessible, safe, energy efficient and secure buildings to support and facilitate the current and future effective delivery of the Council’s services; and
- to retain leased out buildings where they provide a net revenue income to the Council or where Cabinet direct they are retained to provide economic or social benefit to the borough.
- The strategy highlights the aims of reducing the number of service specific buildings and rationalising corporate office accommodation to the Council’s main Tredomen site in light of the 2019 forecast of an increase in flexible and agile working.
- The strategy, however, does not include measurable outcomes to allow the Council to demonstrate progress in delivering the strategy’s objectives and aims.
- Since 2019, the Council has subsequently agreed a number of other strategic plans that may influence its use of assets, including decarbonisation, its place shaping and well-being programme and customer and digital. The Council has yet to fully integrate those strategies, for example, embedding the decarbonisation strategy into the council’s operating model which may influence how assets are used over the medium to longer-term.
- The Council property services team operates a corporate landlord model overseeing strategic planning; development and maintenance of the estate; disposal of assets, and energy services. The team holds wide ranging data providing a detailed oversight of the current asset base.
- In response to previous audit recommendations<sup>4</sup>, the Council has developed an annual Service Asset Management Plan process (SAMP). Services use the following consistent criteria to review the performance of assets:
  - **Compliance:** Ensuring assets comply with statutory and regulatory requirements;
  - **Condition:** Maintaining assets to a satisfactory condition to support service delivery;
  - **Suitability:** Ensuring assets are fit for purpose;
  - **Sufficiency:** Ensuring available assets meet current and expected service demands;
  - **Accessibility:** Ensuring assets are as accessible as possible to all service users; and
  - **Sustainability:** Maintaining assets to ensure maximum operational life and minimising the potential negative impact on the environment

<sup>4</sup> Wales Audit Office (2013) Asset Management (Land and Property) Strategy Review

- Through this annual process services may identify additional maintenance requirements or disposals of surplus assets and can use the information to manage asset-based risks.
- The SAMP criteria do not, however, explicitly require services to demonstrate residents' views. Whilst services may subsequently use other approaches to involve residents such as formal engagement, the perspectives of residents who may use or potentially use services are not currently included within the review criteria.
- Since early 2020, the Council's delivery of many of its services and therefore its use of assets has changed as a result of government restrictions imposed to reduce the spread of the COVID-19. The Council has recognised that many of those changes can be retained which will allow it to increase the scale and pace of the objectives set out in its existing asset management strategy.
- Two of the ten Corporate reviews<sup>5</sup>, under the Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme have the greatest potential to impact on the Council's use of assets: those being Flexible working (office accommodation) and Walk-in Services (community hubs).
- The Council has identified a number of potential future outcomes for those reviews including:
  - residents being able to access multiple services and facilities from a single location;
  - a significant reduction in the number of public facing buildings (where residents can receive a service) that the Council owns or leases;
  - reduced corporate office accommodation requirement;
  - administrative buildings being repurposed to provide an appropriate mix of fixed desks / hot desks, touch down points, quiet space and meeting space; and
  - reduced carbon footprint;
- At the time of our fieldwork, the Council had not yet fully developed measures of success to demonstrate its progress in delivering those intended outcomes.
- The Walk-in Services review team has identified that the Council has too many public facing buildings. In response the team is developing options to reduce the number of public facing buildings to fewer, better located community hubs which can support a post pandemic digitally enabled, agile provision.

<sup>5</sup> Caerphilly County Borough Council Cabinet (22 July 2020) [Strengthening Team Caerphilly](#)

- The Council is considering developing a 5-year strategy to guide its Walk-in service approach which may provide an opportunity to set out the scale of the anticipated change and associated success measures.
- As part of the Flexible working review and to inform its future office accommodation plans, which will go beyond previously stated ambitions, the Council surveyed staff in 2020 and 2021 to understand their views.
- In 2021, a higher percentage of those staff who responded supported agile working compared to 2020. In 2021 42% of respondents indicated that they want to work mostly from home compared to 23% in 2020. A further 42% of respondents indicated their preference to work equally between home and office. 11% wanted to be based mostly in the office with occasional home working. 1% of respondents want to work solely in the office whilst 4% of respondents asked for an alternative option.
- The Council has developed a categorisation process for all staff roles and is exploring the level of relevant IT and digital equipment required to support staff to work effectively in an agile way. The Council plans to undertake a property portfolio and economic impact assessment around the impact of reduced office accommodation.
- At the time of our fieldwork the Council had yet to finalise its approach to flexible working. The finalisation of that approach provides the Council with an opportunity to clarify the scale of change and the success measures it will use to demonstrate progress towards its outcomes.

## The Council's understanding of longer-term trends and involvement of residents in shaping its strategic agenda is currently underdeveloped

### Why the Sustainable Development Principle is important

- 10 When we began our audit work under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act we recognised that it would take time for public bodies to embed the sustainable development principle, but we did also set out our expectation that over the medium term we would expect public bodies to be able to demonstrate how the Act is shaping what they do. It is now approaching seven years since the Well-being of Future Generations Act was passed and we are now into the second reporting period for the Act. Therefore, we would now expect public bodies to be able to demonstrate that the Act is integral to their thinking and genuinely shaping what they do.

## What we found

- The Council's corporate review methodology includes consideration of the sustainable development principle throughout the process of developing proposals for change.
- The Council's training and support to officers around the five ways of working<sup>6</sup> is helping to embed the sustainable development principle into how projects are developed. The transformation programme board considers the Act as it takes decisions on the outputs of the corporate reviews.
- Despite this framework, the Council's consideration of factors that may affect the use of assets over the longer-term including decarbonisation, greater automation of working practices and greater flexible working is currently not well documented.
- The Council currently collaborates with a range of other public sector and voluntary groups to share assets on an operational basis. The Council and Gwent Police have developed a co-located Safeguarding Hub and the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust is seeking to double their office space use in the County. The Council will need to assure itself that such operational developments are delivering the intended outcomes.
- The Council has developed a Public Sector Hub based in Tŷ Penallta and a Public/Private sector hub in the Winding house. At the time of our fieldwork, those facilities were awaiting approval for opening based on Welsh Government guidance.
- Despite the Council's and the Caerphilly Public Services Board (PSB) stated aims to reduce the number of public sector assets and increase opportunities for shared use and collaboration, progress to date has been limited. The PSB has identified a range of potential benefits from increased shared use and collaboration including reduced costs, increased utilisation and efficiency, reduced energy usage, a reduced collective carbon footprint, better co-operation and understanding between the partners and an enhanced service to the public.
- In 2020, public sector organisations in Gwent agreed to collaborate with a view to identifying possible strategic approaches to a One Public Estate. Such an approach may identify flexibility, integration and a reduced dependency to seek out private market solutions which may potentially reduce costs. However, to date progress has been limited by the operational demands of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- During the Flexible working review the Council involved staff throughout the process, including surveys of staff and ongoing engagement with trade unions. As part of a pilot of its community hub approach the Council developed an appropriate approach to involvement. The Council may wish to assure itself that that residents are consistently involved from the earliest

<sup>6</sup> Long term, prevention, collaboration, integration and involvement.

possible stage, to understand their current and future needs as well as identifying potential approaches to the redesign of current services or the design of new services.

- Through its Corporate reviews the impact of changes to assets on flexible working are being effectively considered. The Council's integrated impact assessment documents the impact of assets on its own well-being objectives.

## The Council's arrangements support active consideration of its statutory duties, however, insufficient staff capacity may constrain the delivery of its intended changes

### Why effectively managing the delivery of planned changes to assets is important

- 11 It is important that asset management plans deliver the intended outcomes efficiently and effectively so that actual expenditure is as close to the levels planned as possible and councils meet their statutory duties. Effective collaboration with other organisations and involving communities about their needs can improve the services delivered to residents. Where councils do not have the range of skills, knowledge and expertise to effectively manage both ongoing asset management and deliver strategic changes this may reduce the ability to deliver the intended outcomes.

### What we found

- In October 2020, the Council agreed a Community Asset Transfer policy. That policy sets a framework for how the Council will work with communities to consider what assets might be suitable for transfer to protect assets with a community value for future use, but under a different management/ownership arrangement.
- At the time of our fieldwork no assets have been transferred. The Council's wider strategic approach to community engagement, including its recently established community empowerment fund, may potentially lead to a greater interest and uptake of such transfers.
- The Council's integrated impact assessment (IIA) is an ongoing process during the development of proposals. The IIA covers the Council's statutory duties under the:
  - Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011;
  - Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015;

- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards; and
- Socio-economic Duty.
- The continuous process of developing and refining the IIA should assure the Council that it has due regard to its statutory duties when it reaches decision making points.
- The Council's financial position is strong as evidenced by the two recent Audit Wales Financial Sustainability reports and its financial regulations set out clear governance arrangements for the acquisition and disposal of assets .
- We have identified a number of areas that the Council may need to address to deliver its intended changes efficiently, economically and effectively in line with the sustainable development principle. These include:
  - addressing the risk that the Council faces, as a result of national trends, of being unable to recruit and retain sufficient staff with the right skills and expertise to deliver the vision, e.g. asset specialists, digital team;
  - ensuring that there is a comprehensive and complete understanding of communities' needs for services now and in the future that is periodically refreshed;
  - continuing engagement with staff to manage the advantages and disadvantages of flexible working;
  - ensuring effective integration of relevant corporate strategies, for example digital and decarbonisation, with the walk in services and flexible working approaches;
  - developing more strategic integration with public sector partners, and
  - managing the disposal of surplus assets effectively, including considering Community Asset Transfers as a possible approach.
- The transformation programme board has considered the issue of recruitment and retention and recognises the Council is not able to fully influence all of the factors relating to this as many of those factors are at an all Wales level. With a view to the longer-term the Council has developed an apprenticeship programme but recognises the need to take more effective action to address the recruitment and retention challenges it faces in the shorter-term, through its own actions and working at a regional and national level to address those challenges.

## To reflect its increasing ambition the Council can strengthen its use of data to inform its understanding of performance

### Why effectively reviewing the delivery of planned changes to assets is important

- 12 Councils should use data to monitor whether they are achieving their intended outcomes effectively and efficiently over the short and longer-term. Using benchmarking data can provide useful insight into Councils individual performance and can identify opportunities for learning from other organisations.

### What we found

- The Council's property services team holds a wide range of data about the Council's assets and this provides the Council with a detailed understanding of its current asset base, including condition surveys, energy performance and statutory testing and maintenance compliance. We found that the Council does not set targets for 12 of the 26 measures within the corporate property scorecard.
- The Council's data demonstrates that its focus in recent years is to ensure compliance with statutory testing requirements and maintenance has led to very high levels of compliance and since 2017-18 the Council has reduced the cost of urgent works to corporate buildings from £2.3m to £770k by the end of 2020-21.
- Since 2007-08, the Council has invested in a number of energy efficiency schemes that have reduced subsequent energy usage. However, without clearly stated targets it is unclear whether actual performance is in line with the Council's expected performance.
- Prior to the pandemic the Council published an annual Property Review report<sup>7</sup> summarising current data and future challenges. The main data within the report related to:
  - the size of the estate;
  - condition of the estate;
  - statutory compliance;
  - building utilisation;
  - carbon footprint;
  - replacements, acquisitions and disposals.

<sup>7</sup> Caerphilly County Borough Council Cabinet (15 May 2019) [Property Review report](#)

- As part of the Council's Directorate Performance Assessments, (DPAs) introduced in 2020, elected members receive data on utility consumption in corporate offices, the estimated value of urgent and essential works for corporate buildings and compliance with certification for periodic electrical, annual gas, annual legionella and fire risk assessment testing and inspection.
- Whilst the DPAs contain previous years performance data, they do not include data on building condition and building utilisation nor targets. The Council therefore has scope to strengthen its reporting to ensure that readers of the DPAs understand the relative performance that is being reported.
- Given the Council's developing ambitions for its use of assets, the Council may wish to review the data within its current assets performance framework to ensure that those provide the greatest insight into the achievement of the Council's intended outcomes.
- The Council may also wish to consider how future annual property reports set out:
  - performance targets for the current year and performance in previous years;
  - how its assets approach contributes to the outcomes of other strategies, for example, decarbonisation, flexible working and digital; and
  - how other strategies including decarbonisation, flexible working and digital are contributing to the intended assets outcomes.
- Whilst the Council has previously participated in benchmarking data collection process on assets with other public bodies, we found that the Council is not consistently using such data to understand performance and drive future decisions. As part of our examination of councils' performance assessments across Wales covering the 2020-21 financial year, we noted a reduced reference to comparative performance information although we recognise that the pandemic led to the suspension of some national data collection. The ability to compare data and performance with other organisations will continue to be an important element of arrangements to secure value for money. This represents a challenge for councils to address particularly in light of the self-assessment duties as set out in the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021.



## Part two: the Council's Response

- 13 Following the conclusion of our fieldwork we presented our findings to the Council. The Council has developed its response to our recommendations and that response is shown in the Exhibit 3: below.
- 14 We will continue to monitor the Council's progress in implementing these actions, and the extent to which they address the issues we have identified in our findings.

### **Exhibit 3: management response**

The following table sets out the Council's response to the recommendations in this report.

Ref	Recommendation	Acceptance status Please indicate whether the recommendation is: <b>1. Fully accepted</b> <b>2. Partially accepted</b> <b>3. Not accepted</b>	Management response Please set out here relevant commentary on the intended implementation plan in response to the recommendation	Completion date Please set out here when you plan for the management response to be completed and intended outcome achieved.	Responsible officer (title)
R1	<p>Develop a longer-term asset strategy</p> <p>In developing its asset management strategy, the Council should ensure that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• takes account of longer-term trends that may affect service provision and the efficient use of assets;</li> <li>• ensures alignment with the outcome of other relevant strategic documents, including decarbonisation and digital strategies;</li> <li>• sets out the Council's intended outcomes over the short, medium and longer term;</li> </ul>	1. Fully Accepted	<p>The Council is in the process of appointing a new Head of Land and Property who will have responsibility, among other things, for redeveloping and integrating the Council's Asset Management Plans and ensuring they integrate with the wider suite of strategic documents.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the new post holder will take up the role in the Autumn and the approach to refreshing the Council's approach to Asset Management will be a key priority.</p> <p>As part of the redevelopment of the approaches to Asset Management, the Council will ensure appropriate outputs and outcomes are set with targets and timescales introduced where appropriate.</p>	<p>April 2023</p> <p>April 2023</p> <p>April 2023</p>	<p>Corporate Director Economy and Environment</p> <p>Corporate Director Economy and Environment</p> <p>Head of Land and Property</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sets out SMART performance measures that provide insight to decision makers; and</li> <li>revises the Service Area Management Plan criteria to include active consideration of residents' needs over the medium to longer term.</li> </ul>		The Council will also seek to include some specific recurrent questions within its next Caerphilly Conversation that will provide insight into residents' views on community assets and their use.	January 2023	Head of Transformation
R2	<p><b>Assign Resources</b></p> <p>Secure sufficient and skilled resources to deliver the strategic vision effectively, including to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manage the disposal or transfer of surplus assets;</li> <li>implement digital solutions, and</li> <li>engage with and involve communities around their needs.</li> </ul>	1. Fully Accepted	<p>The Council is currently in the process of appointing a Head of Land and Property.</p> <p>The Council is currently developing a new approach to Recruitment and Selection designed to enhance its chances of securing and retaining critical resources.</p> <p>The Council is exploring opportunities to provide additional support for critical</p>	<p>Autumn 2022</p> <p>Autumn 2022</p> <p>Autumn 2022</p>	<p>Corporate Director Economy and Environment</p> <p>Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services</p> <p>Head of Customer and Digital</p>

		<p>resources through an enhanced relationship with its supply chains. The Council is actively implementing a cloud strategy to future proof its approach to the delivery of digital solutions through the use of Software as a Service.</p> <p>The Council, as well as adapting its Caerphilly Conversation to seek views on assets, will strengthen further the involvement aspects of any disposals or changes to existing services.</p> <p>Strategic community involvement work is already programmed to ensure assets, particularly those linked to the Walk In Services corporate review, are developed around community need.</p> <p>This approach is in line with the council's Consultation and Engagement Framework, adopted in February 2020.</p> <p>Ongoing process of highlighting opportunities within the Community Asset Transfer scheme with community members during engagement process</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>January 2023</p> <p>In line with timescales associated with Walk In Services corporate review</p>	<p>Head of Customer and Digital</p> <p>Head of Transformation</p> <p>Transformation Lead – Insight and Intelligence to support oversee work of wider Walk In Services project group</p>
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R3	<p><b>Evaluate the benefits of partnership working</b></p> <p>Collaborate with public sector partners across Gwent to evaluate the potential benefits of developing a strategic long-term approach to a single public estate.</p>	2. Partially Accepted	<p>While there are clear and obvious benefits from collaborating with other public sector bodies, previous attempts to do so across the Gwent PSB have proved challenging and are reliant on partners wanting to pursue opportunities. This recommendation, therefore, is not entirely in the Council's gift to resolve.</p> <p>That said, the advent of Agile working practices do clearly provide new opportunities for redundant building capacity to be utilised by either private or public partners, maximising the use of assets while reducing the costs.</p> <p>The Council is currently formalising its approach to Agile working and in doing so is assessing its future capacity requirements across its administrative buildings. As this exercise concludes, the Council will engage partners to assess the opportunities to co-locate.</p>	December 2022	<p>Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services</p>
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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.  
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

## Management response

**Report title:** Springing Forward Assets – Caerphilly County Borough Council

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R1	<p><b>Develop a longer-term asset strategy</b></p> <p>In developing its asset management strategy, the Council should ensure that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) takes account of longer-term trends that may affect service provision and the efficient use of assets;</li> <li>b) ensures alignment with the outcome of other relevant strategic documents, including decarbonisation and digital strategies;</li> <li>c) sets out the Council's intended outcomes over the short, medium and longer term;</li> <li>d) sets out SMART performance measures that provide insight to decision makers, and</li> </ul>	1. Fully Accepted	<p>The Council is in the process of appointing a new Head of Land and Property who will have responsibility, among other things, for redeveloping and integrating the Council's Asset Management Plans and ensuring they integrate with the wider suite of strategic documents.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the new post holder will take up the role in the Autumn and the approach to refreshing the Council's approach to Asset Management will be a key priority.</p> <p>As part of the redevelopment of the approaches to Asset Management, the Council will ensure appropriate outputs and outcomes are set with targets and timescales introduced where appropriate.</p> <p>The Council will also seek to include some specific recurrent questions within its next Caerphilly Conversation that will provide insight into resident's views on community assets and their use.</p>	<p>April 2023</p> <p>April 2023</p> <p>April 2023</p> <p>January 2023</p>	<p>Corporate Director Economy and Environment</p> <p>Corporate Director Economy and Environment</p> <p>Head of Land and Property</p> <p>Head of Transformation</p>



	<p>e) revises the Service Area Management Plan criteria to include active consideration of residents' needs over the medium to longer term.</p>				
R2	<p><b>Assign Resources</b> Secure sufficient and skilled resources to deliver the strategic vision effectively, including to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) manage the disposal or transfer of surplus assets;</li> <li>b) implement digital solutions, and</li> <li>c) engage with and involve communities around their needs.</li> </ul>	1. Fully Accepted	<p>The Council is currently in the process of appointing a Head of Land and Property.</p> <p>The Council is currently developing a new approach to Recruitment and Selection designed to enhance its chances of securing and retaining critical resources.</p> <p>The Council has identified this specific recruitment gap as a risk and is exploring a range of alternative options to further build capacity and expertise from the private and public sector. This will allow us to capture opportunities a strategic partner can bring as well as building on additional public sector collaboration</p> <p>The Council is exploring opportunities to provide additional support for critical resources through an enhanced relationship with its supply chains.</p>	<p>Autumn 2022</p> <p>Autumn 2022</p> <p>Ongoing across 2023</p> <p>Autumn 2022</p>	<p>Corporate Director Economy and Environment</p> <p>Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services</p> <p>Corporate Director Economy and Environment &amp; Head of Human Resources</p> <p>Head of Customer and Digital</p>

			<p>The Council is actively implementing a cloud strategy to future proof its approach to the delivery of digital solutions through the use of Software as a Service.</p> <p>The Council, as well as adapting its Caerphilly Conversation to seek views on assets, will strengthen further the involvement aspects of any disposals or changes to existing services.</p> <p>Strategic community involvement work is already programmed to ensure assets, particularly those linked to the Walk In Services corporate review, are developed around community need.</p> <p>This approach is in line with the council's Consultation and Engagement Framework, adopted in February 2020.</p> <p>Ongoing process of highlighting opportunities within the Community Asset Transfer scheme with community members during engagement process</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>January 2023</p> <p>In line with timescales associated with Walk In Services corporate review</p>	<p>Head of Customer and Digital</p> <p>Head of Transformation</p> <p>Transformation Lead – Insight and Intelligence to support oversee work of wider Walk In Services project group</p>
R3	<p><b>Evaluate the benefits of partnership working</b></p> <p>Collaborate with public sector partners across Gwent to evaluate the potential benefits of developing a strategic long-term approach to a single public estate.</p>	2. Partially Accepted	<p>While there are clear and obvious benefits from collaborating with other public sector bodies, previous attempts to do so across the Gwent PSB have proved challenging and are reliant on partners wanting to pursue opportunities. This recommendation, therefore, is not entirely in the Council's gift to resolve.</p>		

That said, the advent of Agile working practices do clearly provide new opportunities for redundant building capacity to be utilised by either private or public partners, maximising the use of assets while reducing the costs.

The Council is currently formalising its approach to Agile working and in doing so is assessing its future capacity requirements across its administrative buildings. As this exercise concludes, the Council will engage partners to assess the opportunities to co-locate.

December 2022

Corporate Director  
Education and  
Corporate Services

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