

Pecyn Dogfennau Cyhoeddus

Penallta House,
Tredomen Park,
Ystrad Mynach,
Hengoed CF82 7PG

Ty Penallta,
Parc Tredomen,
Ystrad Mynach,
Hengoed CF82 7PG



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Am unrhyw ymholiad yn ymwneud â'r agenda hwn cysylltwch â Jo Thomas
(Rhif Ffôn: 07714600912 Ebost: thomaj8@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Dyddiad: Dydd Mercher, 12 Hydref 2023

I bwy bynnag a fynno wybod,

Bydd cyfarfod aml-leoliad o'r **Cabinet** yn cael ei gynnal yn yn Nhŷ Penallta a thrwy Microsoft Teams ar **Dydd Mercher, 18fed Hydref, 2023 am 1.00 pm.** i ystyried materion a gynhwysir yn yr agenda canlynol. Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r iaith Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, a dylid rhoi cyfnod rhybudd o 3 diwrnod gwaith os ydych yn dymuno gwneud hynny. Bydd gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd yn cael ei ddarparu ar gais.

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Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Christina Harrhy
PRIF WEITHREDWR

A G E N D A

Tudalennau

1 I dderbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb

A greener place Man gwyrddach

Correspondence may be in any language or format | Gallwch ohebu mewn unrhyw iaith neu fformat



2 Datganiadau o Ddiddordeb.

Atgoffir Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion o'u cyfrifoldeb personol i ddatgan unrhyw gysylltiad(au) personol a/neu ragfarnllyd mewn perthynas ag unrhyw eitem o fusnes ar y rhaglen yn unol â Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000, Cyfansoddiad y Cyngor a'r Cod Ymddygiad ar gyfer y ddau. Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion.

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Cylchrediad:

Cynghorwyr

C. Andrews, S. Cook, E. Forehead, N. George, P. Leonard, S. Morgan, C. Morgan, J. Pritchard a E. Stenner,

A Swyddogion Priodol.

SUT FYDDWN YN DEFNYDDIO EICH GWYBODAETH

Bydd yr unigolion hynny sy'n mynychu cyfarfodydd pwyllgor i siarad/roi tystiolaeth yn cael eu henwi yng nghofnodion y cyfarfod hynny, weithiau bydd hyn yn cynnwys eu man gweithio neu fusnes a'r barnau a fynegir. Bydd cofnodion o'r cyfarfod gan gynnwys manylion y siaradwyr ar gael i'r cyhoedd ar wefan y Cyngor ar www.caerffili.gov.uk ac eithrio am drafodaethau sy'n ymwneud ag eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig.

Mae gennych nifer o hawliau mewn perthynas â'r wybodaeth, gan gynnwys yr hawl i gael mynediad at wybodaeth sydd gennym amdanoch a'r hawl i gwyno os ydych yn anhapus gyda'r modd y mae eich gwybodaeth yn cael ei brosesu.

Am wybodaeth bellach ar sut rydym yn prosesu eich gwybodaeth a'ch hawliau, ewch i'r [Hysbysiad Preifatrwydd Cyfarfodydd Pwyllgor Llawn](#) ar ein gwefan neu cysylltwch â Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol drwy e-bostio griffd2@caerffili.gov.uk neu ffoniwch 01443 863028.

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 1.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

J. Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change), C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities), N. George (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property and Highways), E. Forehead (Cabinet Member for Social Care), P. Leonard (Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection), C. Morgan (Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces) and E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance).

Together with:

R. Edmunds (Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services) and D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive).

Also in Attendance:

S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community & Leisure Services), A. West (Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager), G. Richards (Highway Services Group Manager), P. Hudson (Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader), K. Peters (Corporate Policy Manager), S. Wilcox (Programme Development Manager), J. Roberts-Waite (Head of Strategy and Development), M. Noakes (Development Manager), N. Taylor-Williams (Head of Housing)

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Leader 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 for absence were received from Councillor S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Housing) C. Harray (Chief Executive) and M.S. Williams Corporate Director Economy and Environment).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. MINUTES – 26 JULY 2023

RESOLVED the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

4. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE

Cabinet was provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports until 13th December 2023.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the Forward Work Programme be noted. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

5. DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE STRATEGY – HOUSING

The Cabinet Member for Social Care presented the report on behalf of the Cabinet for Housing. The Cabinet Member stated that there are currently 6300 people on the Council Common Housing Register, and of those, 360 people are in temporary accommodation and are awaiting homes that better suit their needs it is clear from the continuing effects of COVID and the Cost of Living Crisis with the increase in rents and mortgages that there will be further demand for Council homes as one of 11 Councils across Wales who have retained their housing stock, Caerphilly Homes, is in an advantageous position of having the ability to build new low carbon affordable homes in response to the ever pressing need.

Consideration was given to a report that sought Cabinet approval for Caerphilly Homes to deliver 100 low carbon affordable home per annum and to approve the Caerphilly Homes adopts the Design Commission for Wales' Placemaking Charter, which sets out high level quality and design standards that will inform and underpin each Caerphilly Homes development.

Cabinet noted the report had been considered at the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 18th July, 2023, and noted the comments that were made.

The report provided Cabinet with details of the content of the first Development and Governance Strategy for Caerphilly Homes.

It was noted that the Strategy sets out the governance arrangements that are required by Caerphilly Homes to underpin the development of new build homes, the core objectives, the development process, and overall Strategy to increase delivery.

It was further noted that the report proposed the creation of a Development and Governance Project Board (DGPB) that would oversee the delivery of the development programme and will have delegated responsibility for agreeing a range of decisions that are necessary to underpin the creation of an agile, fleet of foot, development programme similar to the TACP programme Board. The TACP Programme Board will be assumed within the DGPB.

Following a query raised the Head of Housing advised Cabinet that general principles of the Placemaking Charter would benefit all residents of Caerphilly in the future not only individual developments but would generally improve the surroundings and neighbourhoods throughout the Borough by looking at local communities and choosing the most suitable locations for new

developments, prioritizing sustainable travel, walking, cycling and public transport creating well defined safe and welcoming streets and public spaces promoting sustainable mix of uses to make places vibrant and also making sure there's value and respect to the positive distinctive qualities and different spaces.

Cabinet sought clarification on whether, the Monitoring Officer and the S151 Officer have any objections or views for the development of the Governance Project Board and financial pressures.

Cabinet noted that the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer have been consulted regularly while developing the report and are in support of the formation of the Governance Project Board and advantages of having the Board in place.

Cabinet further noted that the Cabinet Member for Housing will form part of this Board, if they feel there is a need for full Cabinet to consider a particular issue then it will be presented to the Cabinet. Also, within the report, there is a mechanism for Cabinet to receive regular updates on what the decisions the Board has made.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED for reasons contained within the Officers report:-

1. The comments of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee be noted.
2. The establishment of the Development and Governance Project Board (DGPB) be approved.
3. The responsibilities of the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) Board are assumed by the Development and Governance Project Board.
4. The delivery of 100 low carbon affordable homes per annum be approved.
5. The Design Commission for Wales' Placemaking Charter be adopted by the Council as it underpins the design quality for all Caerphilly Homes Developments, and the Council becomes a signatory to the Charter.

6. WINTER SERVICE PLAN UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report that sought Cabinet approval for the Winter Service Plan (WSP) as policy and as part of fulfilling our statutory duties under the Highways Act 1980, to provide a safe highway network and provided Cabinet with an update on key winter service activities and priorities in relation to winter maintenance and flooding.

Cabinet noted, Highways Operations has produced a Winter Service Plan since the inception of Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC). The purpose of the plan is to explain the Council's responsibilities for maintaining the highway infrastructure network during the winter maintenance period (currently October to April). The plan also provides guidance to elected councillors, council staff and the public on operational procedures and contact points during the winter maintenance period.

Cabinet raised a query on whether the new 20mph speed restrictions would impact the Winter Plan, for example gritting in the winter months. The Head of Infrastructure advised Cabinet there will be an impact. There has been a trial undertaken on the restricted routes and there has been an increase of 15 to 20 minutes to each route. This year monitoring will be undertaken in the winter months, and should there be a requirement, there could potentially be an additional route which will be an increase to 9 routes. If this is the case, it will require a

lot of work to change because route optimisation is used to get the efficiencies of the routes. There are also software updates that will have to be implemented to the software used in the vehicles.

Clarification was sought on whether Climate Change has an impact on the Winter Plan. The Officer confirmed that it does have an impact. The Officer explained that although we are seeing warmer temperatures in winter, when there is an event, it is extreme for example there could be more extreme flooding or extreme snow fall.

Cabinet acknowledged that the Winter Maintenance Plan is incredibly complex and an excellent piece of work.

Subject to the inclusion of an additional recommendation 3.2 to read: Future annual reviews will be reported to CMT and should any significant amendments to the plan be identified Cabinet endorsement will be sought it was moved and seconded that the recommendation be approved.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED for reasons contained within the Officers report and subject to an additional recommendation:

1. The Winter Service Plan be approved.
2. Future annual reviews be reported to CMT and should any significant amendments to the plan be identified Cabinet endorsement be sought.

7. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Consideration was given to a report which presented Cabinet with the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) which is part of the Council's Performance Framework.

The report provided Cabinet with a summary of information and analysis for the period April 2022 to March 2023. Cabinet were advised the CPA forms part of the overall Council 'self-assessment' activity.

It was noted that the CPA was presented to Joint Scrutiny on 20th July 2023 where members were invited to discuss, challenge, and scrutinise the information within the report. Following Joint Scrutiny, the CPA is now submitted to Cabinet for endorsement.

It was further noted that the Council's Performance Framework was endorsed by Cabinet in February 2020 and the report introduces one of the key components of the Framework, the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA). The CPA is a 'self-assessment' of the Authority's progress across a wide range of information types. The CPA is an opportunity for members to ask, how well we are performing? and what evidence are we using to determine this.

In response to a query raised the Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services advised Cabinet that CCBC sickness levels are in the lower quartile compared to other LA's. However, not all Councils submit their figures, which is carried out on a yearly basis. It was noted that the level of sickness is declining, however, there is a further work to be carried out.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED for reasons contained within the Officers report;

1. The comments and challenge of the Council's Corporate

Performance Assessment for the period April 2022 to March 2023 from Joint Scrutiny as set out within section 10 be noted.

2. The Corporate Performance Assessment for the period April 2022 to March 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 be endorsed.

8. PUBLIC PROTECTION ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022/23

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 13th June 2023.

Consideration was given to a report which sought Cabinet approval of the review of progress and performance of Public Protection enforcement and advice activity in compliance with the adopted Public Protection Enforcement Policy, including outcomes of investigations undertaken under the auspices of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act. Cabinet were also asked to consider, in accordance with the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's Code of Practice, the Council's CCTV surveillance camera system to ensure that it remains necessary, proportionate and effective.

In response from a query raised, the Head of Public Protection and Community & Leisure Services advised Cabinet, that Gwent Police do request information from Public Protection in relation to any CCTV footage that may be available, this could be in relation to any crimes or antisocial behaviour that has occurred.

Cabinet sought clarification on why there have been such a high number of dogs that have been impounded and what is the cost to the Local Authority.

The Officer explained that in recent months there has been a high number of warrants exercised in relation to illegal dog breeding. Due to the high numbers of dogs being seized, the nature of the dogs and their poor condition it has created an issue with kennelling. It was noted the Council are working with Hope Rescue who are assisting with the issue, however this has incurred quite a significant cost. Following any prosecution there is an application made to the court to recover any costs, where it is appropriate.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection congratulated the Trading Standards Team for such a wonderful outcome in regard to the rescuing the dogs.

It was noted that in relation to underage sales of vapes and other age restricted products, such as alcohol and cigarettes, Trading Standards have carried out a number of test purchase with the use of underage volunteers targeting specific premises. In the past few weeks there has been a successful prosecuting against a trader who sold vapes to an underage volunteer. The fine for this offence was £1250.00.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED for reasons contained within the Officers report;

1. The content of the report including comments made by the meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on the 13th June 2023 as detailed in section 11 be considered.
2. The review of progress and performance of Public Protection enforcement and advice activity in compliance with the adopted Public Protection Enforcement Policy including outcomes of investigations

undertaken under the auspices of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act be approved.

3. The Council's CCTV surveillance camera system remains necessary, proportionate and effective in accordance with the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's Code of Practice be agreed.

9. PROPOSAL FOR THE CLOSURE OF CWM GLAS INFANTS SCHOOL

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by Education and Social Services Committee on 12th September 2023.

Consideration was given to a report which sought Cabinet approval on the recommendation to proceed to consultation in respect of the closure of Cwm Glas Infant School by July 2024.

Cabinet noted that due to the falling rolls at Cwm Glas Infant school which are projected to decrease further, a meeting was arranged by the Head Teacher and the Governing body with Local Authority representatives including the Chief Education Officer, to discuss the future viability of the school. The conclusion of the meeting agreed the school could no longer maintain a balanced budget and an appropriate staffing level, therefore a decision was made by the Head Teacher and Governing Body of the School to pursue closure of Cwm Glas Infant School with effect from July 2024.

It was further noted that at present Cwm Glas Infant School shares a catchment area with Coed Y Brain Primary School where pupils transition to at Key Stage 2 subject to parental preference.

The proposal seeks to transition the pupils at Foundation Phase, to deliver an inclusive all-through primary school provision. Subject to Cabinet approval, this will result in the proposed closure of Cwm Glas Infants School with effect from July 2024.

Cabinet sought clarification on how many surplus places there currently are within Caerphilly schools and are we likely to see school closures in the future. The Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager advised Cabinet there is currently 18% surplus within the Primary Sector and 15% percent within the Secondary Sector, this can be subject to change dependent on a number of factors and provision that we may put in place, such as Community usage, childcare, etcetera. The number of live births is declining all across Wales. The Schools and Local Authority work together to share data on an annual basis and look at ways to address surplus places, such as childcare or community usage.

Following a query raised Cabinet were informed that live birth data is received on an annual basis from the Health Authority. Between 2015 to 2021 there has been a decline in circa 500 children in the live birth data in Caerphilly. In 2023 there has been an indication that there has been a very small increase in live births.

Cabinet noted, that even though the Local Ward Members are disappointed in the situation at Cwm Glas, they fully understand the rationale behind the proposal as do the school and Governing Body.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED for reasons contained within the Officers report :-

1. The content of the report be noted.

2. Proceeding to consultation on the proposal to close Cwm Glas Infant School with effect from July 2024 be approved.

10. SHARED PROSPERITY FUND – SPF PROGRAMME BOARD AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consideration was given to a report which provided Cabinet with an update on the position of CCBC with regards to the role of the UKSPF Programme Board in providing executive leadership to the delivery of the Local Investment Plan under the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund as part of the UK wide Levelling Up programme.

The report sought Cabinet approval for revised Terms of Reference for the SPF Programme Board; and seeks appropriate delegation for the Board to make timely decisions on virement of funding within the Programme in recognition of the extremely tight time constraints associated with the delivery of the SPF Programme by March 2025.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance and the Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change wished to place on record their support and thanks for Officers in terms of getting the money to the doors as quick as possible, particularly to the business community.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved and by way of Microsoft Forms this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED for reasons contained within the Officers report the up-to-date Terms of Reference for the SPF Programme Board included in Appendix 1 that outlines the appropriate delegation for the Board to make timely decisions on virement of funding within the SPF Programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 14.04 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 18th October 2023.

CHAIR

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 10th October 2023

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
18/10/2023 13:00	NRW CCBC Collaboration Agreement - Cwmcarn Forest Drive	To allow Cabinet to review the outcome of the 2-year pilot in respect of the CCBC management of the Cwmcarn Forest Drive and consider whether or not to extend the collaboration agreement for the continued management of the drive with Natural Resources Wales for a further 5 year period.	Antony Bolter/Allan Dallimore	Cllr James Pritchard
18/10/2023	Caerphilly Homes – Re-development of the Former Oakdale Comprehensive School	To seek Cabinet approval for the signing of a delivery agreement (DA) via SCAPE with Willmott Dixon to deliver an 85 new home mixed tenure scheme.	Jane Roberts-Waite/Mark Noakes/Steve Wilcox and colleagues from Wilmott Dixon	Cllr Shayne Cook
18/10/2023	Caerphilly Homes – Re-development of the Former Ty Darran Care Home, Risca	To seek Cabinet approval for the signing of a delivery agreement (DA) via SCAPE with Willmott Dixon to deliver a 46 new, affordable home later living scheme which will set the ambition for the future of later living accommodation in the county borough.	Jane Roberts-Waite/Mark Noakes/Steve Wilcox and colleagues from Wilmott Dixon	Cllr Shayne Cook
18/10/2023	Additional highway safety works - B4251 Gelligroes to Ynysddu	To seek cabinet approval for additional highway safety related works on the B4251, Gelligroes to Ynysddu	Chris Adams/Marcus Lloyd	Cllr Nigel George
18/10/2023	Recycling Contamination Process	To agree a process to reduce contamination of recycling materials key issue	Rhodri Lloyd/Marcus Lloyd	Cllr Chris Morgan

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 10th October 2023

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
18/10/2023	Exempt item - Ness Tar	Exempt item subject to Public Interest Test	Rhian Kyte	Cllr James Pritchard
15/11/2023 13:00 p.m.	Annual Report for Corporate Complaints 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023	To review and assess the effectiveness of complaints handling in respect of the annual data for 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 under the Corporate Complaints Policy.	Lisa Lane	Cllr Nigel George
15/11/2023	Support for pupils unable to attend school (formerly "Tuition" report).	To seek Cabinet approval for proposals for revising the model of support for pupils accessing tuition.	Keri Cole	Cllr Carol Andrews
15/11/2023	Revised Town Centre Management Model	For Cabinet to consider the outcomes of the trial of an alternative town centre management model and determine the preferred way forward.	Rhian Kyte/Jo Hillier Raikes	Cllr James Pritchard
15/11/2023	Corporate Plan (including Well-Being Objectives) 2023 to 2028	To consider the Councils Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives 2023 to 2028	Christina HARRY	Leader/Cllr Eluned Stenner
15/11/2023	Write-off debts over £20,000 – Business Rate Arrears for LTD Companies	Cabinet is asked to determine the business rate debts detailed within the report be written-off on the grounds that they are irrecoverable.	John Carpenter	Cllr Eluned Stenner
13/12/2023 13:00 p.m.	Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Proposal – Ysgol Y Lawnt / Upper Rhymney Primary	For Cabinet to consider the Consultation Report and approve the publication of a Statutory Notice	Sue Richards/Andrea West	Cllr Carol Andrews
13/12/2023	Proposal for the closure of Cwm Glas Infants School	For Cabinet to consider the Consultation Report and	Sue Richards/Andrea West	Cllr Carol Andrews

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 10th October 2023

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
		approve the publication of a Statutory Notice		
13/12/2023	Corporate Self Assessment	For Cabinet to consider the Council Self-Assessment report 2022/23	Sue Richards	Cllr Eluned Stenner
13/12/2023	HRA Budget Outturn Report 2023	For Cabinet to consider the HRA Budget Outturn Report for 2022/2023	Lesley Allen	Cllr Shayne Cook
13/12/2023	Housing Offices Rationalisation Report	As part of a review of how we provide housing services to our customers and communities, and following a comprehensive customer consultation exercise, we are seeking approval to permanently close all existing Housing Offices, replacing them with a centralised Housing Office in Penallta House. This will facilitate service modernisation and improvements by reducing the need for customers to travel to a housing office to receive services, making housing officers more available to our customers through working agilely within our communities, thereby increasing opportunities for access and engagement and building better relationships with our customers.	Fiona Wilkins/Julie Reynolds/Nick Taylor-Williams	Cllr Shayne Cook

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 10th October 2023

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
13/12/2023	Greater Blackwood Masterplan	For Members to consider the Draft Greater Blackwood Masterplan. The report will seek the views of members prior to its presentation to Cabinet, where Cabinet will be asked to endorse the Draft Masterplan as the basis for a public consultation exercise.	Rhian Kyte	Cllr James Pritchard
13/12/2023	Cwm Ifor Solar Farm final business case	Consideration of updated financial information and options for Cwm Ifor Solar Farm to inform whether to proceed with granting additional funding for the grid connection followed by progression of the final business case.	Anna Lewis/Paul Cooke/Sue Richards	Cllr James Pritchard
17/01/2024 13:00 p.m.	Caerphilly Cares Support Package for families eligible for free school meals	Welsh Government withdrawal of free school meals for eligible families during the school holidays	Tina McMahon	Cllr Carol Andrews
17/01/2024	Draft Waste Strategy	To approve the draft waste strategy for public consultation	Marcus Lloyd/Hayley Jones	Cllr Chris Morgan
17/01/2024	Draft Budget Proposals for 2024/25	To present Cabinet with details of the draft budget proposals for the 2024/25 financial year to allow for a period of consultation prior to a final decision by Council on 27 February 2024.	Christina Harray/ Stephen Harris	Cllr Eluned Stenner



CABINET - 18TH OCTOBER 2023

**SUBJECT: REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER OAKDALE
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SITE BY CAERPHILLY HOMES**

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval from Members to sign the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon to enable the construction of the first Caerphilly Homes mixed tenure development to start in Autumn 2023.
- 1.2 Approve the inclusion of a later living scheme within the Oakdale development which is designed specifically to replace the sheltered housing scheme (scheduled for decommissioning) at Ty Melin.
- 1.3 Approve the signing of a PCSA (Pre-Construction Delivery Agreement) to further progress the design and development of the newly proposed later living element of the scheme.
- 1.4 Approve the signing of a PCSA to undertake the investigatory site investigation works and design development of the Ty Melin site which will be brought forward for inclusion in the Caerphilly Homes development programme. It is proposed that due to the proximity and relationship of the existing Ty Melin site to the former Oakdale School site, the development of the site be added to the Oakdale development programme in order to ensure the continuity of the scheme through a 2.5-3 year development period.
- 1.5 The report was considered by the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the 19th September 2023; comments from the Committee are included in Section 10 of the report.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In 2021 Caerphilly Homes signed a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with Willmott Dixon via the public sector compliant SCAPE Framework.
- 2.2 The signing of the agreement signalled a desire by Caerphilly Homes to bring forward the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site for its first flagship mixed tenure scheme.

- 2.3 Since the signing of the PCSA a significant amount of work has been undertaken to develop a scheme that has placed placemaking at the heart of the proposal. The design team have ensured that they have worked with the topography and biodiversity of the site retaining a number of category A and B trees and not over densifying the site. Outline planning permission was secured in 2022 and a reserved matters application is under consideration.
- 2.4 Subject to members agreeing to sign the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon at Cabinet on the 18th October 2023, work will start on site on 30 October 2023. The timeline for practical completion is October 2025.
- 2.5 Subject to members agreeing the inclusion of a replacement later living scheme for Ty Melin and agreeing the signing of a PCSA, the scheme will include 26 later living apartments.
- 2.6 If members approve the inclusion of a later living scheme into the current proposal as a replacement for Ty Melin, it is further proposed that Caerphilly Homes sign a PSCA agreement with Willmott Dixon to begin the exploratory site investigation and design work to bring forward the Ty Melin site following the move by existing residents from Ty Melin into the new scheme on the Oakdale site. The Ty Melin site already lies within the HRA and subject to receipt of positive site investigations will be brought forward for affordable housing as part of the Caerphilly Homes development programme.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet approve the inclusion of the later living element of the scheme which will result in the residents of Ty Melin, Croespenmaen relocating into the new accommodation on the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site and the existing Ty Melin site being redeveloped post 2025.
- 3.2 Cabinet approve the signing of the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon which will allow the development to start on site in October 2023.
- 3.3 Cabinet approve the signing of a PCSA with Willmott Dixon to undertake the design work necessary to include the later living scheme into the wider site and also approve the signing of a separate PCSA to undertake the site investigatory and design work necessary to bring forward the Ty Melin site into the Caerphilly Homes development programme.
- 3.4 Members endorse the proposal to develop a Social Value Plan which will relate to all developments undertaken by Willmott Dixon in the county borough. Under the SCAPE Framework arrangement 20% of the contract value will be attributed to the delivery of social value including an extensive construction related employment programme.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To deliver the ambitions contained within the Caerphilly Homes Governance and Development Strategy (Cabinet 20th September 2023).
- 4.2 To bring back the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site into beneficial use and provide an alternative later living scheme to the one in existence at Ty Melin (Croespenmaen).

- 4.3 Bring forward the existing Ty Melin site following decommission into the Caerphilly Homes development programme to deliver additional affordable homes.
- 4.4 To provide high quality, low carbon, energy efficient homes for current residents of Ty Melin.
- 4.5 Ensure that Caerphilly Homes' investment in new homes delivers wider social, economic and environmental outcomes for residents, communities and businesses throughout the county borough.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1.1 The site of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School was vacated in 2016 and cleared as a result of demolition in 2019.
- 5.1.2 In 2019, following the creation of a dedicated Strategy and Development team, Caerphilly Homes began the process of exploring the potential viability of the site for residential development. Willmott Dixon were procured as development partner and carried out an initial feasibility study.
- 5.1.3 On the 9th September 2020, Cabinet made a decision to sign a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with Willmott Dixon to move to the next phase of development, in order to undertake detailed site investigation work and a detailed development appraisal. With over 100 development appraisals undertaken and a significant number of design iterations, this work is now almost concluded, and the design and development proposal has been submitted to Planning as a reserved matters application. Outline planning was approved in March 2022.
- 5.1.4 The site is particularly challenging, not least because of the significant difference in levels on the site and the number of constraints including the need to retain trees and provide ecological enhancements.
- 5.1.5 The site originally fell within the general fund portfolio and was appropriated to the HRA in March 2022.
- 5.1.6 The proposed mixed tenure development comprises 92 homes. This is not only the Council's first flagship development but also the first mixed tenure site that the Council will deliver.
- 5.1.7 The Caerphilly Homes Occupational Therapist has been engaged in the scheme and two accessible bungalows will be provided within the development to meet the specific needs of two families who are currently on the Common Housing Register.
- 5.1.8 In order to ensure the site is as attractive and marketable as possible and due regard is given to placemaking and facilitating the creation of a cohesive community which sits neatly within an existing, well-established community. The design team have been very sensitive to the immediate surroundings, existing ecology and habitats that exist within the site. Every effort has been made to ensure that 'quality' runs throughout the design, the materials, and the environment. It sets the bar high for future Caerphilly Homes developments.
- 5.1.9 Caerphilly Homes will build to Building Regulations 2025 across the site regardless of tenure and to WDQR (Welsh Design Quality Requirements). This will result in a

larger floor space across the market sale homes than those provided by competitors and hopefully result in people seeking to purchase plots off plan. It will also mean higher costs per square metre however, if plots fail to sell, Caerphilly Homes will look to absorb those homes back into the affordable element of the scheme thereby mitigating the financial risk resulting from any unsold market sale homes.

- 5.1.10 Willmott Dixon have undertaken a commercial assessment of the local market on behalf of Caerphilly Homes which has involved undertaking comparisons of house types, floor space etc offered by competitors. Our homes have been designed and priced to sell.
- 5.1.11 Building to Building Regulations 2025 across the site also means that all homes will offer occupants the highest level of energy efficiency and comfort thereby lowering energy costs for occupants, (both Caerphilly Homes customers and those which are owner occupied).
- 5.1.12 Caerphilly Homes has commissioned a significant amount of research into the sourcing and supply of photovoltaics and battery storage and the benefits of their use on the site. Both were considered as options on this scheme in order to achieve the EPC A rating requested by Welsh Government. However, the research (undertaken by Mark Morant Consulting) suggested that on a site of this size, the use of photovoltaics would offer very little benefit. The ethics behind the sourcing of the materials contained in photovoltaics and battery storage were of concern as was the ongoing liability relating to maintenance and the fact that they are currently unable to be recycled at end of life. Caerphilly Homes intends to keep a close eye on this market as the technology is evolving and Welsh Government direction re EPC ratings as these solutions may be appropriate for other Caerphilly Homes sites in the future.
- 5.1.13 Caerphilly Homes have discussed the fabric first approach and the Mechanical and Electrical strategy that will be adopted on site with the Welsh Government's Technical Scrutiny team who are content that the solution proposed (which is based on the IHP funded pilot sites and delivery to Building Regulations 2025) will deliver new, energy efficient low carbon homes as per the Welsh Government's WDQR standards. From an EPC perspective they will have an EPC rating of B. Welsh Government acknowledge that EPC ratings are not the best method by which to evaluate the energy efficiency and air tightness of a home. It is likely that the EPC measurement will be reviewed shortly and will take in account the use of electric heating systems. The focus on fabric first, air tightness and ventilation will result in the creation of 92 new, low carbon, low energy cost, healthy homes.
- 5.1.14 Part F of the 2025 Building Regulations include new standards for ventilation whilst Part L sets out minimum energy performance targets, air tightness and improved insulation.
- 5.1.15 The high-level specification to which all new, Caerphilly Homes will conform is set out in the Development and Governance Strategy Report that was considered and approved by Cabinet on 20 September 2023. All Caerphilly Homes developments will seek to meet Building Regulations 2025 as a minimum.

Ty Melin / Agile Aging Proposal

- 5.1.16 In a report that was discussed and approved by Cabinet in 2018 approval was given to consider remodelling the Ty Melin sheltered housing scheme at Croespenmaen in accordance with WHQS. It has since become apparent that the costs to remodel the scheme to ensure compliance with WHQS23 would be unachievable. As a result, the

project team (including Caerphilly Homes, Architects Holder Mathias, Engineers Cambria and Willmott Dixon) were asked in April 2023 whether it would be possible to incorporate a new, low carbon, contemporary sheltered housing scheme within the parameters of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site.

- 5.1.17 The site is hugely challenging in relation to the topography and levels of the site. In exploring the art of the possible, the Architects and Engineers have advised that a new, low carbon, agile aging scheme could be accommodated within the area of the site that is currently occupied by the existing MUGA. This would enable the existing residents of Ty Melin to move into a new modern, energy efficient scheme which is situated in sustainable location opposite the post office, public house, shop and on a main transport route. It would also provide a light and open area for communal events and facilitate and encourage greater interaction with the wider community. The vacant Ty Melin site would then be incorporated into the Caerphilly Homes development programme for delivery of a new residential scheme post 2025.
- 5.1.18 The inclusion of an agile aging scheme within the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site has helped to improve the design in an area of the proposed development that is quite challenging. It has also increased the financial viability of the scheme as Caerphilly Homes can draw down SHG grant on an increased proportion of affordable homes.
- 5.1.19 Following receipt of approval from Cabinet, an engagement and involvement strategy will be drafted to ensure that prospective residents remain apprised of the scheme and have the opportunity to input into the emerging design. There are current 14 households (16 residents in total) based in Ty Melin. An initial conversation has taken place with ward members and residents to outline the new proposals. Existing residents living at Ty Melin were supportive of the proposals and are excited to be involved in the design of the scheme and to move into the new accommodation.

Contract Arrangements

- 5.1.20 Willmott Dixon will be procured via the Public Sector Compliant SCAPE Framework to deliver 92 new homes on the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site. The Pre Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) for the new later living scheme will also be procured via the Framework and Ty Melin, which is a separate arrangement appended to the Oakdale development, via the SCAPE Framework.
- 5.1.21 The SCAPE National Construction Framework is a fully compliant public sector Framework developed by a partnership including Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Gateshead Council, Warwickshire County Council which has delivered over 1200 public sector led schemes across the UK. The Framework permits the direct award of projects to Willmott Dixon worth between £7.5m - £75m. The Framework expires in September 2025.
- 5.1.22 Working with a Tier 1 contractor that has a regional base and employs a significant number of people from within the region, assists in supporting the circular economy and helps mitigate risk to the Council.
- 5.1.23 Caerphilly Homes has utilised the Framework on the IHP funded schemes in Treceyndd and Trethomas and also via a PCSA on Ty Darran.
- 5.1.24 As per the IHP funded schemes in Treceyndd and Trethomas, Willmott Dixon continue to work closely with Caledan Ltd, a light-weight steel frame manufacturer

based on Penallta Industrial Estate. The delivery of this project together with the flagship later living scheme at Ty Darran, will result in the creation of 8 new employment opportunities at Caledan who will be part of a new, social value programme that will be informed and influenced by Caerphilly Cares and be delivered by Willmott Dixon and its wider supply chain. As per the requirements of the SCAPE public sector compliant Framework, 20% of the total contract value will be committed to delivering social value obligations that will be set out in a specific social value plan (which will include Oakdale, Ty Darran and Ty Melin) which is currently under development.

- 5.1.25 A social value plan containing employment, education, community and environmental targets is under development together with a specific employment workstream for veterans which links directly to the Council being a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant. This element or workstream will seek to engage ex-armed forces personnel / veterans directly in the project to provide them with training and skills to obtain secure employment but also a home. Caerphilly Homes have started the process of scoping out how the project would be organised and financed and have engaged with a national charity Alabare (who support ex-veterans), the Regional Armed Forces Covenant Officer, Caerphilly Cares and Willmott Dixon (who have an affiliation with the British Army) to discuss how the project may work. A project team have visited a similar project that is underway in Wilshire. Further details will be provided as part of the finalised social value plan.
- 5.1.26 The total project cost of the scheme is £35.2m of which £31.4m is attributed to Willmott Dixon and will be the figure included in the Delivery Agreement (DA). Caerphilly Homes will seek Social Housing Grant finance to part fund the delivery of the affordable element of the scheme. The market sale homes will need, as a minimum, to break even as the HRA cannot subsidise private sales.
- 5.1.27 Willmott Dixon have been working closely with local estate agents and mortgage providers to understand the local market for new build homes for sale. A showhome will be erected on site so that people interested in both the affordable offer and the market sale homes can engage in a customer experience thereby receiving an insight into the look, quality and feel of Caerphilly Homes and the surrounding community.
- 5.1.28 A Sales and Marketing Strategy is under preparation and the commercial element of the project will be led in partnership with Willmott Dixon. A commercial group comprising officers from the Council's Legal and Communications team will be established to oversee this element of the scheme.
- 5.1.29 This report seeks approval for the Council to enter into the next phase of the development process with Willmott Dixon via the signing of a Delivery Agreement that will see 92 new homes delivered on the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site at a total Delivery Agreement cost of £31.4m out of a total project cost of £35.2m (excluding any Welsh Social Housing Grant contribution). Excitingly it will be the first mixed tenure Caerphilly Homes development and will set the standard and the bar for future developments.
- 5.1.30 The report also seeks approval for Caerphilly Homes to enter into a PCSA agreement to undertake the design work necessary to include the later living scheme and a PCSA to undertake the site investigatory work and design work necessary to bring forward the Ty Melin site for development.

5.1.31 It is anticipated that, subject to approval, work will start on site in Oakdale on 30th October 2023 and be complete by October 2025 (104 calendar weeks). A second phased reserved matters application will be submitted for the new later living scheme following the satisfactory conclusion of the PCSA and the design work.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 There is no doubt that the development of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site represents an exciting opportunity for Caerphilly Homes' first, flagship, mixed tenure, development however it is not without its challenges.

5.2.2 Financial viability on this site is a challenge despite it being in a well-located, attractive and sustainable location. Viability has been tracked throughout the scheme development and an updated appraisal will be presented to Cabinet on the 18th October 2023.

5.2.3 The mortgage market is volatile, and the Bank of England are increasing rates further which could present a significant challenge to selling homes on the site. In the event that market sale homes are not purchased then Caerphilly Homes will give consideration to changing the designation of those homes thereby mitigating financial risk to the Council and the HRA.

5.2.4 The inclusion of a new later living scheme to replace the accommodation at Ty Melin is an exciting addition to the scheme and presents a unique opportunity to create a diverse, mixed tenure community which is already in part, integrated within the wider Penmaen / Crumlin ward area.

5.2.5 If, exploratory site investigations on the existing Ty Melin site are deemed positive, the site will be brought forward for inclusion into the Caerphilly Homes development programme.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 That the site will be seen as an attractive and vibrant place to live that is accessible and well located in a sustainable location.

6.2 Ground conditions are as assessed and there are no unforeseen challenges on the site.

6.3 Caerphilly Homes will be viewed as a developer that delivers quality homes.

6.4 That prospective purchasers will be willing to purchase off plan and be able to secure appropriate mortgage products.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment suggests that the Redevelopment of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site to deliver 92 new homes, which includes 26 later living apartments, will have a positive impact upon all persons seeking all types of homes within the Penmaen and adjacent wards.

7.2 **[Hyperlink to the Integrated Impact Assessment](#)**

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The total cost of the scheme based on 92 units is £35.2m of which, £31.4m is attributed to the costs of delivery by Willmott Dixon and will be included in the Delivery Agreement (DA). The affordable element of the scheme will be part funded by Social Housing Grant. The exact amount of grant that will be drawn to help deliver the scheme has yet to be determined.
- 8.2 The PCSA agreement to further the design and delivery of the later living scheme is estimated to be circa. £500,000. The PCSA agreement to bring forward the Ty Melin site is estimated to be circa. £650,000.
- 8.3 The exact cost of the Delivery Agreement and the PCSA's will be determined by the time the report is presented to Cabinet on the 18th October 2023 and a verbal update will be presented.
- 8.4 The development of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School Site is included in the HRA Business Plan over the next 3 years, along with an element of assumed SHG funding, together with an expectation of capital receipts at the end of the development for the sale of the non-affordable properties. Capital receipts at this stage are only assumed to recover the initial development costs of the non-affordable properties, but any surplus that may arise will be reinvested back into future development schemes.
- 8.5 The current Business Plan also assumes that borrowing will be necessary to progress schemes of this nature and the level of borrowing remains viable within the plan. The HRA has an agreed borrowing cap of £100m which has not yet been reached. The financial viability model has been calculated over a 50 year period.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Caerphilly Homes are in the process of recruiting a Construction Manager to oversee the delivery of the scheme. The Construction Manager will be supported by a Project Manager and a Clerk of Works.
- 9.2 The resources allocated to the project will be continually reviewed. Should additional resources be required, the need will be discussed with the Head of Service.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The ward members for Penmaen have been consulted and engaged in the development of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site since the scheme inception.
- 10.2 Consultation has also been undertaken with the local community as part of the statutory PAC process. Following approval of the delivery agreement, the cost plan, the social value plan and the sales and marketing strategy a community engagement and involvement plan will be formulated.
- 10.3 Following discussion by PDM the following teams have had sight of the draft Delivery

Agreement prior to its consideration at Cabinet.

- Legal
 - Building Consultancy
 - Insurance
 - Information Unit
 - Procurement
 - Caerphilly Homes (landlord services and repairs and maintenance)
- 10.4 Elected Members for the Crumlin ward were appraised of the proposal to decommission Ty Melin and to move the existing residents into a new later living scheme on the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site during a meeting on 27 July 2023. Both ward members were keen to understand how the residents of Ty Melin would feel about the move and could appreciate the benefits that new, more efficient accommodation would bring.
- 10.5 Existing residents at Ty Melin were engaged in a session on 31 July 2023 during which the plans were explained and some initial drawings shared. All residents were excited by the proposals and expressed their desire to be involved in discussions as the design of the new scheme evolves.
- 10.6 This report was presented to the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the 19th September 2023.
- 10.7 Members sought clarification on the MUGA equipment on site and were advised that officers are discussing this with Islwyn High School to seek to set up a new MUGA. The intention is to keep the existing MUGA at Oakdale site until the new MUGA is available, which is estimated at 5-6 months. The scrutiny committee asked about the increased distance from Oakdale to Islwyn High and were advised that there is another MUGA on the Persimmon site nearby.
- 10.8 The scrutiny committee asked for the reasons why the Ty Melin and other sites were not re-developed as part of the WHQS programme. Members were advised that there were a number of factors including the configuration and building materials used at these sites. This would have meant extensive costs to bring them up to WHQS standards, and were therefore deemed prohibitive. In addition, the apartments at these sites are very small and not fit for purpose, making them very difficult to let.
- 10.9 Members queried the plans for the new build which shows one-bedroom apartments and suggested that two bedroomed apartments would be required for couples or people who have carers. It was confirmed that although most apartments are one bedroomed there are also two bedroomed apartments planned.
- 10.10 The scrutiny committee sought further detail on the plans to include training in the employment programme and asked if training on new technology will be included. Members were assured that the intention is to provide opportunities to learn new skills for technology such as Heat Pumps, and modern methods of construction.
- 10.11 Members asked if the land being used (which is owned by CCBC) is reflected in the sale prices for the new homes, as compared with homes sold by private developers who must pay for the land. In addition it was asked if there a way to limit sales to local people. The scrutiny committee was advised that the land had to be paid for by Caerphilly Homes based on a valuation by the District Valuer. The land has to be appropriated to the HRA from the General Fund at market value. It isn't necessarily a

'cash' transaction. A further explanation can be provided by the Housing Accountant if required. Members were advised that it is not possible to limit sales to local people.

- 10.12 The scrutiny committee asked how many apartments are utilised at Ty Melin at present compared to the 33 that will be available at the new site. Members were advised that there are 16 occupiers at Ty Melin, some are couples. This development will increase the number of apartments available and there is an identified need for later living accommodation in the area.
- 10.13 Members asked if the later living accommodation will be prioritised for development ahead of the other builds, and were advised that the later living accommodation cannot proceed until the new MUGA is completed at Islwyn High School, but it is intended to discuss this with Wilmott Dixon.
- 10.14 The Armed Forces Champion stated that she was pleased to hear of the intention to provide opportunities to ex-service personnel. Members were advised that discussions have been held with the Armed Forces Covenant Officer, and are also working with the Charity Alabare. We are hoping to engage with ex-service people on the project and also seek to move those from temporary accommodation if they are on the waiting list.
- 10.15 Members were pleased to see the plans to use sustainable materials and modern methods of construction on the site and were informed that this is an important factor, to use sustainable materials where we can and to learn from previous projects.
- 10.16 Members congratulated officers on an excellent presentation and gave their support for the proposals. It was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms confirmation this was unanimously supported.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 1972, Housing Wales Act 2014

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Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



CABINET – 18TH OCTOBER 2023

SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY HOMES - TY DARRAN REDEVELOPMENT

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval from members to sign the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon to progress the scheme through to construction and completion by Autumn 2025.
- 1.2 To endorse the creation of a social value plan which will encompass the Ty Darran, former Oakdale Comprehensive School and Ty Melin development schemes.
- 1.3 The report was considered by the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the 19th September 2023; comments from the Committee are included in Section 10 of the report.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In 2018 Cabinet determined that due to design limitations and concerns regarding cost, Waunfawr House, St Mary's Court and Castle Court sheltered housing schemes would not be remodelled and a programmed closure of the three schemes would be implemented. Residents were subsequently advised that upon completion of a new later living scheme at Ty Darran, they would transfer into the new scheme.
- 2.2 Caerphilly Homes have been working with Willmott Dixon and Architects Pentan for over 18 months, to bring forward a 45 unit later living scheme on the site of the former care home at Ty Darran, Risca.
- 2.3 During this time Caerphilly Homes delivered two Passivhaus schemes (Trecenydd and Trethomas) in collaboration with Willmott Dixon, funded by the Welsh Government's Innovative Housing Programme (IHP). The aim of the IHP was to pilot new construction methods and materials to mitigate the impact of climate change, lower energy costs and increase the energy efficiency of homes. The programme then encouraged grant recipients to learn from the pilot projects and apply the positive lessons learnt to other developments at scale and pace. Caerphilly Homes partnered with construction expert Willmott Dixon and Caledan Ltd to develop a fabric first, steel frame construction solution; manufactured in Caerphilly, for Caerphilly. The benefit of having a local manufacturer involved in the development of the solution has resulted in benefits to the circular economy and ensuring that the investment in new homes delivers wider

benefits for the local population and community.

- 2.4 As a result of the climate emergency declared by the Cabinet in 2019 and the ambition to create a net zero carbon borough by 2030, it was the aim to deliver a net zero carbon later living development at Ty Darran. The delivery of a net zero carbon scheme has been explored in conjunction with sustainability expert Mark Morant however, seeking to calculate whole life costs (both operational and embodied carbon) is challenging and also costly at this point. Caerphilly Homes have therefore opted to build to Building Regulations 2025. The Council's insurance team also advised that for any development 3 storeys and over, a steel frame solution would be most appropriate.
- 2.5 It was recognised that to expedite the Ty Darran development and ensure the most efficient use of resources (time and cost) it would be best to seek to evolve the steel frame fabric first solution developed for the pilot sites and apply an evolution of the solution to Ty Darran. Willmott Dixon continue to partner with local, Penallta based steel frame manufacturer, Caledan Ltd who will be supplying the majority of the lightweight steel frame solution utilised on the scheme.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members note the content of the report and approve the signing of the Delivery Agreement (DA) with Willmott Dixon to deliver a new, low energy, flagship later living scheme by Spring 2025.
- 3.2 Members endorse the formulation of a social value plan which will encompass the Ty Darran, former Oakdale Comprehensive School and Ty Melin development schemes with Willmott Dixon.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To deliver 45 new affordable homes as replacement for the following sheltered housing schemes; Castle Court - Crosskeys, St Mary's Court - Risca and Waunfawr House - Crosskeys.
- 4.2 Deliver the Council's ambition to deliver more affordable, new, low carbon homes and meet the Welsh Government's commitment to deliver 20,000 new homes during the period of the current administration.
- 4.3 Deliver high quality later living accommodation that meets the expectations and needs of current and future occupants.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1.1 In January 2020 a decision was taken by Cabinet to award a contract to Willmott Dixon to deliver certified Passivhaus schemes in Trecenydd and Trethomas. In total 18 apartments have been constructed using an innovative steel primaframe solution which is manufactured on Penallta Industrial Estate by Caledan Ltd. As a result of the order from Willmott Dixon for the 18 units, they have been able to invest in new technology and employ an additional two team members.
- 5.1.2 The efficiency of the building fabric developed for Trecenydd and Trethomas has been monitored via a sophisticated network of hardware built into the envelope by

The Active Building Centre at Swansea University and provides important intelligence as to the efficiency of the building fabric and energy costs.

- 5.1.3 The Mechanical and Electrical strategy adopted will be an evolution of the solution developed for Trecenydd and Trethomas as the technology that was embedded within the fabric of the building is indicating that the air source heat pump coupled with a hot water cylinder, mechanical heat ventilation recovery system and electric heating is operating at a 30% betterment (coupled with a thermally efficient and air-tight building fabric). Thereby resulting in lower energy costs for customers.
- 5.1.4 Engagement with potential occupants is ongoing. An involvement event was also held in Risca library during Spring 2023 so that the local community could engage in the development of the scheme. The design has evolved as a result of the engagement and involvement events to date. A series of further events will be scheduled during Autumn 2023.
- 5.1.5 The Architects, Pentan and Willmott Dixon have worked hard to ensure that the design develops in accordance with the original mandate which was to create a flagship, later living scheme that sets the bar for future Caerphilly Homes developments and which creates a completely different offer for people over the age of 60 living in the county borough. That offer includes a building that facilitates interaction between residents and the local community; that encourages agile aging through the provision of bright, light and open communal, multi-use spaces and includes apartments that are light, spacious and enable access to the wider environment.
- 5.1.6 The building will be constructed in line with Building Regulations 2025. Part F of the 2025 Building Regulations include new standards for ventilation whilst Part L sets out minimum energy performance targets, air tightness and improved insulation.
- 5.1.7 The high-level specification to which all new, Caerphilly Homes will conform is set out in the Development and Governance Strategy Report that will be considered by Cabinet on 20 September 2023. All Caerphilly Homes developments will seek to meet Building Regulations 2025 as a minimum.
- 5.1.8 The re-development of Ty Darran is an exciting, flagship development that will set the standard of later living accommodation in the borough delivered by Caerphilly Homes. The design team (which involves representatives from Pentan Architects, Willmott Dixon, Mark Morant Associates, SDS, the Caerphilly Homes development team and the Council's Placemaking Officer) have paid special attention to the material choices, landscaping and the outside spaces that envelope the building.
- 5.1.9 The demolition of the former Ty Darran care home was undertaken by Willmott Dixon as part of the Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) in Spring this year.
- 5.1.10 The sewer diversion has been completed and the SAB solution confirmed.
- 5.1.11 The completion of Ty Darran may also make available three additional development sites that could (pending the receipt of site investigation reports) be included in the Council's development programme (Waunfawr House (Crosskeys), St Mary's Court (Risca) and Castle Court (Crosskeys). Castle Court has already been vacated and site investigation works have already been commissioned. The ward member, Councillor Simmonds has been informed and is engaged in the process).

Procurement

- 5.1.12 Willmott Dixon have been engaged via the SCAPE Framework. The SCAPE National Construction Major Works Framework is a fully compliant public sector Framework developed by a partnership including Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Gateshead Council, Warwickshire County Council which has delivered over 1200 public sector led schemes across the UK. Working with a Tier 1 contractor that has a regional base and employs a significant number of people from within the region, assists in supporting the circular economy and helps to mitigate risk.
- 5.1.13 Caerphilly Homes has utilised the Framework on the IHP funded schemes in Treceenydd and Trethomas and also on Oakdale.
- 5.1.14 The total project cost of the scheme is estimated to be £19.8 million of which £18.2m are costs attributed to Willmott Dixon and will be included in the Delivery Agreement (DA). Part of the cost will be funded through Social Housing Grant (SHG) however the grant rate has yet to be determined.
- 5.1.15 As part of the SCAPE Framework an overall Social Return on Investment (SROI) based on local labour, local spend and social value activities must be delivered. A social value plan is being prepared in collaboration with Caerphilly Cares which will outline how Willmott Dixon and their supply chain will deliver the SROI requirements and how those requirements will help meet the priorities included in the corporate plan. A construction related employment programme will form part of the offer.

5.2 Conclusion

- 5.2.1 The work undertaken in partnership with Willmott Dixon on the pilot sites and the Oakdale development is closely aligned to what the Council are seeking to deliver on the proposed Ty Darran later living scheme using the steel frame primaframe solution developed and manufactured by Caledan Ltd.
- 5.2.2 The evolution of the solution used on the pilot sites to Oakdale and Ty Darran should bring efficiencies in relation to professional services utilised on both schemes and economies of scale in relation to the use of the steel frame and standardised materials and products. It will also bring greater opportunities to deliver improved social value through minimising environmental waste and impact, strengthening the local supply chain, shared apprenticeship and employment opportunities, training and community benefits.
- 5.2.3 The 45-apartment scheme will be the first of its kind built by Caerphilly Homes and will set the standard and the quality of future Caerphilly Homes' later living / agile aging accommodation.
- 5.2.4 Approval is therefore sought from Members to sign the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon in order to deliver a new, flagship later living scheme at the site of the former Ty Darran care home, Risca by Spring 2025.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 Construction will start on 30 October 2023. The site will be complete by Spring 2025.

- 6.2 The reserved matters application will be approved. Outline planning permission was approved by Planning Committee on 23rd March 2022.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment suggests that this proposal will have a positive impact on individuals and couples aged 60 and over (those over 55 years of age with particular needs will also be considered). It will also have a positive impact upon those people aged 60 and over who would benefit from accessible accommodation.

7.2 Link to Integrated Impact Assessment

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The total cost of the scheme is £19.8m of which £18.2m is attributed to the costs incurred by Willmott Dixon to deliver the scheme and is the figure that will be included in the Delivery Agreement (DA). The exact amount of Social Housing Grant that will be drawn to help deliver the scheme has yet to be calculated.
- 8.2 The development of the former Ty Darran care home site is included in the HRA Business Plan over the next 3 years.
- 8.3 The current Business Plan also assumes that borrowing will be necessary to progress schemes of this nature and the level of borrowing remains viable within the plan. The HRA has an agreed borrowing cap of £100m which has not yet been reached.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Caerphilly Homes are in the process of recruiting a Construction / Contract Manager to oversee the delivery of the scheme. The Construction / Contract Manager will be supported by a Project Manager and a Clerk of Works.
- 9.2 The resources allocated to the project will be continually reviewed. Should additional resources be required, the need will be discussed with the Head of Service.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 Ward members have been engaged throughout the development of the project together with residents who are scheduled to move into the new scheme from Waunfawr House, St Mary's Court and formerly Castle Court (now decommissioned). An engagement event was held in Risca Library during Spring 2023 which invited the local community to engage in the design proposals.
- 10.2 Further engagement with ward members and residents is scheduled to take place during Autumn 2023.
- 10.3 The following teams have been consulted upon the draft Delivery Agreement (DA) prior to the discussion at Cabinet on 18th October 2023.
- Legal
 - Building Consultancy

- Insurance
- Information Unit
- Caerphilly Homes – Repairs and Maintenance, Landlord Services.
- Procurement

- 10.4 This report was presented to the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the 19th September 2023.
- 10.5 Members asked if the land at Ty Melin and the other sheltered housing schemes at St Marys, Castle Court etc, will be re-used for other Caerphilly Homes schemes. The scrutiny committee were advised that site investigatory works are already scheduled to take place at Castle Court with the other schemes to follow.
- 10.6 Members stated that most of their questions related to both Oakdale and Ty Darren and were pleased to see the plans. They gave their support for the proposals and it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms confirmation this was unanimously supported.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 1972, Housing Wales Act 2014

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CABINET - 18TH OCTOBER 2023

**SUBJECT: CWMCARN FOREST DRIVE COLLABORATION WITH
NATURAL RESOURCES WALES – REVIEW OF AGREEMENT
AND NEXT STEPS**

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To review the collaborative arrangement with Natural Resources Wales for the Council to manage the operation of the Forest Drive at Cwmcarn Forest as a visitor attraction and to consider whether or not this agreement should be extended.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Forest Drive is owned by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and a Partnership Agreement was put in place between NRW and the Council to ensure a financially sustainable operation of the Drive. This was considered and endorsed by Cabinet on 21st April 2021. The Partnership Agreement was considered as an enabling tool to continue with the Levelling Up Fund submission which was unsuccessful.
- 2.2 The drive is currently operating at a small profit which is shared equally between NRW and CCBC. Officers believe the cost to maintain the site is likely to increase over the coming years as deterioration of the built structures will increase maintenance requirements.
- 2.3 Visitor numbers in 2023 are starting to show a downward trend compared to 2022. There is some concern that the Forest Drive may not be able to financially “wash its face” if numbers continue to decline. Extending the agreement by another 12 months, i.e. up to 31st March 2025, will allow accurate income figures to be obtained for comparison with previous years to get a clear indication of trends aspirations moving forward. It will also allow NRW and CCBC to investigate ways of ensuring that the drive does not incur additional financial burdens on each organisation in forthcoming years. Both organisations recognise a small increase in admission charges from April 2024 would be a quick but effective start to this process.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that:

3.1.1 The existing agreement be extended for a period of one year. This should ensure that both parties can fully ascertain the finances associated with the operation of the drive at the attraction. It is recognised that the last two years have been a honeymoon period and figures gained from 2023-24 should provide evidence on how the drive is performing financially post initial spike of interest.

3.1.2 Cabinet endorses an increase in the admission price from £8 to £10 per car, from £15 to £18.50 for minibuses and from £30 to £35 for coaches. These prices include parking fees on Council operated car parks at Cwmcarn as part of the admission fee. Season Ticket prices should also rise by a similar amount to £75 for a car, £37.50 for a motorbike and £125 for a minibus. These increases reflect inflation and are proposed to be implemented from the start of the 2024 season from 1st April 2024

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The extension of the agreement to operate the Forest Drive on a long-term basis is not a light decision to be made, especially at a time when the Council are facing dramatic targets for savings across all departments. Accurate income figures need to be obtained in comparison with previous years to get a clear indication of aspirations moving forward in light of the unsuccessful Levelling Up Fund application to continue development of the site. Therefore, the extension of the management agreement is recommended for a further 12 month period.

4.2 There is evidence emerging that the net financial position of the Forest Drive is reducing. Therefore, the continued operation of all aspects, including the Forest Drive, requires commitment and engagement with the private sector to deliver some of the additional attractions that have been included in the Levelling Up Fund submission to UK Government. There is some evidence indicating a rise in day visits to attractions in the UK, but a reduction in longer stays. Opportunities to ensure that income can be maximised should now be explored further to ensure that neither NRW nor CCBC are put under additional financial pressure through its management and upkeep.

4.3 Cwmcarn remains a significant visitor attraction in the County Borough and across South Wales. Outdoor attractions and adventures are a key pillar of the Visit Wales marketing strategy for tourism. Most importantly, the past two years have demonstrated that the partnership between NRW and CCBC remains strong, and this existing agreement is an effective platform for exploring how successful tourism outcomes can be achieved using the Forest Drive as a focal point.

5. THE REPORT

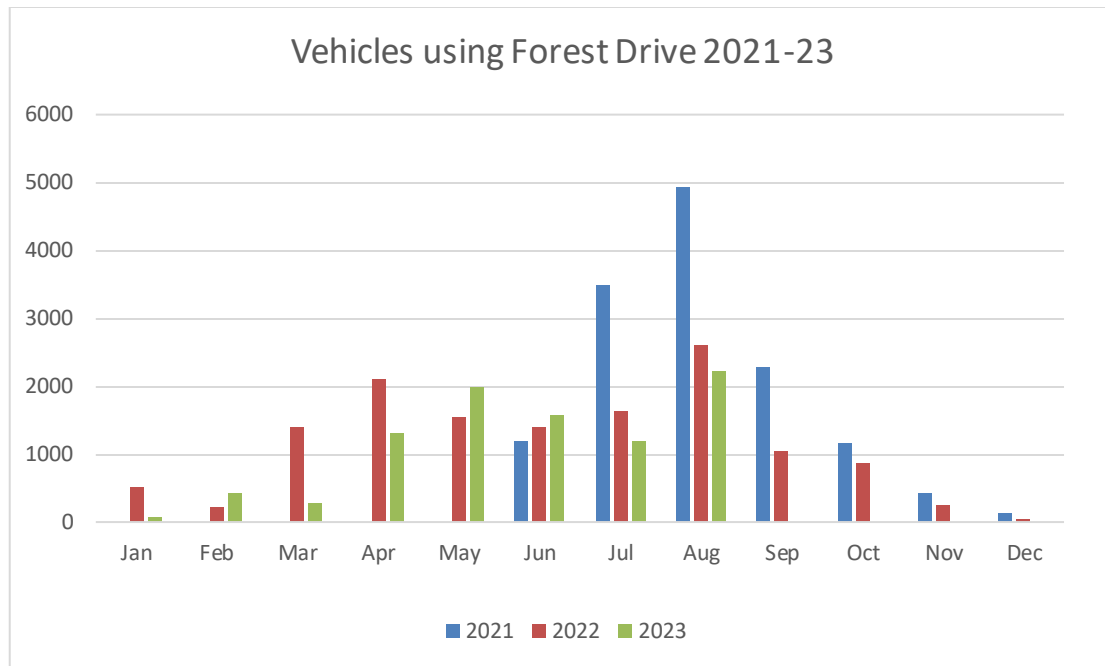
5.1 The Forest Drive is owned by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and was closed between 2015 and 2021 to allow for the felling of around 150,000 trees because of the disease Phytophthora Ramorum.

5.2 Following a programme of investment to resurface the forest drive and reinstate and enhance the recreational facilities, a Partnership Agreement was put in place between

Natural Resources Wales and the Council to ensure a financially sustainable operation when the Forest Drive was re-opened. This was considered and endorsed by Cabinet on 21st April 2021.

- 5.3 The operational management of the Forest Drive is an example of the commercial and investment strategy adopted by Cabinet in December 2020, which indicates our commitment to working in partnership with organisations who share our values, working with NRW is a good demonstration of this commitment. This agreement sits within the strategic context, supporting all the main aims of the commercial strategy and the wider transformation strategy ensuring we adopt the commercial mind and social heart ethos.
- 5.4 On a day-to-day basis, the Council's Visitor Economy and Destinations team manage the site. However larger proposed operations and events require permission from NRW. NRW officers also maintain an active and close watching brief over all aspects of the management and administration of the site including but not exclusive to the operation of the drive, the car park and amenities along the route and the cycle trails.
- 5.5 The Partnership Agreement was considered a key element of a suite of interventions to improve the offer at the attraction. Another component of this was the development of an investment masterplan for the site which was commissioned using Regeneration Project Board resources. Key elements of this masterplan were submitted to the UK Government Levelling Up Fund under Round Two, and Members will be aware that this submission was unsuccessful. It is felt that the need for further investment is critical to the ongoing development and operation of the site. Without further investment, visitor numbers are likely to decline as the offer at other regional attractions improve and become stronger. The ongoing developments at Afan Forest Park, Swansea Sea front, Zip World, Rhigos and the Rhydycar East snow dome development are predicted to have a negative impact on Cwmcarn, unless it improves its offer to the visitor.
- 5.6 Opening times for the Forest Drive are:
- | | |
|--------|---|
| Summer | 10am – 6pm (last entry 4pm) |
| Winter | 10am – 4pm (last entry 2pm – weekends only) |

Visitor numbers in 2023 are down compared to 2022, but at the time of drafting this report it is too early to draw any meaningful conclusions and the number of vehicles is higher in May and June this year compared to last year (see table below and summary data at Appendix 2).



5.7 It should be noted that, after the initial post-Covid boom in 2021-22, the surplus generated was circa £17.5k in 2022-23, albeit in line with initial expectations as set out in the 2021 report. It is worth noting that prior to the site closing for the tree removal, Cwmcarn Forest Drive did not cover its operational costs. There are new play areas available now, so the overall offer has some added value to the visitor but without additional continued investment and development, the site may not be able to compete with other regional attractions.

5.8 Whilst the high level of post-Covid visits has now dropped, it is positive news that the number of visitors recorded across the Cwmcarn destination remains higher than the historic pre-Covid data indicates, with over 300,000 visitors in 2022-23 compared to a high of 240-250,000 in the years up to 2018-19.

5.9 Increasing the entrance price will help to produce a healthier income for the Drive. Officers are therefore seeking Cabinet approval to increase the admission prices from:
 £8 to £10 per car
 £15 to £18.50 for minibuses and
 £30 to £35 for coaches.

These prices include parking fees on Council operated car parks at Cwmcarn as part of the admission fee. Season Ticket prices should also rise by a similar amount from:
 £60 to £75 for a car
 £30 to £37.50 for a motorbike and
 £125 for a minibus (no season tickets have ever been sold for minibuses and so no price has previously been set).

These increases reflect inflation and are proposed to be implemented from 1st April 2024. The small increases are aimed at ensuring that the attraction continues to generate income whilst ensuring that they do not deter people visiting. The prices have not changed since the reopening of the drive in June 2021 and have therefore not kept up with inflation. Even with the proposed increase, the attraction would still be remarkably good value compared to other half day/day attractions in the region.

5.10 As outlined above the surplus generated by the drive was below £20k during 2022-23

and the cost to maintain the site is likely to increase over the coming years as deterioration of the built structures in the exposed conditions will increase, putting pressure on the Cwmcarn site core budget.

- 5.11 To that end, Cabinet are being asked to support the extension of the collaboration agreement for an additional 12 months up to 31st March 2025. It is recognised that the last two years have been a honeymoon period and figures gained from 2023-24 and 24/25 should provide solid evidence on how the drive is performing financially post initial spike of interest. It will also allow NRW and CCBC to investigate ways of ensuring the income from the drive and wider site can be maximised.

Conclusion

- 5.12 It is clear that the continued partnership between the Council and NRW is beneficial to the operations at Cwmcarn as a whole and not just the drive. However, the operation will not be financially viable in the long term, without a clear commitment to further investment in the destination.
- 5.13 The range of unknown or just partially predictable factors set out in the assumptions below suggests that another short-term agreement should be preferred to allow for ongoing assessment of the data emerging from the operation to ensure that the Council does not enter into a financially unsustainable arrangement. The timelines proposed will also allow opportunities for private sector investment to be explored.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The following assumptions have been made in proposing the recommendations in the report.
- 6.1.1 The Cost-of-Living Crisis is expected to ease during the years ahead – there are early signs that this is happening, as reported in June 2023.
- 6.1.2 Expenditure on maintenance will increase as the site matures.
- 6.1.3 The pressure on local government budgets is set to continue, which affects non-statutory activity such as tourism.
- 6.1.4 Demand for day visits and attractions is set to continue and increase.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out for this report and shown that it will have a positive impact. There will be positive impacts on the local community in being able to continue to access countryside and outdoor facilities in support of well-being, economic regeneration and contributing to active lifestyles of our residents. The proposed price increases are considered to be in line with inflation over the past two years and will not impact on visitors' ability to pay.

[Link to IIA](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 2022-23 is the first year where there is a thorough understanding of the true costs of running the Drive and which could be monitored. However, this has been affected by the loss of staff during the year so staffing costs have been lower than predicted. This is a recurring theme that also affects the 2023-24 fiscal year figures as the operation is still a Ranger short (the advert is live at the time of drafting this report).

8.2 Below is the full income and expenditure for the Forest Drive for the last fiscal year. This figure includes staff salaries, maintenance and vehicle hire / running costs. What is not included in these costings are management overheads for both the General Manager and Visitor Centre Supervisor whose involvement in the operation of the Forest Drive is essential but not recorded.

Income 2022/23	£99,028.92
Expenditure 2022/23	£81,405.38

8.3 Any profit from the operation of the Forest Drive is equally divided between the two organisations with both receiving £8,811 from last year. This compares favourably with the forecast surplus of £15,000 per annum stated in the 2021 Cabinet report. There is agreement in place with NRW that any surplus funding will be re-invested into the Drive in the following year.

8.4 It is expected that as the drive matures over the coming years then maintenance costs will increase, and the surplus will reduce. Given that the surplus was under £20k in 2022-23, it is considered likely that the operation may not be financially sustainable in the years ahead if current trends continue and the adverse effects of the Cost-of-Living Crisis are sustained.

8.5 The Cwmcarn Forest Attraction (not just the drive) operates with a subsidy from the Council of
2021-22 - £194,113 (includes WG Covid payments)
2022-23 - £263,671
2023-24 - £260,281

Although management is instigating measures to reduce this subsidy it is unlikely that this will be reduced to zero but in 2023-24 performance in the first six months indicates that the destination is on track to achieve the above figure, which represents a net reduction of £75,000 compared to the previous year after inflationary measures are taken into account.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are 18 staff (13.4 FTE) employed by the Council to support the operation of Cwmcarn Forest. They will not be affected by the proposals in this report as, if approved, the existing operations will continue as at present.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 All comments from the consultation process have been incorporated into the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

Author: Antony Bolter, Visitor Economy and Destinations Manager

Consultees: Cllr Jamie Pritchard, Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change
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Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property Services
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer
Allan Dallimore, Regeneration Services Manager
Antony Bolter, Visitor Economy and Destinations Manager
Jared Lougher, Sports and leisure Development Manager
Paul Hudson, Business, Enterprise and Renewal Team Manager
Rhys Handley, Natural Resources Wales
Cllr Denver Preece
Cllr Andrew Whitcombe

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Cabinet Report on proposed partnership agreement with NRW, 21st April 2021

Appendix 2 Data collected on vehicles visiting the Forest Drive since re-opening in 2021

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



CABINET – 21ST APRIL 2021

SUBJECT: REOPENING OF CWMCARN FOREST DRIVE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR – ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To allow officers to agree a proposed collaborative arrangement with Natural Resources Wales on behalf of the Council to manage the operation of the Forest Drive at Cwmcarn Forest as a visitor attraction for a trial period of 2 years.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Forest Drive is owned and managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and has been closed since 2015 to allow for the felling of around 150,000 trees because of the disease Phytophthora Ramorum.
- 2.2 Following a programme of investment to resurface the forest drive and reinstate and enhance the recreational facilities, Natural Resources Wales are looking to reopen the Forest Drive in the spring of this year and are seeking to work in partnership with the Council to ensure a financially sustainable operation is established through a collaboration agreement.
- 2.3 The Council are being asked to take on the operational management of the Forest Drive at Cwmcarn Forest.
- 2.4 The commercial and investment strategy adopted by Cabinet on 9th December indicates our commitment to working in partnership with organisations who share our values, working with NRW is a good demonstration of this commitment. The strategy sets the foundations for working in different ways, empowering staff to try new things as well as fundamentals of commercialisation such as business planning. This proposal sits within the strategic context supporting all the main aims of the commercial strategy and the wider transformation strategy ensuring we adopt the commercial mind social heart ethos.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet permit officers to agree a collaboration agreement on behalf of the Council with Natural Resources Wales to support the re-opening of the Forest Drive in 2021 to achieve a financially sustainable operation of the attraction.
- 3.2 Cabinet endorse the recommended admission price of £8 per car, £11 for minibuses and £25 for coaches to include parking fees on Council operated car parks at Cwmcarn as part of the admission fee.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Forest Drive is a unique visitor attraction in South East Wales and its closure has had an impact on the revenues of Cwmcarn Visitor Centre since 2015 as it has limited the availability

of walking trails, cycle trails and general access to the landscape, all of which are drivers of leisure and tourism visitors to the site. Cwmcarn Forest is currently in receipt of substantial funding to invest in supporting the regeneration ambition to make the venue a major visitor attraction in South East Wales, and the reopening of the Forest Drive will reinstate a major attractor at the site increasing accessibility to the surrounding forest and countryside.

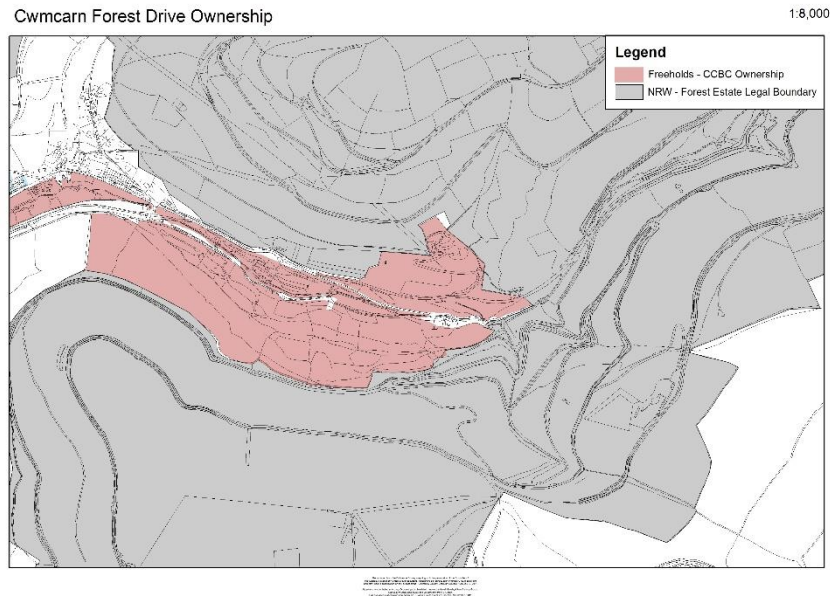
5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In 2015, Natural Resources Wales closed Cwmcarn Forest Drive to the public having discovered that large areas of the site were affected by Phytophthora Ramorum and planned to fell and remove up to 150,000 trees over a planned four-year period. The closure of the Forest Drive has been an issue for many residents and a community pressure group, ‘the friends of Cwmcarn Forest Drive’ had been lobbying NRW and the Welsh Government to work towards the reopening of the drive. £1m was secured by NRW to undertake the preparatory work required to reopen the Drive and NRW have worked closely with Council officers to devise a work programme and to project manage the project, including the scope for integrating a technology based admission system that could reduce the annual running costs of the site.
- 5.2 The majority of the felling and clearance works have now been completed, and the Forest Drive resurfacing works are complete. NRW are aiming to reopen the Forest Drive to visitors in the spring of 2021. Officers from NRW and the Council have been meeting regularly as part of a project group to work towards this goal as part of a collaborative working arrangement.
- 5.3 Outdoor Activity Tourism (excluding walking and road cycling) is estimated to be worth over £500m to the Welsh economy accounting for 10% of expenditure in the tourist economy of Wales as a whole and supporting 8,000+ FTE jobs. Locally, tourism is worth an estimated £134m for the local economy, responsible for around 1,626 jobs in Caerphilly County Borough.
- 5.4 Cwmcarn Forest is a tourist destination that includes several elements that attract visitors including walking trails, cycling trails, a fishing lake and adventure playground. The Forest Drive, also known as the Scenic Drive, was previously a popular visitor attraction in the South East region of Wales. Cwmcarn Forest as an overall site has recently been afforded ‘Discovery Gateway’ status as part of the Valleys Regional Park Initiative, which also resulted in a grant of £450,000 being awarded by the Valleys Task Force to the Council to enhance the facilities across the site.
- 5.5 The venue has a diverse portfolio of income streams covering around 64% of the total expenditure and are derived from the following areas of activity at the site:
- Café.
 - Overnight accommodation (camping and glamping).
 - Retail offer from on-site gift shop.
 - Car parking.
 - Lease income from retail unit.
 - Hire of room facility.

Table 1 – Net Budget for the period 2020/21

2020/21 Budget			
VISITOR ATTRACTION	Income	Expenditure	Net Budget
Cwmcarn Forest Drive	£443,420	£689,438	£246,018

5.6 The Council has an established base at Cwmcarn and has recently expanded to house the Council's Outdoor Education Service. Natural Resources Wales own substantial land holdings around the forest drive and visitor centre, as shown in the site map below, but they do not have an operational base at the site.



5.7 As outlined above there has been major investment at Cwmcarn, with further pipeline projects under way from several funding sources as follows:

- Tourism Amenity Investment Scheme (TAIS)
 - Expansion of Bike Trails.
 - Enhancement of Existing Walking Trails.
 - Creation of new welcome arrival features and signage.
- Mon & Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle (M&BCAT)
 - New Adventure Play Hub.
 - New Luxury Glamping Lodges.
 - Lakeside Landscape Enhancements & New Pit Wheel Car Park.
 - Cross-country Cycle Trail (Twrch Loop).
- Valleys Regional Park – Discovery Gateway Site
 - Visitor centre enhancements & new play area.
 - WIFI enhancements.
 - Internal building Improvements.
 - External building Improvements.
 - Walking trail development & landscape/nature interpretation.
 - New toilets.
 - Discovery backpacks.
 - Learning & community cabin.
 - General habitat management



- 5.8 The investment programme is aimed at reducing the net subsidy that the Council provides for the running of the site. The reinstatement and reopening of the Forest Drive will complement the above enhancements to the site and add to the mix of attractions, improving the dwell time with the potential to increase secondary spend significantly from visitors. Further complementary investment projects are being undertaken by NRW to develop the recreational offer and parking areas around the Forest Drive.
- 5.9 Cost estimates and income forecasts have been put together that include an allocation for highway surface maintenance, grass / brush clearance and playground inspections and maintenance, see Appendix one. Based on the limited available data provided by NRW it is considered that the Forest Drive can attract between 7,000 and 10,000 cars per year.
- 5.10 At an estimated average of 2 people per car¹ this could generate between 14-20,000 additional visitors to the forest drive, a proportion of which would be anticipated to generate secondary spend at the Forest Drive Visitor Centre in the gift shop and café.
- 5.11 There is the potential to generate a surplus of around £15,000 if expectations of car visitors are met. The installation of an automated barrier incorporated into the Forest Drive entrance offers flexibility to reduce the initial staffing levels and associated costs of operating the Drive.
- 5.12 The collaboration agreement would take around 6 to 8 weeks to draft and will outline the project objectives, financial arrangements, roles and responsibility of the two parties, review process, liability schedules, health and safety arrangements and protocols, data protection and dispute resolution amongst other aspects of the agreement.

Conclusion

- 5.13 There are financial risks associated with establishing a partnership to reopen the Drive and forecast budgets need to establish a realistic model of potential running costs to ensure that the partnership with NRW to reopen the Forest Drive does not create a financial liability for the authority. A trial period of 2 years is proposed as part of the collaboration agreement to allow a realistic time frame within which to assess the income and expenditure requirements of the site. The agreement will be reviewed after the two-year pilot period ends to establish whether both parties want to extend the agreement. It is acknowledged that the level of visitors in the first year of the trial is likely to be lower due to capacity restrictions resulting from ongoing covid restrictions.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The financial pressures on local authority budgets will continue in the medium term as outlined in the Council's medium-term financial plan.
- 6.2 Historic levels of admissions can be achieved in the first two years of the drive re-opening of between 7,000 and 10,000 cars per annum (subject to covid restrictions being relaxed).

¹ European Environment Agency, car occupancy rates for travel and leisure

However, the level of visitors in the first year of the trial is likely to be lower due to capacity restrictions resulting from ongoing covid restrictions.

- 6.3 The drive would be open for an 'eight month' season from March to October.
- 6.4 The partnership agreement would be reviewed after an initial two-year operating period.
- 6.5 The re-opening of the Forest Drive will bring additionality in terms of visitor numbers which would lead to an increase in on site secondary spend.
- 6.6 NRW will contribute £30,000 for the first year of the pilot period to support the re-opening of the forest drive and to support the employment of wardens dedicated to the forest drive operation. It is assumed that this funding will also be available for the second year of the pilot period.
- 6.7 That covid and Brexit will continue to impact on currency values and the economic consequences for the tourism industry in terms of UK based visitors switching their destination choices to holiday in the UK.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The decision to reopen the Forest Drive is determined by Natural Resources Wales but the Council is seeking to enter into a partnership agreement to operate the forest drive as part of a long term, collaborative, integrated approach in line with sustainable development principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- 7.2 As part of NRW's decision to reopen the forest drive there are positive impacts on the local community in being able to access countryside and outdoor facilities in support of well-being, economic regeneration and contributing to active lifestyles of our residents. The data collected by NRW shows a higher than average number of visitors to the site amongst two identifiable groups prior to its closure, those aged 25-44 and those who described their ethnicity as black / Asian / mixed.
- 7.3 Consultation with the local community has provided a number of suggestions and ideas for improvements that the Management Board, that will be set up as part of the accompanying collaboration agreement that will support the proposed reopening of the Forest Drive, will review and identify for action. The Management Board will monitor the site to ensure the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 Act are met.

https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/IIA/IIA_Cwmcamn_Forest_Apr21.aspx

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There is a financial risk in not achieving the predicted level of income that could be generated at the Forest Drive with limited financial records of past performance available at the current time. A significant operational cost is the staffing element previously used to control admissions to the site, a cost that can be significantly reduced by the installation of an automated barrier on site, thereby reducing the financial exposure of both organisations.
- 8.2 Initial forecasts are that depending on the agreed admission price of £8 per car, installation of an automated barrier, demand being realised and no unknown or adverse events impacting on the Council's obligations, the agreement could generate a profit of between £14,872 for the site, (see Appendix one) or a worst case scenario of a £5,128 loss. Potential profits and losses will be shared equally between CCBC and NRW contributing to the Council's transformation aims to make the attraction more financially sustainable and reduce the current level of subsidy.
- 8.3 The secondary spend benefits of the reopening of the drive are unknown at this stage.

8.4 There is significant uncertainty as to the road map and timescales to re-opening tourist attractions affected by the pandemic and that is likely to impact on the income and expenditure projections.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There is a desire from NRW to employ a Forest Drive Warden in response to feedback from recent community engagement events and they are seeking to make an annual financial contribution of £30,000 towards supporting this. It is intended that warden staff (1.5 FTE's to cover the opening hours) will be recruited in line with existing warden duties on fixed term contracts. If the Council determines not to continue with the collaboration at the end of the two-year pilot period, then staff employed because of this agreement will cease employment under the fixed term contract in line with similar externally funded positions.

9.2 There is likely to be an implication for the current general Manager who would be taking on the additional responsibility of the management of the Forest Drive which would need to be evaluated. Similarly, Job Descriptions of the current warden staff on site would need to be revised to include and extend their working boundaries to include the overall site.

10. CONSULTATION

10.1 Management staff at the visitor attraction concerned have been engaged to discuss the option identified in the report. Feedback from the consultees to the report have been included.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Annual Budget

APPENDIX ONE

ANNUAL BUDGET

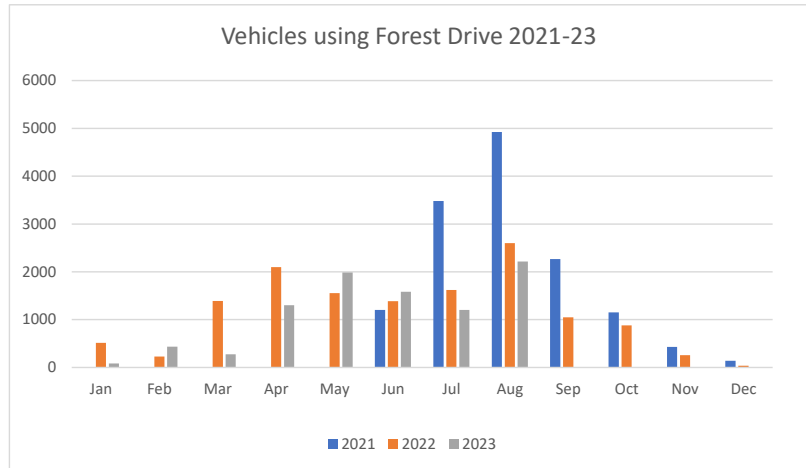
	Admission Charge - £8
EXPENDITURE	
Employees	£ 61,595
Grass Cutting	£ 2,200
Brush cutting	£ 1,000
Road sweeping	£ 800
Highway Maintenance	£ 1,500
Utility & repairs	£ 1,000
Toilet Maintenance	£ 5,400
Admissions: Service contract	£ 3,300
Play areas: Inspections & maintenance	£ 5,000
	£ 81,795
INCOME	
Admissions target - 7,000 (less VAT)	£ 46,667
NRW contribution	£ 30,000
	£ 76,667
NET PROFIT / SUBSIDY	-£ 5,128

	Admission Charge - £8
EXPENDITURE	
Employees	£ 61,595
Grass Cutting	£ 2,200
Brush cutting	£ 1,000
Road sweeping	£ 800
Highway Maintenance	£ 1,500
Utility & repairs	£ 1,000
Toilet Maintenance	£ 5,400
Admissions: Service contract	£ 3,300
Play areas: Inspections & maintenance	£ 5,000
Total	£ 81,795
INCOME	
Target - 10,000	£ 66,667
NRW contribution	£ 30,000
Total	£ 96,667
NET PROFIT / SUBSIDY	£ 14,872

Forest Drive Comparison June 2021 - June 2023

Appendix 2

	2021	2022	2023
Jan	0	514	85
Feb	0	227	436
Mar	0	1391	274
Apr	0	2101	1304
May	0	1555	1987
Jun	1203	1388	1584
Jul	3479	1621	1205
Aug	4926	2601	2214
Sep	2269	1049	0
Oct	1150	881	0
Nov	432	258	0
Dec	140	38	0
	13,599	13,624	9089



	2022			2023		
	Income	Expend	Net	Income	Expend	Net
Jan	£3,801	£315	£3,486	£846	£3,134	£-2,288
Feb	£1,676	£504	£1,172	£1,931	£3,926	£-1,995
Mar	£9,939	£1,788	£8,151	£2,816	£5,080	£-2,264
Apr	£15,561	£10,620	£4,941	£10,061	£2,561	£7,500
May	£11,306	£8,498	£2,808	£14,466	£8,703	£5,763
Jun	£12,493	£7,635	£4,858	£13,061	£9,348	£3,713
Jul	£13,546	£9,761	£3,785	£0	£0	£0
Aug	£19,942	£8,697	£11,245	£0	£0	£0
Sep	£8,228	£6,317	£1,911	£0	£0	£0
Oct	£5,767	£7,379	£-1,612	£0	£0	£0
Nov	£1,849	£4,544	£-2,695	£0	£0	£0
Dec	£593	£7,439	£-6,846	£0	£0	£0
Total	£104,701	£73,497	£31,204	£43,181	£32,752	£10,429

Expenditure in 2021-22 could not be reliably recorded due to technical difficulties.

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



CABINET – 18TH OCTOBER 2023

SUBJECT: B4251 YNYSDDU TO WYLLIE SAFETY REVIEW

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

--

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet on additional proposed safety measures for the above highway and to seek cabinet approval to undertake the associated works.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A road safety review was carried out in March 2020 on the B4251 Ynysddu to Wyllie which made a few recommendations. These recommendations were actioned during the summer of 2020 and included, areas of resurfacing, chevron signing, speed limit reduction along with other minor maintenance issues.

Following the completion of these safety measures a significant tree felling operation commenced in September 2020 to remove “Ash Dieback”. The removal of these substantial trees opened-up the embankments and renewed perceptions of danger and requests for a Vehicle restraint system (VRS) at certain points along the stretch of highway. While the independent safety reports did not recommend the installation of VRS or fencing, schemes were developed to see what could be accommodated should the authority wish to consider a non-compliant VRS scheme or alternate fencing along this route. In February 2022 Cabinet approved the installation of a chain-link boundary fence along the B4251.

Following completion of previous improvement measures, installation of the chain-link fence and representations from the local ward members and members of the public, it was agreed that a further road safety review would be independently undertaken to evaluate the works and improvements undertaken to date.

This review was undertaken in an open and transparent way and resulted in a meeting on 15/06/23 where all relevant parties met council officers, Gwent police and authors of the independent safety report to review and analyse the outcomes.

A final meeting was then held with local residents and Councillors on the 16th August 2023 to agree the proposed actions. All actions agreed at the meeting are contained within the report Table 1 (5.5).

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet are asked to consider the contents of this report and approve the additional road safety review conclusion that the B4251 between Ynysddu and Wyllie does not have any major road safety issues and that the suggested minor improvements identified (which are generally maintenance or preventative related) be actioned as part of ongoing highway maintenance schedules or as described in Table 1 at paragraph 5.4 below. These improvements will also be monitored against any recorded accident data received over the coming years.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that this section of highway is as safe as possible taking account of current highway design standards.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The current road safety assessment undertaken by Local Transport Projects (LTP) in March 2023 replicates the same study area as the original safety Improvement Study commissioned with AMEY consultants in March 2020. The study area focused on the then de-restricted section of the road (road has now had a 40mph restriction placed on it) which begins at the north end of Ynysddu and terminates just south of the Gelligroes roundabout on the A472 and also included the 40mph section leading to the roundabout at that time. The road runs north to south adjacent to the Sirhowy River and has 5 no. bus stops and a river over-bridge. There are reflective road studs throughout the de-restricted section. The street lighting in the area was changed from permanent lighting to a part-night regime between midnight and 5.30am in 2010 in accordance with the inter urban route policy for part night lighting.

- 5.2 The Road Safety Review and Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment forms a review and assessment of the current highway conditions at the time of the study (February/March 2023). Reference to previous reporting/assessment work undertaken by others is made within the report as appropriate. (See report Appendix 1)

- 5.3 The scope of the Road Safety Review and Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment is summarised below:

1. Road Safety Review – Assessment of current highway conditions on the route, including:

- Assessment of vehicle speed, vehicle flow and injury collision data for the route.
- Site-based and desktop assessments of cross section, geometry, surface condition, carriageway falls/drainage, kerbing, road markings/studs, signing, road lighting, road restraint system, fencing and other relevant features; and
- Overall, Road Safety Review conclusions and recommendations.

2. Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment – RRS Assessment for the study route with reference to 'Provision of Road Restraint Systems on Local Authority Roads' (PRRSLAR) (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011) which provides an appraisal process to help authorities decide when a RRS is justified.

- 5.3.1 Previous RSS Assessments have been undertaken as follows:

- October 2019 – ‘CCBC Vehicle Restraint System Risk Scoring Assessment’ (CCBC,2019). This assessment was undertaken when most of the study route was subject to a 60mph speed limit. It is understood that the assessment was undertaken with reference to the PRRSLAR guidance (rather than TD 19/06). The route scored as a medium priority site; and
- March 2020 – ‘Caerphilly CBC – B4251 Safety Improvement Study’ (Amey Consulting, 2020). Although a 60mph speed limit was in place on most of the route, a draft risk scoring assessment with reference to the PRRSLAR guidance was undertaken on the assumption that a 40mph speed limit would be implemented on the route. The route scored as a medium priority site.

5.3.2 The current RRS Assessment undertaken as part of the latest review forms a new assessment and is based on the existing conditions on the route. Where appropriate, this RSS makes use of relevant data/information obtained and analysed as part of the Road Safety Review.

5.3.3 Although previously assessed by others as a **medium** priority site (9-13pts), it is considered that the recent non-RRS interventions (e.g., 40mph speed limit implementation, chevron signing, localised resurfacing etc) have contributed to reducing the risk on the route to the **lower** priority category (0-9pts) as the route achieved a total scoring of only 8pts.

5.4 A table of minor improvements and additional preventative measures is summarised below in Table 1. These measures were discussed and approved with consultees on 16th August 2023. All measures below are subject to a routine Road Safety Audit (RSA). Any recommendations from the RSA will be reviewed and actioned by the Head of Service under their delegated powers.

Table 1

Source of recommendation	Works Item	Delivery timeframe (weather dependant)
Recommended by Safety Review	Surface Condition - Some minor defects identified mainly relating to carriageway depressions, cracking and potholing.	To be reviewed by Highways Maintenance team and works undertaken during future road surfacing maintenance works – Review within 4 weeks of Cabinet approval
Recommended by Safety Review	Falls and Drainage - Some minor items/issues identified mainly relating to gathered detritus at gullies, evidence of ponded surface water and cracking at gully frames.	To be reviewed by Highways Maintenance team and works undertaken during future road surfacing maintenance works – Review within 4 weeks of Cabinet approval Road channels to be swept/cleansed – Part of routine maintenance (last sweep confirmed as 9th Aug)

Recommended by Safety Review	Kerbing - Some minor items/issues identified mainly relating to detritus masking the kerb, kerb upstand inconsistencies and damaged kerbs	To be reviewed by Highways Maintenance team and undertaken during future road surfacing maintenance works – Review within 4 weeks of Cabinet approval. Kerb line to be swept/cleansed – Part of routine maintenance (last sweep confirmed as 9th Aug).
Recommended by Safety Review	Road Markings - Revise central hatch marking to a 4m mark, 2m gap (currently 6m mark, 3m gap). Consider provision of edge of carriageway road makings to provide enhanced delineation of the edge of carriageway. A small number of worn road markings were identified.	Central road marking lengths - to be amended during future road surfacing programmes. Edge of carriageway marking (100mm wide) and worn road markings. To be laid and refreshed within 10 weeks of Cabinet approval.
Recommended by Safety Review	Road Studs – Missing Road studs were identified at three locations.	To be reviewed by Highways Maintenance team and undertaken during future road surfacing maintenance works – Review within 4 weeks of Cabinet approval.
Recommended by Safety review	Signing - Replace existing 40mph terminal signs with standard 40mph repeater signs. Review location of all chevron signing in relation to edge of carriageway. Some minor items/issues identified relating to sign face cleaning, minor sign face damage, obscured visibility of signs and lack of bi-lingual information.	Replace speed limit terminal signs with speed limit repeaters. - Within 10 weeks of Cabinet approval Chevron relocation not achievable. Sign face cleaning - Within 10 weeks of Cabinet approval. Remaining minor items to be reviewed by Highways Maintenance team – Review within 4 weeks of Cabinet approval

Recommended by Safety Review	Road Lighting - Some minor items/issues identified mainly relating to foliage obscuring lanterns and leaning lighting columns.	Review undertaken August 2023 / Vertical realignment due end Sept 2023 (No immediate concerns noted) Excess vegetation removal - Review planned by Arboriculturalist Officers end of August 2023. (NB: Full detailed survey from Gelligroes to Full Moon due under routine maintenance inspection regime winter 23/24)
Recommended by Safety Review	Existing VRS Terminal - CCBC to replace terminal inline with current standards	Replaced under capital works programme - Complete.
Additional preventative Interventions proposed by CCBC	Upgrade existing Bend Warning Signs and include supplementary Vehicle Activated warning signs at both ends of the site	Subject to Road Safety Audit Stage 1/2 - Within 10 weeks of RSA / Cabinet approval.
Additional preventative Interventions proposed by CCBC	New High friction surfacing colour red and bilingual SLOW/ARAF markings adjacent to the Bend Warning signs	Subject to Road Safety Audit Stage 1/2 - Within 10 weeks of RSA / Cabinet approval.
Additional Safety Interventions proposed by CCBC	Install new High Visibility Bend Marker posts.	Subject to Road Safety Audit Stage 1/2 - Within 10 weeks of RSA / Cabinet approval.

It should be noted that while consultees agreed and welcomed the actions within Table 1 at the meeting on 16th August 2023, they expressed their disappointment that the report did not recommend a VRS or physical barrier along the road or that streetlighting part night lighting policy would not be removed for this road.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The Road Safety Review undertaken in March 2023 has not identified any major road safety issues on the length of the B4251 between Gelligroes and Ynysddu.

The vehicle restraint system assessment has now reduced from “medium“ to “low” following the interventions identified in the previous independent safety assessment where the relevant recommendations such as reduction of speed to 40mph from national speed limit have been implemented.

Some suggested minor improvements have been identified as part of the second independent safety review which are considered minor defects/issues/items which are generally maintenance related. This information is summarised within Table 1(5.4).

In addition to these recommended measures subsequent meetings with local residents and Councillors have also identified a number of preventative measures that should also be implemented as outlined in Table 1, above (5.4)

It is recommended that the road safety review is accepted as factually correct, and the information is reviewed and forwarded to Highway Operations Group to implement and action the minor repairs and preventative measures in accordance with CCBC policies.

No further safety reviews or reports are required at this stage, but routine highway inspections will continue in line with council policies, with all actionable defects repaired as they arise.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IIA)

7.1 The proposed works form part of our Highway maintenance work stream and as such do not require an IIA.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There is no additional funding required. All defects will be managed by Highway Services using residual funding from the phase one chainlink boundary fencing works and their Highway maintenance budgets.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The views of consultees and interested parties, who were present at liaison meetings as part of the review process, have been incorporated and addressed within the report. On the 16th August 2023 the works listed in Para 5.4 were agreed and welcomed, however, reservations were made that :-

- No substantial barriers were being installed on the bends.
- The street lighting part night lighting policy decision was not being reversed for the road.

10.2 A family member has asked that Cabinet members attention is drawn to the final paragraph of item 5.4 and paragraph 10.1 of the report. They wished to reiterate their thanks for the work undertaken and that while they agreed and welcomed the actions within Table 1 they expressed their disappointment that the report did not recommend a VRS or physical barrier along the road or that street lighting part night

light policy decision would not be revoked for the road.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Highways Act 1980.

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- Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
- Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
- Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
- Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
- Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
- Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Group Manager
- Gareth Richards, Highway Services Group Manager
- Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities, Welsh Language
- PC David J. Thomas – Gwent Police
- Cllr Janine Reed, County Councillor (Ynysddu)
- Cllr Jan Jones, County Councillor (Ynysddu)
- Jo Jones,
- Leighton Reardon,

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Road Safety Review and RRS assessment
Appendix 2 Site Location Drawing – This document is an Engineering Drawing and cannot be made accessible. Therefore, should anyone wish to discuss the content they may contact Chris Adams, Author of the Report on adamsc@caerphilly.gov.uk

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Caerphilly County Borough Council
B425 I Gelligroes to Ynysddu
Road Safety Review and Road
Restraint System (RRS) Assessment

September 2023

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Caerphilly County Borough Council

B4251 Gelligroes to Ynysddu

Road Safety Review and Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment

March 2023

Client Commission

Client:	Caerphilly County Borough Council	Date Commissioned:	February 2023
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LTP Quality Control

Job No:	LTP/23/5353	File Ref:	B4251 Road Safety Review and RRS Assessment - Final Issue 2		
Issue	Revision	Description	Author	Checked	Date
FINAL	Issue 2	Revised final (minor revs)	RP	RP	06/09/2023
FINAL	Issue 1	Final report to Client	RP	NW	30/03/2023
				Authorised for Issue:	NW

LTP PROJECT TEAM

As part of our commitment to quality the following team of transport professionals was assembled specifically for the delivery of this project. Relevant qualifications are shown and CVs are available upon request to demonstrate our experience and credentials.

Team Member	LTP Designation	Qualifications
Nigel Wilson	Technical Director	CEng FIHE MCIHT
Ryan Penn	Associate	BA(Hons) IEng FIHE FCIHT MSoRSA
Oliver Appleby	Graduate Highway Engineer	MEng (Hons) MCIHT MIHE

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B4251 GELLIGROES TO YNYSDDU

ROAD SAFETY REVIEW & ROAD RESTRAINT SYSTEM (RRS) ASSESSMENT

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I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Local Transport Projects Ltd (LTP) has been commissioned by Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) to undertake a Road Safety Review and Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment for the approximate 1.8km length of the B4251 between Gelligroes and Ynysddu. As identified within Figure 1, the study area extends from south of Heolddu Road in Gelligroes to the village boundary in Ynysddu. Gelligroes roundabout, which is located a short distance north of Heolddu Road, is not included within the study area.

Figure 1: Study Route



Source Imagery: Copyright Google Earth Pro (License Key-JCPMR5M58LXF2GE)

1.2 Route History

- 1.2.1 The study route has been subject to a number of recent studies, assessments and highway interventions and a brief timeline is provided below:
- 1.2.2 **October 2019 – ‘CCBC Vehicle Restraint System Risk Scoring Assessment’ (CCBC, 2019).** The route scored as a medium priority site.
- 1.2.3 **March 2020 – ‘Caerphilly CBC – B4251 Safety Improvement Study’ (Amey Consulting, 2020).** The study outlines that *“in general, the road itself was found to be in good condition and well maintained, however analysis of the major geometry found that it fell below the standard that would be required for a newly constructed route. Following the appraisal of existing conditions several recommendations are made for the improvement of the route with regards to safety. The most notable recommendation being the reduction of the speed limit to 40mph throughout, which was made based on traffic survey data and geometric analysis. Furthermore, as the route comprises many tight, blind bends it is recommended that additional warning signs and surface markings be installed to give warning to motorists. It is also recommended that steps be taken to discourage any overtaking along the entire route. As well as these additions there are also several comments made regarding future maintenance.”*
- 1.2.4 The study also provided a draft risk scoring assessment in accordance with ‘Provision of Road Restraint Systems on Local Authority Roads’ (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011) based on the assumption that a 40mph speed limit is implemented on the route. The route was scored as a medium priority site. The risk level at a medium priority site is defined as *“intervention may be required to introduce control measures to drive residual risk towards the Lower Priority Site category. The residual risk can be tolerated only if further risk reduction is impracticable or requires action that is grossly disproportionate to the reduction in risk achieved”* (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011). In terms of outcomes, for a medium priority site the same document outlines that *“where the risk evaluation has identified a site as a medium priority a RRS may be justified however a non-RRS approach to reducing the risk may prove sufficient to negate the need for a RRS. If suitable effective measures cannot be introduced then the appraisal process would normally continue in order to consider the other criteria.”*
- 1.2.5 **Summer 2020 – Implementation of road safety measures.** A number of road safety measures recommended within the Amey Consulting report were implemented during the summer of 2020. The measures included the provision of chevron signing at the most severe bends and localised carriageway resurfacing works.

- 1.2.6 **September 2020 – Tree removal.** Much of the B4251 route was lined by established mature trees but during September 2020 a significant tree felling operation commenced along the route to remove ash dieback. The CCBC ‘Cabinet Report 9th February 2022: B4251 Ynysddu to Wyllie Highway Improvement’ notes that “the removal of these substantial trees opened-up the embankments and created additional perceptions of danger and renewed requests for a VRS [Vehicle Restraint System]. In November 2020 a review of the site was undertaken to consider the concerns being raised” (CCBC, 2022). The review identified that “it is possible that a wooden post and rail or concrete post and chain-link fence could be installed which may reduce the risk of a vehicle leaving the road given the topography of the area. This would also provide some form of protection to both pedestrians and vehicles” (CCBC, 2022).
- 1.2.7 **January 2021 – Implementation of 40mph speed limit.** The speed limit on the section of the B4251 that was subject to the national speed limit (60mph) was reduced to 40mph, with the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) sealed on 1st January 2021.
- 1.2.8 **June/July 2022 – Provision of steel post and chain-link fence.** During June/July 2022, CCBC erected a steel post and chain-link fence along sections of the route between Heolddu Road and Wyllie.

1.3 Scope

- 1.3.1 This Road Safety Review and Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment forms a review and assessment of the current highway conditions on the study route as at the time of the study (February/March 2023). Reference to some of the previous reporting/assessment work undertaken by others is made as appropriate. The scope of this Road Safety Review and Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment is summarised below:
- 1.3.2 **Road Safety Review** – Assessment of current highway conditions on the route, including:
- Assessment of vehicle speed, vehicle flow and injury collision data for the route;
 - Site-based and desktop assessments of cross section, geometry, surface condition, carriageway falls/drainage, kerbing, road markings/studs, signing, road lighting, road restraint system, fencing and other relevant features; and
 - Overall Road Safety Review conclusions and recommendations.
- 1.3.3 **Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment** – RRS Assessment for the study route with reference to ‘Provision of Road Restraint Systems on Local Authority Roads’ (PRRSLAR) (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011) which provides an appraisal process to help authorities decide when a RRS is justified.

2. ROAD SAFETY REVIEW – DATA ASSESSMENTS

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section of the Road Safety Review considers recent vehicle speed, vehicle flow and injury collision data that has been supplied by CCBC.

2.2 Vehicle Speeds

2.2.1 Between Saturday 4th and Friday 10th March 2023, an independent specialist survey company installed Automatic Traffic Counters (ATC) to record vehicle speed information at the following two locations on the B4251:

- A – At lighting column IH07, approximately 440m south of Heolddu Road (latitude: 51.642175, longitude: -3.188379); and
- B – At lighting column IH32, approximately 100m north of the Pont-gam bus stops (latitude: 51.635274, longitude: -3.189735).

2.2.2 The above speed survey locations are identified within Figure 2 and the survey results summarised within Table 1. The complete ATC data is included as Appendix 1.

Figure 2: B4251 Speed Survey Locations

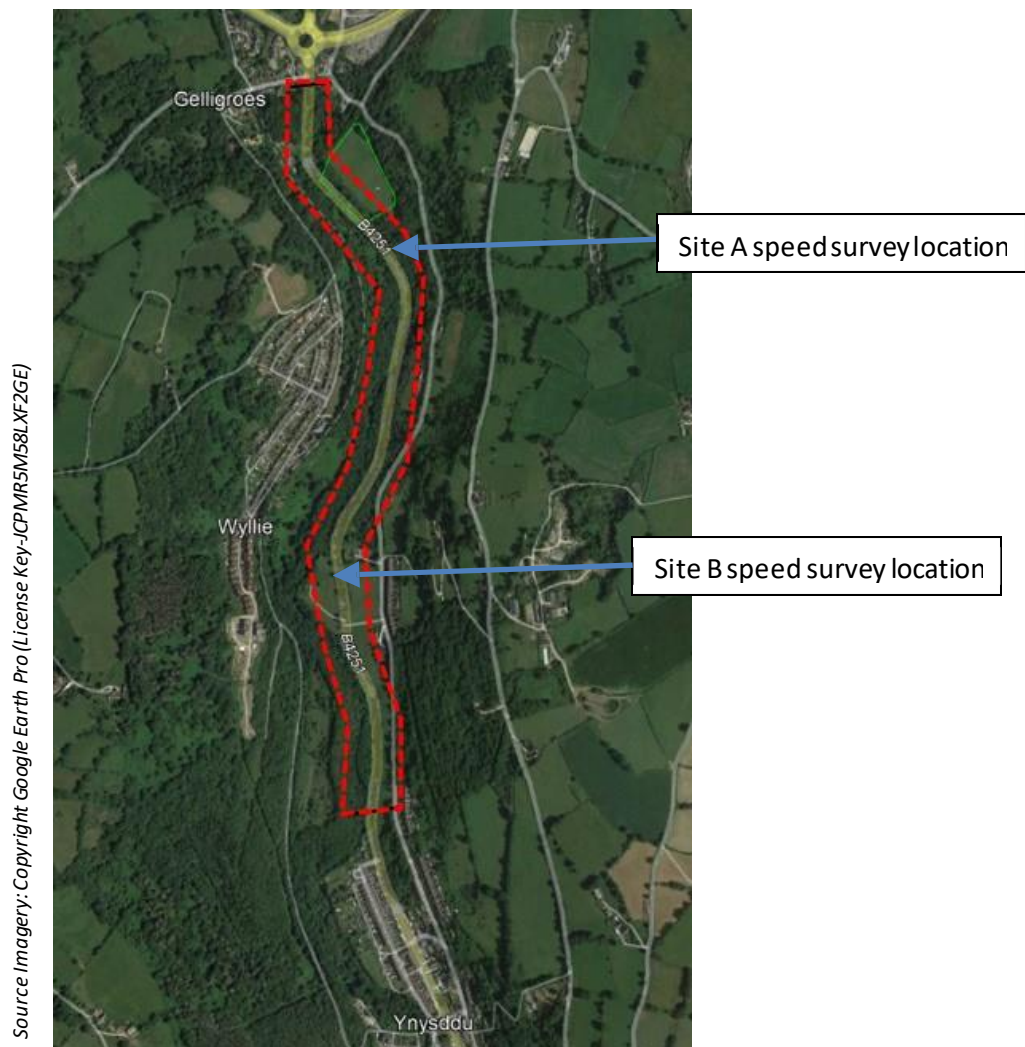


Table 1: B4251 Speed Survey Results

Survey Location	Posted Speed Limit	Mean Speed			85 th %ile Speed		
		Northbound	Southbound	Two-way	Northbound	Southbound	Two-way
A	40mph	39.3mph	41.7mph	41mph	43.6mph	46.6mph	45mph
B	40mph	37 mph	41.8mph	39mph	40.7mph	46.4mph	44mph

2.2.3 Two-way mean vehicle speeds are 41mph at Site A and 39mph at Site B and are therefore considered generally consistent with the posted 40mph speed limit. Recorded 85th %ile speeds are around 4-5mph higher than mean speeds and this magnitude of difference is in line with what could typically be expected.

2.2.4 ‘Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales’ states that “mean speeds should be used as the basis for determining local speed limits as these reflect what the majority of drivers perceive as an appropriate speed for the road. The aim should be for the mean speed driven on the road to be at or below the posted speed limit” (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009). Based on the recorded speed data, it is considered that the current 40mph speed limit on the route is appropriate.

2.3 Vehicle Flows

2.3.1 The ATC data also provides vehicle flow information at the two survey locations. This is summarised within Table 2, with the complete data included as Appendix 1. Recorded flows are almost identical at both survey locations as there are no opportunities for vehicles to join/leave the B4251 between the two survey points.

Table 2: B4251 Traffic Flows

Flow Category	Location	Northbound	Southbound	Two-way
Average Weekday				
24-hour Flow	A	5001	4754	9755
	B	4985	4749	9734
12-hour Flow (07:00-19:00)	A	4184	3613	7797
	B	4170	3608	7778
Typical AM Peak Hr (08:00-09:00)	A	326	425	751
	B	324	427	751
Typical PM Peak Hr (16:00-17:00)	A	536	325	861
	B	533	324	857
7-day Average				
24-hour Flow	A	4557	4321	8878
	B	4542	4316	8858
12-hour Flow (07:00-19:00)	A	3792	3326	7118
	B	3780	3321	7101

2.3.2 Average daily (24-hour) two-way weekday traffic flows on the B4251 total just less than 10,000 vehicles, with a generally even northbound/southbound distribution. It is noted that the Wednesday traffic flows are around 3,000 vehicles less than those recorded on the other weekdays. This is likely to be explained by snowfall on this day. Discounting the Wednesday flows, average daily (24-hour) two-way weekday traffic flows would total approximately 10,350 vehicles.

- 2.3.3 Around 80% of daily weekday traffic flows take place during the 12-hour daytime period 07:00-19:00.
- 2.3.4 Two-way traffic flows during typical weekday AM and PM peak hours total approximately 750 vehicles and 850 vehicles respectively.
- 2.3.5 The ATC data indicates that buses/rigid vehicles/articulated vehicles make up around 1.8% of the total vehicle flow on the B4251.

2.4 Personal Injury Collision (PIC) Data

- 2.4.1 **PIC totals (10-year record)** – PIC data for the study route for the 10-year period 01/07/2012 to 30/06/2022 has been supplied by CCBC and the PIC plot is included as Appendix 2. The plot includes an approximate 100m length of the B4251 north of Alexandra Road that is subject to a 30mph speed limit and is located outside of the study area. As summarised within Table 3, a total of 17 PICs have been recorded during the study period, providing an average of 1.7 PICs per year.

Table 3: 10-year Collision History

Year	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total	3-Yr Av
01/07/2012 to 30/06/2013			3	3	-
01/07/2013 to 30/06/2014		1	1	2	-
01/07/2014 to 30/06/2015	1		1	2	2.2
01/07/2015 to 30/06/2016				0	1.3
01/07/2016 to 30/06/2017			2	2	1.3
01/07/2017 to 30/06/2018			1	1	1
01/07/2018 to 30/06/2019		1	1	2	1.7
01/07/2019 to 30/06/2020	1	1	1	3	2
01/07/2020 to 30/06/2021			1	1	2
01/07/2021 to 30/06/2022			1	1	1.7
Total	2	3	12	17	1.7

- 2.4.2 The PIC rate across the 10-year period has remained relatively stable, with a rolling 3-year average of between 1.3-2.2 PICs per year (currently at 1.7 PICs per year). Of the 17 PICs, 5 (29%) were either serious (3) or fatal (2) in severity.
- 2.4.3 **PIC totals (post 40mph speed limit implementation)** – As previously discussed, the major change on the study route which could influence collision rates was when the speed limit along the majority of the route was reduced from 60mph to 40mph on 1st January 2021 (a short length of 40mph already existed south of Gelligroes roundabout). As such, Table 4 provides speed limit information for the recorded PICs, separating this out for the pre and post 1st January 2021 periods.

Table 4: Collision by Speed Limit

PIC Record 01/07/2012 to 31/12/2020 (102 months)		
Speed Limit at PIC Location	PICs	PIC Rate per Year
30mph*	1*	0.12
40mph (near Gelligroes r'abt)	1	0.12
60mph	14	1.65
Total	16	1.88
PIC Record 01/01/2021 to 30/06/2022 (18 months)		
Speed Limit at PIC Location	PICs	PIC Rate per Year
40mph (full study area)	1	0.67
Total	1	0.67
* PIC included within supplied data but was recorded outside of study area within the 30mph speed limit extents close to Alexandra Road.		

- 2.4.4 A single PIC (slight in severity) has been recorded since the 40mph speed limit was implemented and involved a driver having a medical episode. Although relatively limited 'after' data is currently available (18 months), the route's PIC record with the 40mph speed limit in place is 0.67 PICs per year. The PIC record on the section of the route that was previously subject to a 60mph speed limit is some way higher at 1.65 PICs per year. This suggests much improved road safety performance since the 40mph speed limit was implemented.
- 2.4.5 The remaining analysis within this section focuses on the 10-year collision record along the route to establish longer term patterns but also makes specific reference as appropriate to the collision record following the introduction of the 40mph speed limit.
- 2.4.6 **PIC conditions** – Table 5 summarises the recorded PICs by road surface, weather and lighting conditions. The final column of the Table provides the average for the CCBC area across the 10-year period 2012-2021 (data obtained from the DfT's online road traffic statistics – roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/custom-downloads).

Table 5: Collision Conditions

Road Surface	PICs	%	CCBC Ave 2012-21
Dry	3	18%	68%
Wet or Damp	13	76%	30%
Frost or Ice	1	6%	2%
Weather	PICs	%	
Fine without high winds	8	47%	77%
Rain without high winds	7	41%	16%
Rain with high winds	1	6%	3%
Other	1	6%	5%
Lighting*	PICs	%	
Daylight	8	47%	74%
Dark (street lights present and lit)	1	6%	20%
Dark (street lights present but not lit)	3	18%	2%
Dark (no street lighting)	2	12%	4%
Dark (street lighting status unknown)	3	18%	1%

* Lighting conditions as reported within the PIC data supplied by CCBC.

- 2.4.7 The proportion of wet/damp road PICs within the study area (76%) is considerably higher than the CCBC average (30%).
- 2.4.8 Of the 13 wet/damp road PICs, 8 were recorded whilst it was raining (62%) which is a similar proportion to the CCBC average (60%).
- 2.4.9 9/17 PICs (53%) are recorded as taking place in dark conditions which is almost double the CCBC average (27%). Of these 9 PICs, the data is coded as follows:
- ‘dark – street lights present but not lit’ – 3 PICs;
 - ‘dark – street lighting status unknown’ – 3 PICs;
 - ‘dark – no street lighting’ – 2 PICs; and
 - ‘dark – street lights present and lit’ – 1 PIC.
- 2.4.10 The PIC that was recorded following the introduction of the 40mph speed limit was recorded in daylight.
- 2.4.11 **Time of day** – Table 6 summarises the recorded PICs by time of year.

Table 6: Collision Times

Time of Year	PICs	%	CCBC Ave 2012-21
Winter (Dec-Feb)	2	12%	25%
Spring (Mar-May)	4	24%	23%
Summer (Jun-Aug)	4	24%	25%
Autumn (Sep-Nov)	7	41%	28%

- 2.4.12 The Autumn period recorded the greatest concentration of PICs (7 or 41%). All 7 of these PICs were recorded between late September (26th) and mid-November (19th).
- 2.4.13 **Day of week and time** – Table 7 summarises the recorded PICs by day of week and time of day.

Table 7: Collision by Day & Time

Day	Early Morning (00:00-06:00)	Typical AM Peak (06:00-09:00)	Morning (09:00-12:00)	Afternoon (12:00-15:00)	Typical PM Peak (15:00-18:00)	Evening / Night (18:00-00:00)	Total	%	CCBC Ave
Monday	3	1				2	6	35%	14%
Tuesday	1						1	6%	15%
Wednesday				1			1	6%	15%
Thursday	1			1	1		3	18%	14%
Friday	1				3		4	24%	17%
Saturday							0	-	13%
Sunday					2		2	12%	11%
Total	6	1	0	2	6	2	17		
%	35%	6%	-	12%	35%	12%			
CCBC Ave	6%	12%	14%	18%	25%	25%			

- 2.4.14 Over a third of PICs (6/17) were recorded during the early morning period (00:00-06:00) when traffic flows are likely to be at their lightest. This is almost six times higher than the CCBC average (6%). The PIC that was recorded since the introduction of the 40mph speed limit was recorded during the Wednesday afternoon period.
- 2.4.15 Of the 6 early morning PICs, 3 were recorded between 05:30-06:00. In addition to the 6 early morning PICs, a further 2 PICs were recorded reasonably late at night (22:07 and 23:55).
- 2.4.16 The PICs were concentrated on weekdays, particularly Monday (6), Friday (4) and Thursday (3).
- 2.4.17 **PIC locations** – The 17 PICs were generally dispersed across the study route as follows (described north to south):
- 2 PICs (1 serious and 1 slight) a short distance south of Heolddu Road;
 - 1 PIC (slight) at the first bend south of Heolddu Road;
 - 2 PICs (1 serious and 1 slight) on a straight section of carriageway south of the above bend;
 - 2 PICs (both slight) at the second bend south of Heolddu Road (including the PIC that was recorded following the implementation of the 40mph speed limit);
 - 2 PICs (both slight) on a straight section of carriageway south of the above bend;
 - 4 PICs (1 fatal, 1 serious and 2 slight) within the general vicinity of the bend towards the southern end of Wyllie;
 - 1 PIC (fatal) south of Wyllie within the vicinity of the 30mph speed limit countdown markers (three bars);
 - 1 PIC (slight) approximately 100m north of the 40mph/30mph terminal speed limit signs at Ynysddu; and
 - 1 PIC (slight) approximately 80m south of the 40mph/30mph terminal speed limit signs at Ynysddu (located outside of the study area).
- 2.4.18 **Type of PIC** – Clear language description information has been supplied in relation to most of the recorded PICs. This provides an indication of the type and nature of the collision based on the professional opinion of a Police Officer who attended the scene. This information is summarised within Table 8.

Table 8: Type of PIC

PIC Type	PICs	Additional Details
Single vehicle collision – failed to negotiate bend or loss of control on route (4 coded as going ahead right bend, 2 left bend & 3 going ahead other)	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8/9 involved vehicles leaving the road and colliding with objects (most commonly trees) 6/9 involved northbound vehicles
Two vehicle collision – head-on collision	2	-
Two or three vehicle collision – rear shunt	2	Both involved northbound vehicles
Vehicle overtaking a cyclist	1	Involved northbound vehicle
Driver has medical episode	1	Involved northbound vehicle (post 40mph speed limit implementation PIC)
Limited details provided	2	Both involved northbound vehicles
Total	17	

2.4.19 Single vehicle loss of control/failure to negotiate bend collisions are the dominant PIC type (9/17), with two-thirds of these involving northbound vehicles. The PIC that occurred following the implementation of the 40mph speed limit in January 2021 involved a driver having a medical episode was not a loss of control/failure to negotiate bend collision.

2.4.20 There is a pattern of PICs generally involving northbound drivers (14/17 PICs).

2.4.21 **Causation factors** – The supplied PIC data includes information on possible/very likely causation factors associated with the PICs based on the opinion of a Police Officer who attended the scene. The most cited causation factors are detailed within Table 9.

Table 9: Causation Factors

Causation Factor	PICs	Confidence
Loss of control	8	V likely (5), Possible (3)
Slippery road (due to weather)	7	V likely (4), Possible (3)
Travelling too fast for conditions	6	V likely (4), Possible (2)
Sudden braking	4	V likely (2), Possible (2)
Exceeding speed limit	3	V likely (2), Possible (1)
Careless / reckless / in a hurry	3	V likely (2), Possible (1)
Road layout (bends, hills etc)	3	V likely (1), Possible (2)

2.4.22 Loss of control (8), slippery road (7) and travelling too fast for the conditions (6) are the most commonly cited causation factors. None of these factors are associated with the PIC that was recorded following the implementation of the 40mph speed limit.

2.4.23 Although the above causation factor information is useful, it is recognised that collisions are complex, multi-factor events and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) note that most collisions have several causes, the main ones being human error, the road environment and mechanical/vehicle defects. RoSPA consider that human error is a factor in 95% of collisions, road environment a factor in 12% of collisions and mechanical/vehicle defects a factor in 2% of collisions (RoSPA, 2017).

2.4.24 **Casualties** – The 17 PICs resulted in 21 casualties (an average of 1.2 casualties per PIC). Table 10 provides a breakdown of the casualties according to the mode of travel and age group.

Table 10: Casualty Road User Groups

Road User Group	Age (years)						Total	%
	Unknown	0 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 59	60 Plus		
Car Driver			2	7	6	2	17	81%
Car Passenger				2	1		3	14%
Cyclist				1			1	5%
Total	-	-	2	10	7	2	21	
%	-	-	9%	48%	33%	9%		

2.4.25 Of the 21 casualties, 20 were car occupants (predominantly drivers). A high proportion of car driver casualties were of a young age; of the 17 car drivers 9 were aged between 17 and 26 (17, 19, 21, 21, 21, 23, 23, 25 and 26). Of these 9 drivers, 7 were injured in the single vehicle failure to negotiate bend/loss of control PICs identified within Table 8. The driver injured in the PIC which occurred following the introduction of the 40mph speed limit was aged 73.

2.4.26 Given the high proportion of young driver casualties across the study area, CCBC may want to consider undertaking targeted Education, Training and Publicity (ETP) activities on the route.

2.4.27 **Summary** – The key conclusions from the PIC analysis are that:

- Although caveated by the limited amount of ‘after’ data currently available (18 months), the annual PIC rate on the route is much lower since the speed limit was lowered to 40mph in January 2021. Since this date, a single PIC (slight in severity) has been recorded on the route. Additional analysis should be undertaken once further ‘after’ data is available to determine whether this improved road safety performance is maintained; and
- Across the wider 10-year study period, some common PIC patterns have been identified, including high proportions of wet road / dark / early hours of the morning / young driver / single vehicle / loss of control collisions. However, these patterns are not evident since the introduction of the 40mph speed limit.

2.5 Consultation with Gwent Police Collision Investigation Team

2.5.1 Gwent Police Collision Investigation Team were contacted to determine if they have any comments regarding the operation and safety of the study route. No comments were received from Gwent Police.

3. ROAD SAFETY REVIEW – SITE/DESKTOP ASSESSMENTS

3.1 Site/Desktop Assessments – Assessment Details

- 3.1.1 This Road Safety Review has involved both detailed site-based and desktop assessments. Site inspections undertaken by a team of two qualified professionals were carried out as follows:
- 3.1.2 **Site inspection during dark conditions** – Tuesday 7th February 2023, between 18:45-19:15. The route was driven in both directions by the site inspection team. Weather and road surface conditions were dry at the time of the inspection and road lighting along the route was illuminated; and
- 3.1.3 **Site inspection during daylight conditions** – Wednesday 8th February 2023, between 08:45-12:00. The route was walked and driven in both directions by the site inspection team. Weather conditions were dry and sunny. For approximately half of the inspection, a slight frost was present on the carriageway.
- 3.1.4 In terms of desktop assessments, a topographical survey which covers the approximate 1.2km northern section of the route has been supplied by CCBC, with Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping available for the remainder of the route. A chainage has been applied to the route, beginning at 0m at the southern end and terminating at 1825m at the northern end. Relevant references to chainages are made throughout this section.

3.2 Design Standards / Guidance

- 3.2.1 As part of this Road Safety Review, reference is made to specific design standards/guidance contained within documents which form part of the *'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges'* (DMRB). It is important to note that the DMRB is only mandatory on motorways and all-purpose trunk roads and the B4251 is not a motorway or trunk road. As such, there is not a strict requirement for compliance with the DMRB on roads such as the B4251. However, in the absence of local design standards/guidance, Local Highway Authorities often tend to fall back on the DMRB as a reference point, particularly in higher speed rural environments.
- 3.2.2 Other design guidance does exist and *'GG 101 Introduction to the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges'* outlines that where *"works are to be carried out on roads that are not part of the trunk road network and the use of the DMRB could result in significant over-specification, alternative documents such as the Manual for Streets or Designing Streets 2010 [Scotland] may be used with the approval of the Overseeing Organisation"* (National Highways, 2021).
- 3.2.3 *'Manual for Streets'* (MfS1) (Department for Transport (DfT), 2007) focuses on lightly-trafficked residential streets and is not appropriate on roads such as the B4251. However, *'Manual for Streets 2'* (MfS2) (CIHT, 2010) forms a companion guide to MfS1 and *"builds on the guidance contained in MfS1, exploring in greater detail how and where its key principles can be applied to busier streets and non-trunk roads, thus helping to fill the perceived gap in design guidance between MfS1 and the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges"* (CIHT, 2010).

3.2.4 Two key messages are evident from the above, these being that:

- Whilst design standards/guidance within the DMRB is useful, there is no requirement for strict compliance with the DMRB on local roads such as the B4251; and
- Other guidance, which allows for a greater consideration of local context, is available and is generally more applicable in lower speed environments. Since the implementation of the 40mph speed limit on the B4251, the principles outlined in documents such as MfS2 are likely to be more pertinent to the B4251 than when the route was subject to a 60mph speed limit.

3.3 Cross Section

3.3.1 The B4251 is a single carriageway (S2) road with several bends and straight sections, with key cross-sectional characteristics as follows:

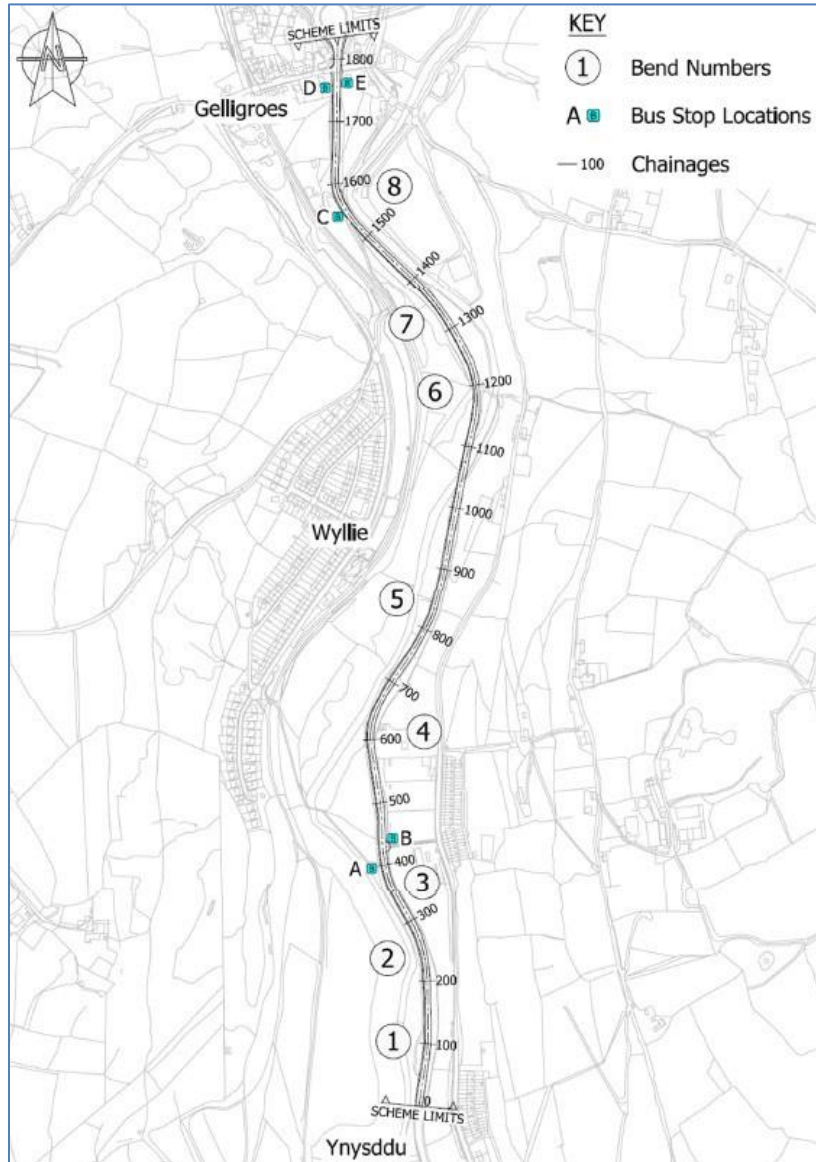
- A carriageway of approximately 9.2m in width, flanked by a 1.8m wide footway on the western side (these dimensions vary to a small extent in places);
- A central hatched area of approximately 1.7m in width which separates opposing traffic flows and results in traffic lanes of approximately 3.8m (northbound) and 3.7m (southbound) in width. The lane widths are generally consistent with those quoted within 'CD 127 Cross-sections and Headrooms' (Highways England, 2021a) for rural all-purpose single carriageways;
- A crown in the centre of the carriageway with varying super-elevation at bends;
- An approximate 55m length of RRS on the eastern side of the road to the north of the river over-bridge;
- A steel post and chain-link fence along sections of the route between Heolddu Road and Wyllie (provided June/July 2022). The fence is provided on the same side of the road as the Sirhowy River (i.e.; north of the river over-bridge the fence is on the eastern side and is on the western side to the south). Short sections of timber post and rail fencing are provided at other locations along the route; and
- Areas beyond the edge of carriageway/back of footway are generally lined with trees (though it is noted that some tree felling took place during September 2020 to remove ash dieback).

3.4 Geometry

3.4.1 Geometric assessments of the study route were undertaken as part of the 'Caerphilly CBC – B4251 Safety Improvement Study' (Amey Consulting, 2020) and, at this time, most of the route was subject to a 60mph speed limit. Since this previous assessment, a 40mph speed limit prevails on the fully study route. The following paragraphs provide commentary on the geometric assessments prior to the speed limit reduction and provide relevant assessments following the speed limit reduction.

3.4.2 **Bend radii for new roads (previous assessment)** – The ‘Caerphilly CBC – B4251 Safety Improvement Study’ (Amey Consulting, 2020) identified that the study route includes 8 notable radii and these are numbered within Figure 3 (bus stop locations also identified).

Figure 3: Bend Radii



Source: Amey Consulting, 2020

3.4.3 The previous assessment with reference to Figure 9.23N2 ‘CD 109 Highway Link Design’ (Highways England, 2020) identified that “the radii should be 510-1020m for a 100kph road (100kph equates to a 60mph national speed limit for this classification of road)” (Amey Consulting, 2020). LTP would not necessarily agree with this as Figure 9.23N2 refers to design speed rather than the posted speed limit. Using Figure 2.1 of the same document, it is considered that the alignment and layout constraints on the route are more akin to a design speed of 85kph (53mph), rather than 100kph (62mph).

- 3.4.4 Regardless of the above, the previous assessment found that radii on all 8 bends fell well below the current standards for the 100kph speed which was used (see Table 11). In commenting on this, the report outlined that *“as the stretch of road within the study area is a well-established route, it is not expected to conform to current standards. Motorists are obligated to take the road as they find it, which means they should drive at an appropriate speed for the conditions. However, motorists may differ significantly in their interpretation of the conditions. This conflict has the potential to cause a hazard to all road users”* (Amey Consulting, 2020).
- 3.4.5 **Bend radii for new roads (current assessment)** – As outlined above, LTP consider the route to have a design speed of 85kph. However, at the same time, recent speed surveys have identified actual vehicle speeds on the route to be lower than this with mean speeds of 39-41mph and 85th %ile speeds of 44-45mph. This is not uncommon and ‘MfS2’ states that designers should *“consider the potential for reducing design speed locally, where it is appropriate that traffic should travel more slowly”* (CIHT, 2010). The next design speed below 85kph in CD 109 is 70kph, which equates to a speed of 43.5mph which is broadly in line with the recorded 85th %ile speeds on the route (44-45mph).
- 3.4.6 The final two columns of Table 11 identify radii requirements for speeds of 85kph (design speed of the route) and 70kph (actual speeds on the route). Aside from at bend 7, the achievable radii at all bends remains below the levels required at speeds of 85kph and 70kph. However, and as per the previous assessment, as a well-established route it is very unlikely that it would meet current DMRB standards. It is considered that the bend radii on the route, although below standards outlined within DMRB, are not significantly different from bends that can be found at other comparable locations in Caerphilly and across Wales. As previously outlined, it is also noted that the application of DMRB standards is not mandatory on roads such as the B4251. The previously discussed collision record also identifies improved road safety performance since the 40mph speed limit covered the full route. In addition, the speed data identifies that the 40mph speed limit appears to be successfully controlling vehicle speeds to around the level of the posted limit which should encourage more appropriate driving speeds at the bends.

Table 11: Bend Radii Measurements

Radii N°	Radii Measurement	Radii Requirement 100kph Speed	Radii Requirement 85kph Road	Radii Requirement 70kph Road
1	88m	510-1020m	360-720m	255-510m
2	203m			
3	130m			
4	102m			
5	130m			
6	163m			
7	378m			
8	72m			

- 3.4.7 **Full Overtaking Sight Distance (FOSD) (previous assessment)** – The previous assessment assumed a design speed of 100kph and at this level CD 109 indicates that a FOSD of 580m should be provided. It was found that this distance was not achievable on any part of the route, with the longest straight section being 350m between radii 5 and 6. Again, as previously outlined, LTP consider the design speed to be 85kph which equates to a FOSD of 490m (which is also not achievable).
- 3.4.8 **Full Overtaking Sight Distance (FOSD) (current assessment)** – As discussed, though the design speed is considered to be 85kph, actual vehicle speeds are around the 70kph level. The FOSD requirements at these levels are 490m (85kph) and 410m (70kph). As per the previous assessment, these distances are not achievable on any part of the route (longest straight section of 350m between radii 5 and 6). Again, it is unlikely that the B4251, as a well-established route, would meet current DMRB standards. In addition, the collision history does not identify a pattern of overtaking collisions on the route.
- 3.4.9 **Stopping Sight Distance (SSD) (previous assessment)** – Within the previous assessment, SSD for each of the bus stops was considered with reference to CD 109. A design speed of 100kph was assumed within the 60mph speed limit section and a 70kph in the section of 40mph south of Gelligroes roundabout. The assessment results are summarised within Table 12 and the report comments that “*only one of the bus stops, D, achieves the desirable minimum SSD. However, all except A achieve one step below which is generally acceptable*” (Amey Consulting, 2020).
- 3.4.10 **Stopping Sight Distance (SSD) (current assessment)** – As previously discussed, LTP would consider the design speed of the route within the section that was reduced to a 40mph speed limit to be 85kph, with actual vehicle speeds around the 70kph level. A design speed of 70kph on the long-standing section of 40mph at bus stops D and E (south of Gelligroes roundabout) is likely to be appropriate. A design speed of 85kph equates to a desirable minimum SSD of 160m and a one step below desirable minimum SSD of 120m. All bus stops except for A and E meet the desirable minimum and both stops meet the one step below desirable minimum. It is also noted that the SSD formula within MfS2 identifies a SSD of 78m for speeds of 45mph. Overall, the route is considered to operate satisfactorily from a SSD point of view.

Table 12: SSD for Existing Bus Stops

Bus Stop	Previous Assessment				Current Assessment			
	Design Speed	Desirable Minimum SSD	1 Step Below Desirable Minimum SSD	Achievable SSD	Design Speed	Desirable Minimum SSD	1 Step Below Desirable Minimum SSD	Achievable SSD
A	100kph	215m	160m	154m	85kph	160m	120m	154m
B	100kph	215m	160m	175m	85kph	160m	120m	175m
C	100kph	215m	160m	203m	85kph	160m	120m	203m
D	70kph	120m	90m	174m	70kph	120m	90m	174m
E	70kph	120m	90m	111m	70kph	120m	90m	111m

3.5 Surface Condition

3.5.1 The B4251 is entirely bituminous construction and a visual inspection of the route identified it to be in generally good condition or very good condition where recently resurfaced. Some minor defects were identified as follows:

- Chainage 110m – Minor dip/depression in carriageway surface across its full width;
- Chainage 122m – Minor transverse crack across the northbound lane;
- Chainage 211m – Short longitudinal crack to the centre of the northbound lane;
- Chainage 232m – Minor potholing within northbound lane for approximately 5m;
- Chainage 265m – Some surface deterioration in central hatched area where the carriageway has been patched;
- Chainage 414m – Reinstatement across whole carriageway with some cracking to the edge of the reinstatement in both the north and southbound lanes;
- Chainage 510m – Detritus in the northbound channel from a nearby gully for approximately 100m. Deposit of leaf mulch and detritus in central hatched area for approximately 50m;
- Chainage 634m – Patched area of carriageway within the northbound lane appears slightly depressed;
- Chainage 770m – Reinstatement to northbound lane appears slightly depressed;
- Chainage 1165m – Reasonably large patch of surface lamination within the central hatched area;
- Chainage 1220m – Slight depression in the carriageway surface within the southbound lane, adjacent to a large tree stump;
- Chainage 1250m – Reinstatement to manhole in centre of carriageway slightly depressed to the western side of the frame;
- Chainage 1621m – Pothole in the northbound lane; and
- Chainage 1790m – Gas valve covers slightly depressed in the road surface.

3.5.2 It is recommended that CCBC review these minor defects and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required.

3.5.3 SCRIM (Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine) is used to measure wet skidding resistance on road surfaces. CCBC has supplied SCRIM data (2022) for the Local Authority area. Based on the information provided, it appears that levels of skid resistance on the study route are appropriate and not at a level that would require further investigation.

3.6 Carriageway Falls and Drainage

3.6.1 Analysis of the topographical survey identifies that all straight sections of carriageway are provided with a crossfall of at least 1:40, with one side typically having a crossfall well in excess of 1:40. Across the length of the topographical survey, the approximate longfall on the route is 1%.

3.6.2 The five northern bends (4-8) are covered by the topographical survey. Superelevation has been calculated as follows: Bend 4 (3.5%), Bend 6 (1.7%) and Bend 8 (3.5%). Bend 5 and 7 do not have any additional superelevation besides transitioning between crossfalls at chainages either side. The level of superelevation that is provided at the assessed bends is considered to be generally adequate for the nature and use of the route. This is also supported by the most recent collision record along the route.

3.6.3 Although the site inspections were undertaken in dry conditions, no major indicators of significant drainage issues on the route were identified. However, the following minor issues/items were identified with regards to carriageway falls and drainage:

- Chainage 83m – Cracking to the gully surround on the western side of the road;
- Chainage 131m – Evidence of ponding on the north side of the gully on the western side of the road (carriageway in crossfall at this location);
- Chainage 232m – Some slight cracking to the gully surround;
- Chainage 446m – Evidence of blocking of the gully on the western side of the road due to the presence of detritus on the gully frame;
- Chainage 462m – Detritus has gathered on the gully frame on the eastern side of road as well as within the channel (detritus likely to have fallen from the embankment);
- Chainage 510m – Detritus in the channel from the nearby gully for approximately 100m;
- Chainage 560m – Detritus around the gully frame on the eastern side of the road. A reasonable amount of detritus/rubbish was also observed in the eastern channel around the bend, with some standing water alongside the adjacent drystone wall;
- Chainage 600m – Standing water within the eastern channel which appears to be coming from the embankment. It appears that the surface water at this location cannot drain away via the adjacent gully due to leaf detritus and other heavy elements in the channel;
- Chainage 621m – Location where water appeared to be coming out of the embankment;
- Chainage 715m, 738m & 749m – Leaf detritus around the gully frames on the western side of the road;
- Chainage 762m – Leaf detritus around the gully frame on the eastern side of the road;

- Chainage 816m – Cracked gully surround on the western side of the road with the frame sunk towards the edge of the channel;
- Chainage 940m – Leaf detritus around the gully frame on the eastern side of the road;
- Chainage 1098m – Small amount of debris around the gully location; and
- Chainage 1700m – Camber on the eastern side of the road appears a little steeper than adjacent areas, as though the channel level is slightly lower.

3.6.4 It is recommended that CCBC review the above items and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required. This review should be prioritised given the history of wet road collisions on the route.

3.7 Kerbing

3.7.1 Half battered kerbs of varying upstands are provided on both sides of the B4251. The condition of the kerbing was observed to be generally good, though the following observations are made:

- Chainage 0-83m – From the village boundary, the embankment on the eastern side of the road drops down towards the kerb edge and there is potential for detritus to gather at the highway edge;
- Chainage 700m – Detritus from the steep embankment on the eastern side of the road is masking some of the kerb line, whilst discarded rubbish is also present in the channel;
- Chainage 739m – Large rock within the eastern embankment is positioned on top of the kerb and protrudes slightly into the carriageway;
- Chainage 880m – Detritus from the steep embankment on the eastern side of the road is masking some of the kerb line and also falling into the carriageway;
- Chainage 1300m – Eastern kerb/channel appears to have risen up slightly;
- Chainage 1321m – Kerb upstand on the eastern side drops away slightly;
- Chainage 1325m – Minor damage to the kerb on the eastern side and slightly sunken (potentially from vehicle over-run);
- Chainage 1331m – Kerb upstand on the eastern side drops away slightly;
- Chainage 1354m – Small gap in kerbing on the eastern side; and
- Chainage 1700m – Kerb damaged for a length of approximately 10m.

3.7.2 It is recommended that CCBC review the above items and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required.

3.8 Road Markings

3.8.1 The main road markings that are provided on the study route are:

- Gateway road markings, including red-coloured surfacing, at the 30mph/40mph speed limit terminal point at Ynysddu;
- Central hatch road markings to Diagram 1040 along the full route which divide north and southbound traffic flows; and
- Bus cage markings to Diagram 1025.1 at five bus stop locations (three northbound and two southbound).

3.8.2 The above road markings across the study route were observed to be in generally good condition, though the following minor defects were identified:

- Chainage 0m – Speed limit roundel road markings within the gateway treatment at Ynysddu are slightly worn; and
- Chainage 150m – The western side of the central hatch road markings are worn.

3.8.3 It is recommended that CCBC review these minor defects and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required.

3.8.4 It is considered that improvements/modifications to the existing road marking arrangements could be made on the route; these being:

3.8.5 **Length of Diagram 1040 central hatch road marking modules** – For speed limits of 40mph or less, Diagram 1040 central hatch road markings should have a module length of 6m (4m line and 2m gap). For speed limits of more than 40mph, the module length should be 9m (6m line and 3m gap). The correct 6m road marking module length is provided on the B4251 within the extents of the original short length of 40mph speed limit located south of Gelligroes roundabout. However, within the extents of the 40mph speed limit that was implemented on the remainder of the study route during January 2021, 9m road marking modules are provided. These are incorrect and could lead to a driver believing that a speed limit in excess of 40mph applies. To accord with the 40mph speed limit, the 9m road marking modules should be changed to 6m modules. This would also require changes to the existing road stud layout to reflect the new road marking layout. Removing/replacing existing road markings can sometimes damage the road surface and on occasion removed markings can remain partially visible to drivers, which can introduce its own problems. Providing a new road marking layout at the same time as a road is surface dressed/resurfaced generally provides a much superior finish. It is not known if surface dressing/resurfacing works are planned for the route.

3.8.6 **Potential provision of edge of carriageway road markings (Diagram 1012.1)** – Edge of carriageway road markings to Diagram 1012.1 are used to help delineate the edge of carriageway, particularly on unlit classified roads and those roads not having clearly defined raised kerbs. Although the B4251 is kerbed and street-lit (but not between 00:00-05:30), there may be merit in considering the provision of Diagram 1012.1 markings either on a full-route basis or at key locations (e.g.; bends). As previously outlined, there is evidence of vegetation/detritus from embankments masking the kerb at some locations and there is a history of collisions involving drivers leaving the carriageway. As such, the provision of additional lining to provide enhanced delineation of the edge of carriageway may be beneficial. If such lining is provided it should be ensured that sufficient traffic lane widths can be maintained along the route.

3.9 Road Studs

3.9.1 Road studs are installed within the gaps of the central hatch road markings over the length of the route that had its speed limit reduced from 60mph to 40mph during January 2021. The majority of the road studs are original form single ended studs, with a small number of newer ‘stick down’ studs provided in areas where the carriageway surface has been resurfaced/repared. The road studs were observed to be in generally good condition, though a small number were observed to be missing. The missing studs were located at chainages 161m (southbound), 211m (northbound) and 340m (southbound). It is recommended that CCBC review these locations and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required.

3.9.2 As outlined within the ‘Road Markings’ section, if the 9m central hatch road marking modules are replaced by 6m modules, the road stud layout will also require modifying. Although CCBC’s policy on road studs is not known, it is noted that road studs are not provided on the original short length of 40mph speed limited located south of Gelligroes roundabout. As such, CCBC may wish to consider whether it is necessary to re-provide road studs within the newer section of 40mph if the road marking modules are changed.

3.10 Signing

3.10.1 Various traffic signs are provided on the study route, including speed limit signs, associated repeater signs, direction signs, bend warning signs and chevron signing. The condition of the signing was observed to be generally good, though the following observations are made:

- Chainage 0m – The 30mph speed limit terminal signs and safety camera signs are legible but would benefit from cleaning. One of the four marker posts (northbound) at the gateway entry treatment is missing;
- Chainage 100m – Road narrows sign on the eastern side of the road is leaning away from the carriageway. The sign face would also benefit from cleaning;
- Chainage 110m – Although legible, the speed limit countdown signs (one bar) on both sides of the road are dirty and would benefit from cleaning;

- Chainage 211m – Although legible, the speed limit countdown signs (two bars) on both sides of the road are dirty and would benefit from cleaning;
- Chainage 265m – Chevron sign on the eastern side of the road appears to have sustained minor damage to its corners, potentially caused by passing vehicles. The sign face would also benefit from cleaning;
- Chainage 286m – Chevron sign on the eastern side of the road appears to have sustained minor damage to the top right corner, potentially caused by passing vehicles;
- Chainage 322m – Although legible, the speed limit countdown signs (three bars) on both sides of the road are dirty and would benefit from cleaning. The sign on the western side of the road is located behind a timber post and rail fence;
- Chainage 816m – Northbound chevron sign face missing;
- Chainage 840m – Chevron sign on the eastern side of the road has sustained some minor damage. The sign face would also benefit from cleaning;
- Chainage 1558m – The Gelligroes roundabout Advance Direction Sign (ADS) is legible but not in good condition. Some letters at the bottom right corner of the sign face are faded/have peeled off. Potentially the sign has previously been subject to graffiti and the removal of this may have damaged the retro-reflectivity of the sign face. The coating on the sign posts is also coming off and showing rusted steel beneath. The ADS is also located approximately 275m in advance of the roundabout which is much further away than the 90-150m siting distance recommended within the *'Traffic Signs Manual: Chapter 7'* (DfT, 2018). It may be difficult to position the ADS closer to the recommended siting distance due to the steep/rocky embankment and adjacent vegetation. Visibility of the sign face is also partially obstructed by the lighting column/speed limit sign located in front of the ADS as well as by overhanging vegetation;
- Chainage 1665m – Bus stop sign missing at the bus stop on the western side of the road;
- Chainage 1749m – The series of bends ahead warning sign (Diagram 513) for one mile located on the eastern side of the road has a well-rusted post. The sign face also has the potential to be masked by adjacent vegetation, particularly during the summer months. The supplementary 'for one mile' plate is only provided in English, whilst the corresponding sign at the opposite end of the bends in Ynysddu is bi-lingual;
- Chainage 1774m – Visibility of the direction signs to the hotel, golf course and Wyllie is very poor due to masking by the bus shelter and adjacent vegetation. The signs are also positioned at a mounting height of approximately 1500mm which is unsuitable for a location adjacent to a footway. The sign posts are also in a poor condition (rusting);

- Chainage 1780m – The illuminated two-way traffic sign (Diagram 521) on the eastern side of the road is completely obscured by foliage. It is unclear why this sign is required.
- Chainage 1815m – Direction sign to Gelligroes Mill on the western side of the road is partially obscured by adjacent bushes/shrubs; and
- Chainage 1825m – Some minor damage (peeling) to the weight limit / end of clearway signs located on the western side of the road. These signs are also not bi-lingual.

3.10.2 It is recommended that CCBC review the above items and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required.

3.10.3 In addition to the above, it is considered that improvements/modifications to the existing signing arrangements could be made on the route; these being:

3.10.4 **Speed limit signing** – A speed limit signing inconsistency was identified at the location of the previous 40mph/60mph speed limit terminal point (chainage 1540m). At this location, illuminated 40mph terminal speed limit signs are provided rather than standard un-lit, smaller speed limit repeater signs. This could give the incorrect impression to approaching drivers that they are entering a new speed limit when in fact the signs are just intended to provide a reminder of the existing 40mph speed limit. It is recommended that the existing signs are replaced with standard speed limit repeater signing at this location.

3.10.5 **Chevron signing** – Chevron signing to Diagram 515 (including yellow backing boards) was provided at the most severe bends along the route during the summer of 2020. Good forward visibility of the signs is provided and they help to improve the conspicuity of the bends. However, several of the sign faces had sustained minor damage, most likely caused by passing vehicles and potentially some of the signing is located too close to the edge of carriageway. As such, it is recommended that the positions of all chevron signing is reviewed and, if required, relocated as appropriate.

3.11 Road Lighting

3.11.1 A system of LED road lighting is provided throughout the study route. As per CCBC's part night lighting policy, all lights are switched off between approximately 00:00-05:30. At the time of the site inspection during darkness (18:45-19:15), all lighting columns were illuminated. The following observations in terms of road lighting are made:

- Chainage 0m – Lighting column adjacent to the speed limit signs has potential for its lantern to be obscured by an adjacent tree;
- Chainage 322m – Lantern of lighting column on the eastern side of the road is close to the tree canopy;
- Chainage 565m – Lantern at this location is below the winter tree canopy and the cover to the electrical housing on the column is loose and secured with tape;
- Chainage 1286m – Lighting column on the eastern side of the road appears to be leaning away from the carriageway slightly and also to the right;

- Chainage 1346m, 1445m and 1478m – The three lighting columns on the eastern side of the road appear to be leaning away from the carriageway slightly;
- Chainage 1774m – Foliage growing around the base of the lighting column on the western side of the road, potentially obscuring light from reaching the footway and the western side of the northbound lane; and
- Chainage 1825m – Foliage growing around the base of the lighting column on the eastern side of the road, potentially obscuring light from reaching the footway and parts of the carriageway.

3.11.2 It is recommended that CCBC review the above items and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required. This review should be prioritised given the history of dark collisions on the route.

3.12 Road Restraint System

3.12.1 An approximate 55m length (chainage 1110 to 1165m) of vehicle barrier (Open Box Beam) is located on the eastern side of the B4251 to the north of the river over-bridge. It is assumed that this has been installed to protect road users from the bridge parapet after exiting bend 6.

3.12.2 With reference to the vehicle barrier, the '*Caerphilly CBC – B4251 Safety Improvement Study*' outlines that "*the barrier begins with a ramped terminal facing oncoming traffic which does not comply with current standards which do not allow ramped terminals to be used on roads with speed limits above 50mph. In its current configuration the barrier will prevent motorists who leave the carriageway from impacting the bridge parapet, but likely "launch" the vehicle over the parapet and into the river below. This creates a serious hazard should motorists lose control while exiting the bend.*" (Amey Consulting, 2020).

3.12.3 Although the speed limit has been reduced to 40mph, the ramped terminal remains and the risk of launching an errant southbound vehicle towards the river remains. The CCBC '*Cabinet Report 9th February 2022: B4251 Ynysddu to Wyllie Highway Improvement*' (CCBC, 2022) identifies that the Council have a capital programme to address this at this site and other similar sites. A CCBC update provided to LTP as part of this commission confirmed that the terminal/barrier is to be replaced and an installation date is awaited.

3.12.4 A Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment for the study route is provided within Section 5 of this document.

3.13 Fencing

- 3.13.1 A steel post and chain-link fence is provided along sections of the route between Heolddu Road and Wyllie. This was installed during June/July 2022 and is provided on the same side of the road as the Sirhowy River (i.e.; north of the river over-bridge the fence is on the eastern side and is on the western side to the south). Visually, the fencing provides a level of delineation between the back of the highway and adjacent embankment areas/trees. The fencing was observed to be in generally good condition. Although the fencing may offer some edge protection to errant vehicles, it is not provided with vehicle restraining properties.
- 3.13.2 Generally short sections of timber post and rail fence are provided at some other locations along the route and was observed to be in generally good condition. Although not known for certain, the fencing is likely to have been provided to offer some protection from specific hazards.

3.14 Any Other Safety Criteria / Features / Observations

- 3.14.1 Although generally reflective of the rural nature of the B4251, it is noted that there is very little provision for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) (i.e.; cyclists and pedestrians) along the study route. No specific facilities for cyclists are provided, though very few cyclists were observed at the time of the site inspections and there is no known collision history involving cyclists.
- 3.14.2 A continuous footway is provided along the western side of the B4251 and is likely to be able to suitably accommodate the pedestrian demand on the route. A footway is provided on the eastern side at isolated locations only. At approximate chainages of 400m and 1760m, bus stops are provided on both sides of the road. However, no pedestrian crossing facilities (i.e.; dropped kerbs and tactile paving) are provided between the bus stops. Given this, people with disabilities, the elderly and those with physical/visual impairments may experience difficulties when attempting to cross the B4251 at these locations. It is noted that there does not appear to be a recorded collision history associated with pedestrians attempting to cross the B4251 at these locations, but the provision of crossing facilities would provide an enhanced level of service.
- 3.14.3 On the western side of the B4251, an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing point (dropped kerbs and tactile paving) is provided across a side road access at chainage 1545m. The tactile paving does not appear to be correctly aligned and the crossing point is not sufficiently visible due to verge encroachment/leaf debris.
- 3.14.4 It is recommended that CCBC review the above comments as appropriate.

4. ROAD SAFETY REVIEW – CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Road Safety Review Conclusions & Recommendations

4.1.1 The Road Safety Review has not identified any major road safety issues on the approximate 1.8km length of the B4251 between Gelligroes and Ynysddu. Some suggested improvements have been identified along with some minor defects/issues/items which are generally maintenance related. This information is summarised within Table 13 and it is recommended that it is reviewed and afforded further consideration by CCBC.

Table 13: Road Safety Review Items for Consideration by CCBC

Item	Rpt Ref	Comments	
Vehicles speeds	2.2	Mean speeds are consistent with the posted 40mph speed limit	
Vehicle flows	2.3	Average daily weekday flows are around 10,000 vehicles per day	
Collision record	2.4	Although relatively limited 'after' data is currently available, the route's collision record is much lower since a 40mph speed limit covered the full route. Additional analysis should be undertaken once further 'after' data is available to determine if this improved road safety performance is maintained.	
Item	Rpt Ref	Suggested Improvements / Comments	Minor Defects/Issues/Items
Cross section	3.3	No significant cross section issues identified.	No items identified.
Geometry	3.4	As a local road there is no requirement for strict compliance to DMRB standards. Geometry on the route not considered significantly different from that which can be found at other comparable locations in Caerphilly and across Wales.	No items identified.
Surface condition	3.5	No significant issues identified.	Some minor defects identified mainly relating to carriageway depressions, cracking and potholing. It is recommended that CCBC review these items and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required.
Carriageway falls & drainage	3.6	No significant issues identified.	Some minor items/issues identified mainly relating to gathered detritus at gullies, evidence of ponded surface water and cracking at gully frames. It is recommended that CCBC review these items and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required. This should be prioritised given the history of wet road collisions on the route.
Kerbing	3.7	No significant issues identified.	Some minor items/issues identified mainly relating to detritus masking the kerb, kerb upstand inconsistencies and damaged kerbs. It is recommended that CCBC review these items and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required.
Road markings	3.8	Improvements identified as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the length of 40mph speed limit that was provided in January 2021, the central hatch road marking modules should be 6m in length (currently 9m). • Consider provision of edge of carriageway road markings to provide enhanced delineation of the edge of carriageway. 	A small number of worn road markings were identified. It is recommended that CCBC review these items and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required.
Road studs	3.9	No significant issues identified. However, if the central hatch road markings are changed to 6m modules (see 3.8 above), this will require modification of the existing road stud layout.	Road studs were identified to be missing at three locations. It is recommended that CCBC review these locations and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required.

Item	Rpt Ref	Suggested Improvements	Minor Defects/Issues/Items
Signing	3.10	Improvements identified as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace existing 40mph speed limit terminal signs at chainage 1540m with standard 40mph speed limit repeater signs. Review location of all chevron signing and potentially relocate further away from the edge of carriageway. 	Some minor items/issues identified mainly relating to the need for sign face cleaning, minor sign face damage, obscured visibility of signs and lack of bilingual information. It is recommended that CCBC review these items and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required.
Road lighting	3.11	No significant issues identified.	Some minor items/issues identified mainly relating to foliage obscuring lanterns and leaning lighting columns. It is recommended that CCBC review these items and undertake appropriate remedial action if/as required. This should be prioritised given the history of collisions in dark conditions on the route.
Road Restraint System	3.12	Improvement identified as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ramped terminal at existing vehicle barrier provides a risk of launching vehicles over the bridge parapet. This should be replaced with a suitable crash-friendly end terminal (understood that CCBC have a capital programme to address this). 	N/a – a Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment for the study route is provided within Section 5 of this document.
Fencing	3.13	No significant issues identified.	No items identified.
Any other features	3.14	No significant issues identified.	Although the B4251 is acknowledged to be a rural route, comments made with regards to the level of pedestrian/cycling provision on the route. It is recommended that CCBC review these comments as appropriate.

5. ROAD RESTRAINT SYSTEM (RRS) ASSESSMENT

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A Road Restraint System (RRS) Assessment for the approximate 1.8km length of the B4251 between Gelligroes and Ynysddu has been undertaken with reference to ‘*Provision of Road Restraint Systems on Local Authority Roads*’ (PRRSLAR) (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011). The PRRSLAR guidance provides the outline of an appraisal process to help authorities decide when a RRS is justified. This appraisal “*takes account of the many diverse influencing factors including risk assessment, alternative solutions, system feasibility, cost benefit analysis and the availability of funding*” (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011).
- 5.1.2 The DMRB Road Restraint Risk Assessment Process (RRRAP) contained within ‘*CD 377 Requirements for Road Restraint Systems*’ (Highways England, 2021b) which superseded ‘*TD 19/06 Requirements for Road Restraint Systems*’ (Highways Agency 2006) is not considered appropriate for local roads as its application is limited to motorways and all-purpose trunk roads with speed limits of 50mph or more and two-way traffic flows of 5,000 AADT (average annual daily traffic) or more. Although the B4251 has a traffic flow in excess of 5,000 AADT it is subject to a 40mph speed limit (it is also not a motorway or all-purpose trunk road).
- 5.1.3 The PRRSLAR guidance outlines that the “*application of the risk based approach in that standard [TD 19/06, subsequently superseded by CD 377] is likely to result in over use of RRSs and not represent best use of limited resources. TD 19 [and CD 377 which superseded it] is therefore not suitable for use on the majority of the nation’s local road network*” (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011).

5.2 Previous Assessments / Status of this Current RSS Assessment

- 5.2.1 Previous RSS Assessments have been undertaken by others as follows:
- October 2019 – ‘*CCBC Vehicle Restraint System Risk Scoring Assessment*’ (CCBC, 2019). This assessment was undertaken when most of the study route was subject to a 60mph speed limit. It is understood that the assessment was undertaken with reference to the PRRSLAR guidance (rather than TD 19/06). The route scored as a medium priority site; and
 - March 2020 – ‘*Caerphilly CBC – B4251 Safety Improvement Study*’ (Amey Consulting, 2020). Although a 60mph speed limit was in place on most of the route, a draft risk scoring assessment with reference to the PRRSLAR guidance was undertaken on the assumption that a 40mph speed limit would be implemented on the route. The route scored as a medium priority site.
- 5.2.2 This current RRS Assessment forms a new assessment and is based on the existing conditions on the route. Where appropriate, this RSS makes use of relevant data/information obtained and analysed as part of the Road Safety Review contained with sections 2 to 4 of this document.

5.3 RRS Assessment – Methodology

5.3.1 The PRRSLAR guidance outlines that “one of the fundamental criteria to justify provision of a RRS is to establish if the risk level without a RRS is unacceptable” (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011). The approach applied in the guidance is to prioritise the assessed site into one of the three groupings shown in Table 14.

Table 14: PRRSLAR Site Risk Categories

Category	Risk Level	Outcomes
Higher priority site	Risk cannot be accepted save in extraordinary circumstances.	Where the risk assessment has defined a site as Higher Priority the installation of a RRS is justified in terms of the level of risk. Further consideration is then required to determine if the site meets the other appraisal criteria. Even at high risk sites non-RRS interventions may reduce the risk to a level where a RRS can be omitted.
Medium priority site	Intervention may be required to introduce control measures to drive residual risk towards the Lower Priority Site category. The residual risk can be tolerated only if further risk reduction is impracticable or requires action that is grossly disproportionate to the reduction in risk achieved.	Where the risk evaluation has identified a site as Medium Priority a RRS may be justified however a non-RRS approach to reducing the risk may prove sufficient to negate the need for a RRS. If suitable effective measures cannot be introduced then the appraisal process would normally continue in order to consider the other criteria.
Lower priority site	Level of risk regarded as generally acceptable. Further effort to reduce risk is not likely to be required as resources to reduce risk would be grossly disproportionate to the risk reduction achieved.	Where the risk evaluation identifies a site that is lower priority further appraisal is not required and the level of risk does not normally support installation of a RRS. Simple low cost measures that could reduce the risk can still be considered.

5.3.2 The guidance provides three different risk assessment methodologies, these being ‘accident assessment’ (A), ‘Network Rail methodology’ (B) and ‘risk scoring’ (C). A detailed appraisal of the collision history on the route has been provided within the Road Safety Review included within this document. A key finding from this was that although relatively limited ‘after’ data is currently available, the route’s collision record is much lower since a 40mph speed limit covered the route and other mitigation measures, such as chevron signing were implemented. Additional analysis should be undertaken once further ‘after’ data is available to determine if this improved road safety performance is maintained.

5.3.3 In terms of the ‘accident assessment’ approach, the PRRSLAR guidance outlines that “in some situations where the existing accident history does not indicate a significant likelihood of a future safety problem there may remain doubts surrounding the non-provision of a RRS particularly where the potential accident cost could be substantially higher than indicated by past accident histories alone e.g. in populous areas. In these situations method C (risk scoring) may further inform the risk categorisation” (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011). The guidance also notes that “if personal injury accidents were easy to predict then a prescriptive set of standards could be produced. The purpose of this process is to assist in categorising the total risk at a site. Common with all forms of risk evaluation and assessment, professional judgement has been required in its development and will be required in subsequent application or adjustment” (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011).

- 5.3.4 Taking the above into account, it is considered that an approach which uses ‘risk scoring’ but also uses the route intelligence gained from its collision history is most appropriate. This approach also generally aligns with the safe system approach to road safety management which provides a strong focus on managing risk. As advocated by the UK Roads Liaison Group, the PRRSLAR guidance “*can be adapted by local highway authorities to create a pragmatic system for decision making to help them make best use of the finite resources available to them*” (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011).
- 5.3.5 The risk scoring categories identified within the PRRSLAR guidance are summarised within Table 15.

Table 15: PRRSLAR Risk Scoring Categories

Total Risk Ranking Score	Category
14 or more	Higher priority
9-13	Medium priority
0-8	Lower priority

- 5.3.6 As similar roadside hazards are present throughout the route, the assessment has been undertaken on a route basis, with risk scoring assigned on a highest severity outcome basis (i.e.; the most severe hazard is assessed/scored).

5.4 RRS Assessment – Scoring

- 5.4.1 **Location factor** – The PRRSLAR guidance outlines that in terms of location “*the level of risk will vary based on the type of the route, the speed limit as well as the amount and make-up of traffic on the route. The location factor collectively considers all of these issues, acts as a proxy for the probability of a vehicle leaving the carriageway and results in a risk score that represents the nature of the road adjacent to the hazard in question*” (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011). The location factor score for the study route is provided within Table 16.

Table 16: Location Factor Scoring

Priority Rank	Risk Factor Score
0 – All other roads	0
1 – Rural U and B roads and urban C roads	1
2 – Rural A road and urban B road	3
3 – Urban A road	6
Notes on scoring – The B4251 is a rural B road subject to a 40mph speed limit and carries around 10,000 vehicles per day.	

5.4.2 **Layout factor (part 1)** – The first layout factor relates to bend radius. The PRRSLAR guidance outlines that “*fully assessing risk at bends is not a simple matter. According to published accident information, the majority of run-off accidents are not reported at bends, although the vast majority of accidents are not subject to a detailed scientific assessment of the features that make up road alignment. In fully assessing the risk at bends, it is necessary to consider the approach speeds, the bend radius, the superelevation, the influence of transition curves as well as the surface characteristics. An additional consideration is whether a series of more generous bends precedes a tighter bend resulting in over-confidence of the road user*” (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011). The layout factor (part 1) score for the study route is provided within Table 17.

Table 17: Layout Factor (Part 1) Scoring

Priority Rank	Risk Factor Score
0 – Straight alignment and/or complies with TD9	0
1 – One step below desirable minimum R with superelevation of 5%	1
2 – Two steps below desirable minimum R with superelevation of 5%	2
3 – Three steps below desirable minimum R with superelevation of 5%	3
4 – Four steps below desirable minimum R with superelevation of 5%	4
5 – Five steps below desirable minimum R with superelevation of 5%	5
Notes on scoring – Bend radius on the route varies with some a small margin below desirable minimums and others some way below desirable minimums. Vehicle speed data on the route shows speeds to be in line with the speed limit which was reduced to 40mph in January 2021. Chevron signing has been provided at the most severe bends (summer 2020). Road surface conditions have been assessed as good/very good across the route.	

5.4.3 **Layout factor (part 2)** – The second layout factor relates to the complexity of the carriageway layout. The layout factor (part 2) score for the study route is provided within Table 18.

Table 18: Layout Factor (Part 2) Scoring

Priority Rank	Risk Factor Score
0 – No reason for lane changing/manoeuvres	0
1 – Some potential for lane changing, overtaking, positioning manoeuvres or avoiding action	2
2 – High likelihood of lane changing, overtaking, positioning manoeuvres or avoiding action	3
Notes on scoring – The route (on straights and at bends) is a two-lane single carriageway and no incidences of overtaking were observed during the site inspections. Traffic was observed to flow freely on the route and at a reasonable speed and, as such, there is no real demand for overtaking manoeuvres. The route alignment also provides few realistic opportunities for overtaking. There is no overtaking collision history associated with the route.	

5.4.4 **Collision factor (part 1: longitudinal features)** – The PRRSLAR guidance outlines considers that “*a spot hazard such as a traffic sign post or lighting column provides less of an obstruction than a longitudinal hazard such as a retaining wall or parallel canal*” (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011). The collision factor (part 1) score for the study route is provided within Table 19.

Table 19: Collision Factor (Part 1: Longitudinal Features) Scoring

Priority Rank	Risk Factor Score
0 – Individual spot hazard	0
1 – Series of individual hazards less than 50m apart or a longitudinal hazard that might be reached	1
2 – Longitudinal hazard that is highly likely to be reached resulting in harm or a spot hazard downstream of a feature which may guide the vehicle towards the hazard	2
Notes on scoring – There are spot hazards at regular intervals along the route (on straights and at bends), including mature trees, steep embankment areas and lighting columns. There are also longitudinal hazards along the route such as masonry walls, bridge parapets (protected on one side by vehicle barriers) and the Sirhowy River which is at a significantly lower level than the carriageway. Collision record identifies that collision with spot hazards (i.e.; trees) is much more likely than reaching and colliding with longitudinal hazards.	

- 5.4.5 **Collision factor (part 2: severity of outcomes)** – The second collision factor relates to the likely severity of a collision with a roadside hazard. The collision factor (part 2) score for the study route is provided within Table 20.

Table 20: Collision Factor (Part 2: Severity of Outcomes) Scoring

Priority Rank	Risk Factor Score
0 – Percentage of KSI for primary hazard <20%	0
1 – Percentage of KSI for primary hazard 20 - 30%	1
2 – Percentage of KSI for primary hazard >30%	2
Notes on scoring – During the most recent 10-years there have been 17 injury collisions recorded on the route of which 5 were fatal (2) or serious (3) in severity. This equates to a KSI ratio of 29.4%.	

- 5.4.6 **Consequential factor (part 1: secondary incidents)** – The PRRSLAR guidance describes how *“in some cases an initial collision may result in a secondary event that creates a hazard for other road users and increases the risk of a secondary incident. This may be because of a collapse of the primary hazard when struck and may be particularly relevant for example for a pylon carrying power lines, telegraph poles or street lighting columns that may collapse onto the main carriageway or an adjacent route”* (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011). The consequential factor (part 1) score for the study route is provided within Table 21.

Table 21: Consequential Factor (Part 1: Secondary Incidents) Scoring

Priority Rank	Risk Factor Score
0 – No secondary events likely	0
1 – When damaged or collapsed the feature could give rise to the risk of secondary vehicular accidents	1
Notes on scoring – Unlikely that damaged or collapsed features would give rise to secondary vehicular accidents. There is also no evidence of this within the route’s collision history.	

5.4.7 **Consequential factor (part 2: network disruption)** – The second consequential factor relates to the potential for a collision to result in network disruption. The PRRSLAR guidance outlines that “the disruption could be caused by the carriageway being blocked by the collapse of the impacted feature, or in some cases damage to highway infrastructure may result in lane and/or speed restrictions of more than one day” (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011). The consequential factor (part 2) score for the study route is provided within Table 22.

Table 22: Consequential Factor (Part 2: Network Disruption) Scoring

Priority Rank	Risk Factor Score
0 – No impact on network availability	0
1 – If hazardous feature was damaged or collapses this could give rise to network disruption for more than one day	1
Notes on scoring – For the majority of the route, including at bends, a collision would not be expected to give rise to network disruption for more than one day. However, if the bridge parapet was struck this has the potential to impact the structural integrity of the bridge and network disruption could be experienced over an elongated period.	

5.4.8 **Consequential factor (part 3: cost of damage)** – The third consequential factor relates to the resultant cost of repair or replacement of the infrastructure at risk of impact. The consequential factor (part 3) score for the study route is provided within Table 23.

Table 23: Consequential Factor (Part 3: Cost of Damage) Scoring

Priority Rank	Risk Factor Score
0 – No significant cost implications	0
1 – Significant cost of repair or replacement following collision	1
Notes on scoring – Damage to bridge parapets could carry a significant cost of repair. Elsewhere, cost implications of repairs are likely to be much less significant.	

5.4.9 **Total score** – As per the PRRSLAR guidance, the total risk rating is based on the addition of the following factors:

- Location factor (score of 0-6) plus;
- Layout factors (largest of part 1 and part 2 scores) plus;
- Collision factors (sum of part 1 and part 2 scores) plus;
- Consequential factors (sum of part 1, part 2 and part 3 scores).

5.4.10 The total score for the study route is provided within Table 24.

Table 24: RRS Scoring Matrix Summary

Risk Factor	Risk Factor Score
Location	1
Layout (1)	3
Layout (2)	0
Collision (1)	1
Collision (2)	1
Consequential (1)	0
Consequential (2)	1
Consequential (3)	1
Total	8

5.4.11 Based on the recommended upper and lower bounds for the risk classifications provided within the PRRSLAR guidance, a score of 8 equates to a ‘Lower Priority’ category (scores of between 0 and 8).

5.4.12 The suggested outcome within the PRRSLAR guidance for a lower priority site is: *“where the risk evaluation identifies a site that is lower priority further appraisal is not required and the level of risk does not normally support installation of a RRS. Simple low cost measures that could reduce the risk can still be considered”* (UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011).

5.5 RRS Assessment – Summary

5.5.1 Although previously assessed by others as a medium priority site, it is considered that the recent non-RRS interventions (e.g.; 40mph speed limit, chevron signing, localised resurfacing) have contributed to reducing risk on the route to the lower priority category. The findings of this assessment are presented to CCBC for their consideration and comment as appropriate.

6. REFERENCES

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- Department for Transport (DfT), 2018. Traffic Signs Manual: Chapter 7.
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- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), 2017, Road Safety Factsheet.
- UK Roads Liaison Group, 2011. Provision of Road Restraint Systems on Local Authority Roads.
- Welsh Assembly Government, 2009. Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales.

Appendix I – ATC Data (Available upon Request)

Appendix 2 – Collision Plot (Available upon Request)

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

DO NOT SCALE



Sign Ref.	SF1A	x-height	100.0
Letter colour	N/A	SIGN FACE	
Background	YELLOW	Width	1110mm
Border	N/A	Height	2235mm
Material	Class RA2 (12899-1:2007)	Area	2.47m ²

Sign Ref.	SF1B	x-height	100.0
Letter colour	N/A	SIGN FACE	
Background	YELLOW	Width	1110mm
Border	N/A	Height	2160mm
Material	Class RA2 (12899-1:2007)	Area	2.39m ²

Notes:-

1. All dimensions in metres unless otherwise shown
2. All proposed road markings to be of thermoplastic material with solid glass beads and to conform to the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016

Revisions

Surf.	Date	Initials	Description



ENGINEERING PROJECTS GROUP
ENGINEERING CONSULTANCY

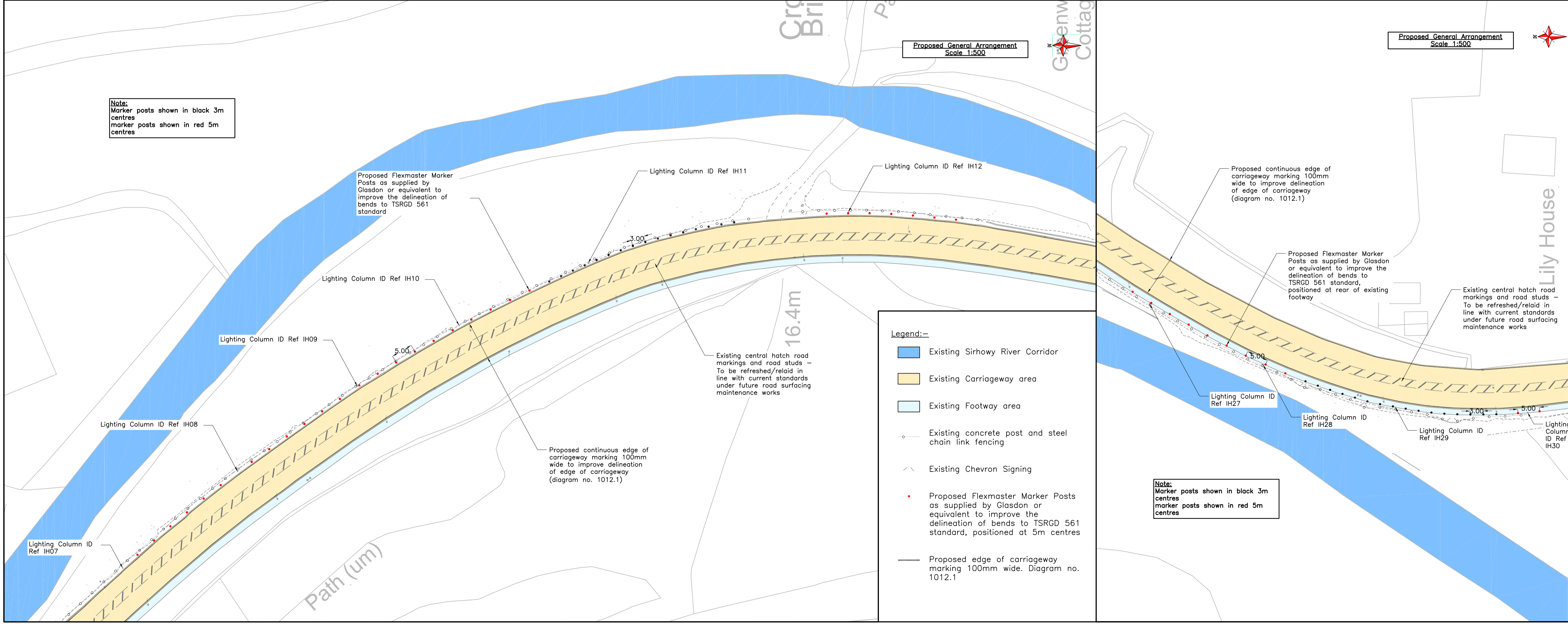
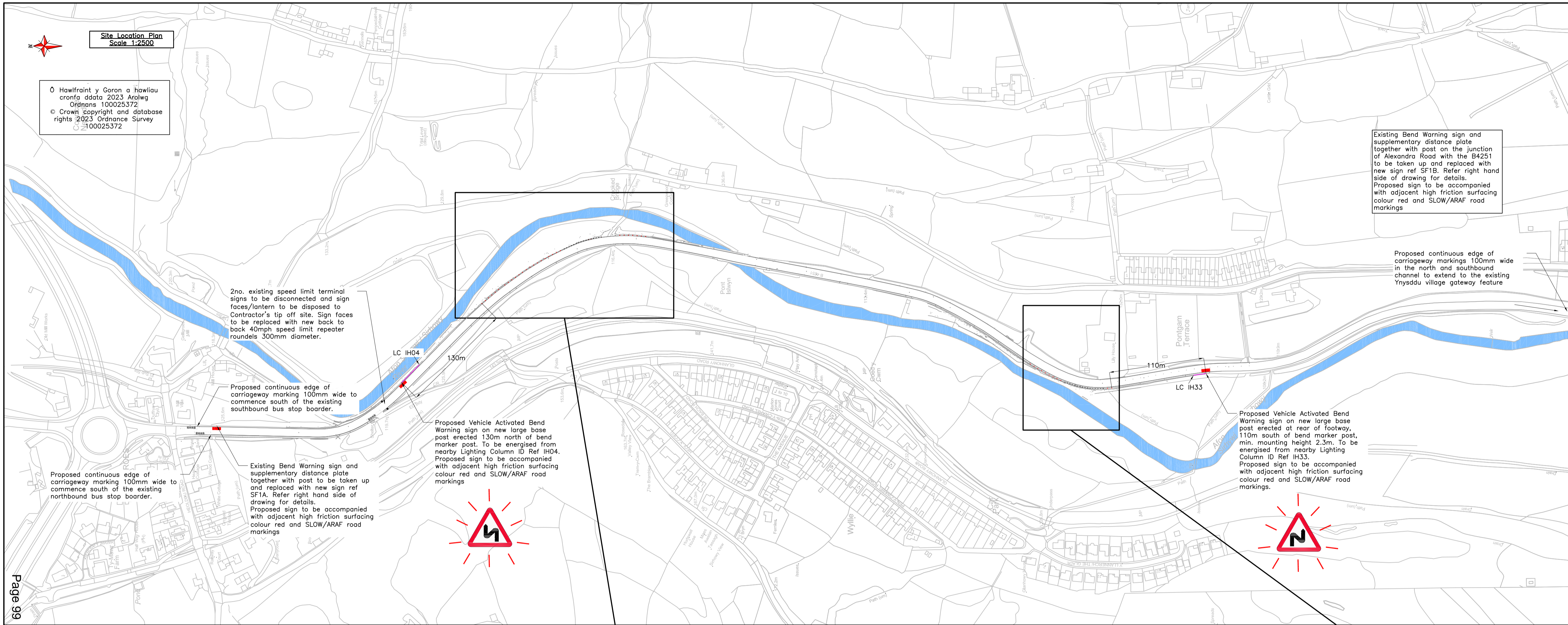
Communities Directorate
Infrastructure Division
Ty Penlita, Tredomen Park
Hengoed CF82 7PG
Head of Infrastructure – Marcus Lloyd
B.Eng., MBA, C.Eng., MCE, MCM, MCHT

B4251 – Newport Road, Ynysddu

drawing title
Site Location and Proposed General Arrangement

scale	date	drawn	checked
As Shown@A1	June 23	SJS	
project ref.	drawing no.	rev.	
TH1309	24		

APPROVAL COMMENT INFORMATION
DRAFT TENDER CONTRACT AS CONSTRUCTED



Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwiadrol



CABINET – 18TH OCTOBER 2023

SUBJECT: RECYCLING CONTAMINATION PROCESS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For Cabinet to approve a proposal to refine and enhance our current approach to public engagement and enforcement specifically targeted to recycling contamination at the kerbside.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 As Cabinet members are aware, a waste strategy routemap has been agreed and work is progressing on a new waste strategy which is scheduled for consultation early in 2024.
- 2.2 As part of considering the waste strategy routemap the Joint Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet were presented with a number of “quick win” actions that could be implemented relatively quickly and in advance of the longer timescale proposals to assist the Authority with improving its recycling performance.
- 2.3 One of these quick wins related to engagement and behaviour change with the aim of increasing participation in dry recycling and organics collection as well as improving the quality of materials collected. Over recent months, a focussed engagement and communication campaign has been launched, which seeks to explain the reasons why we are encouraging residents to recycle and also explains what materials need to go into which receptacle. The education and engagement campaign underpins our overall approach to maximising recycling and minimising the overall amount of waste produced through a targeted behaviour change strategy that aims to bring sustainable behavioural change over the long term.
- 2.4 Whilst our engagement and communication focus will continue over the long term, we also need to focus upon some specific areas of concern; where a combination of engagement, education and finally enforcement is required. One such area where this combined approach is required is tackling the high levels of contamination present within our recycling bins. The routemap previously agreed by Cabinet, highlighted specifically that “there are high levels of contamination in the existing co-mingled kerbside collection and 20-23% of all waste collected at the kerbside for recycling is not able to be processed as recycling”.

- 2.5 Identifying households that are contaminating recycling through a formal process that combines engagement, education and finally enforcement will provide us with specific data capture and insight into the barriers to participation and enable the Authority to work with individuals through the stage process set out in this report.
- 2.6 The report presents several recommendations aimed at ensuring that the Authority has “all the relevant tools” at its disposal for effective behaviour change by supplementing education and persuasion with enforcement powers where the persuasive approach has failed in a very small minority of cases.
- 2.7 The Authority’s present method of collecting recyclable material at the kerbside using a brown wheeled bin has facilitated the capture of significant tonnages of dry recycle. However, by the nature of the containers provided, a minority of residents are continuing to place inappropriate waste into their recycling bin and causing contamination of otherwise good quality recycling feedstock.
- 2.8 In 2014 a report was submitted proposing a multistage process of dealing with residents who were putting the wrong materials in the wrong bin. The Authority’s Waste & Recycling team have been appraising how other Councils have been dealing with contamination of their recycling collections and propose a refined procedure of dealing with contamination which demonstrates our commitment to dealing with the small number of residents who continue to misuse the service.
- 2.9 In short, the new process consisting of a series of letters and visits used in a targeted manner would be further reinforced with robust sanctions against a persistent offender i.e. the serving of a legal notice and then if deemed necessary the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 3.1 Cabinet approve the implementation of an enhanced education and engagement process that incorporates the option to serve legal notices and in certain circumstances where deemed necessary the issue of fixed penalties to persistent offenders relating to recycling contamination .
- 3.2 Should Cabinet approve implementation of the recommended process the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is proposed to be set at £70 reducing to £35 if paid within 14 days.
- 3.3 That a specific communication campaign is undertaken in advance of implementing the enhanced process.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 In order for the Authority to reach the ever more stringent waste recycling targets set by Welsh Government, the Authority needs to go the extra mile to improve performance. Whilst previous education and engagement initiatives have helped to improve general awareness of the importance of waste minimisation and recycling and in turn appropriate participation, there are unfortunately a minority of people who are continuing to misuse the kerbside collection services we offer and thereby

compromising the laudable endeavours of the majority of residents who “waste less and recycle more”.

- 4.2 With some residents continuing to put the wrong materials in the recycling bins provided, the Authority is also at risk of incurring extra treatment costs to clean up the materials collected from the kerbside. A more robust engagement and enforcement process similar to that in place at other Councils across Wales will reduce the risks of suffering financial losses from contract penalties for additional treatment costs and infraction fines from Welsh Government for not meeting statutory recycling targets.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 At a meeting on 14th of September 2023 of the Members Waste Review Working Group, members were presented with options on how the Authority can deal with the small number of residents who persistently misuse the kerbside recycling collection service. The member's working group recognised that in order to maximise our recycling rates we must address our contamination levels. In reaching this conclusion, consideration was also given to the feedback received from the front line collection crews who expressed concerns that without enforcement, the education and engagement process would be ineffective in a small number of cases
- 5.2 Option 1 centred on a series of letters and visits with the ultimate sanction of bin removal. This process has been in place since ratification of an engagement process outlined in the 2014 Cabinet report (Appendix 1&2).
- 5.3 Option 2 centred on the sequential process of:
- the collection team applying an advisory contamination sticker to the designated recycling bin (week 1),
 - the issue of another sticker plus sending a letter and then a visit by an officer (Week 2&3),
 - serve a legal notice (week 4) incorporating a 21-day period to comply or appeal and in the meantime a final visit and a final chance to comply.
- 5.4 The use of bin contamination stickers, letters and visits by officers mentioned above, is a process that is already in use (and has been since July 2023) with the back office function being managed by the administrative team within the waste service. This report is not altering the early stages of that process in any way but is recommending the addition of a conclusion (legal notice) stage where the advice and guidance is persistently being ignored resulting in on-going contamination of the recycling stream. Given the low numbers involved (as set out in paragraph 5.7 below), the administration of this additional final step is a minor addition to the work of the waste admin team. It is also worth noting that it is intended to introduce “technology in the cab” during 2024 which will streamline the existing manual process and provide further assurance the data captured will be used to further refine our overall engagement, education and enforcement approach.
- 5.5 The notice procedure is set out in section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 which allows a waste collection Authority to serve notice on the occupier of a premises to specify how, when and where waste should be presented for collection. A 21-day period to comply with the section 46 is provided but if the occupier fails to comply with the notice then a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can be served. However, it

should be pointed out that the issue of the FPN would only be employed after all stages of dialogue have been exhausted.

5.6 The latter option (Option 2) has been considered following research on exemplar practice in other Welsh Local Authorities which proved that the hierarchical enforcement approach resulted in most people complying before the issue of a fixed penalty notice. For example, one Authority had issued 5000 letters to householders requesting the placement of clean recyclable material only, subsequently, the number of properties that required further action dwindled to the level whereby 260 legal notices were issued. With further engagement between officers and residents the majority of cases were resolved with only 2 householders being issued with a fixed penalty notice.

5.7 Caerphilly CBC's present monitoring and engagement regime for contamination of recycling bins is similar in numbers. These numbers have been confirmed since the monitoring process commenced at the beginning of July (approx. 12-13 weeks of data) :

Number of contamination stickers applied to bins 10,636

Number of letters sent to residents 908

Number of visits & second letters 247

Number of follow up visits 90

Number of recycling bins that could be removed or formal notice issued is less than 10

The number of formal notices that could be issued at 10 no. equates to a percentage of only 0.01% of the 75,000 weekly recycling collections that are undertaken.

5.8 As with most fixed penalty notice processes, the Authority has the powers to set its own FPN level including reduced tariffs for an early payment. The maximum FPN that can be set is £100 with the option for a reduction for early payment. The aforementioned authority utilises the maximum value of FPN at £100 with a reduction to £60 if paid within 7 days. It will be for Cabinet to confirm the level of FPN and there was debate at the Member Working Group on the level of FPN and concerns that it should be set at a level that is conscious of the current cost of living crisis. It is therefore proposed to set the level of FPN at £70 reducing to £35 if paid within 14 days.

Following lengthy and articulate debate by all members of the Working Group there was unanimous support for option 2 i.e.: the issue of an FPN process.

5.9 The Working Group Members stated that removing a recycling bin does not ultimately help either the householder or the Authority. The aim is to advise, encourage and enforce with the ultimate aim of transforming a householder's waste and recycling practices.

5.10 This process has been endorsed by stakeholders including the WLGA's Waste division and the WG consultants WRAP Cymru on the basis of the performance improvements achieved by those Councils utilising this approach. By implementing the process operated by the aforementioned exemplar Authority it is anticipated that Caerphilly CBC can make further gains in recycling performance.

5.11 The Authority is currently in the process of recruiting a team of recycling advisers and once in post, these staff will receive training in relation to the relevant legal process (section 46, EPA 1990) and processes for serving legal notices.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The working group concluded that the protocol for dealing with inappropriate participation in the kerbside recycling collection service be refined and enhanced to include the additional elements of enforcement using the appropriate legal measures set out in section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act which enables the Authority to serve legal enforcement notices followed by the issue of fixed penalty notices for non-compliance with the section 46 notice.
- 6.2 The use of the section 46 enforcement powers is an important element of our overall education and engagement approach that underpins our overall behavioural change ambitions over the long term. Specifically, the use of Section 46 notices is an important element to our overall focus upon reducing contamination rates in our recycling bins.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

- 7.1 It is assumed the appropriate staff are in place to deliver this new process and the digital interface will be in place during 2024 to further refine and improve the data capture. It is assumed that the positive responses and experiences from elsewhere in Wales will be mirrored across the county borough.

8. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 An integrated impact assessment has been developed and is attached as an Appendix (Appendix 3)

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Authority is presently at risk of receiving infraction fines if it fails to attain the statutory recycling targets. These are set at a rate of £200 per tonne and could equate to an infraction fine of circa £400, 000 for failure to achieve the existing statutory target of 64%. This level of potential fines will increase alongside the increase in the statutory target which will increase to 70% for 2024/25. Minimising recycling contamination ensures that the amount of waste required for treatment and disposal is minimised thereby reducing our overall cost envelope.

10. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As detailed within the report, additional staff are currently being recruited to undertake this specific role.

11. CONSULTATIONS

- 11.1 The issue of public engagement and enforcement was discussed by the Waste Review Working Group on 14th of September 2023 specifically in relation to the kerbside waste and recycling collection services and the proposed contamination process.
- 11.2 All consultation comments received have been incorporated into the report.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 Environmental Protection Act 1990
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
Environment (Wales) Act 2016

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Background Papers:

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Cabinet Report on Kerbside Collection of Recyclables 22nd January 2014

Appendix 2 - Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny committee Kerbside Collection of Recyclables 10th December 2013

Appendix 3 - Integrated Impact Assessment



CABINET – 22ND JANUARY 2014

SUBJECT: KERBSIDE COLLECTION OF RECYCLABLES – UPDATE ON RECYCLING MARKET ISSUES

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

-
- 1.1 The attached report, which provided an update on the current market conditions facing the UK's recycling industry and their impact upon the authority's kerbside recycling collection service, and sought the views of Members on the proposed recommendations contained therein, was considered by Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 10th December 2013.
- 1.2 Members were advised that fluctuating market prices over recent months and an increase in demand for high quality input at material recycling facilities has had a significant impact on the Authority's kerbside recycling service. The Authority has implemented a range of short term arrangements with a variety of different contractors and is working towards re-procuring a new contract. In order to ensure greater stability in the long term at an affordable price, the report contains a range of recommendations for improving quality in the kerbside recycling service, including the publication and distribution of new literature, intervention from the Waste Advisory Wardens and a programme of bin removal and enforcement where necessary.
- 1.3 Following discussion on the content of the report, the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that for the reasons contained therein:-
- (i) new literature be prepared/issued to all properties;
 - (ii) work be undertaken with Communications to publicise what should be placed in a recycling bin and the consequence of not adhering to the guidance provided;
 - (iii) the procedures outlined in section 4.15 of the report and detailed below be developed as new council policy.

The issue of new literature to all properties within the borough

Work with Communications to publicise what should be placed in a recycling bins and the consequences of not adhering to the guidance provided, viz:-

1st collection - contaminated bin - place sticker and do not undertake collection (resident to remove contamination).

2nd collection - contaminated bin - place letter in property advising what needs to be removed from the bin for it to be emptied.

If there is no improvement on the 3rd collection attempt, undertake a follow up visit from Waste Advisory Warden.

If no further improvement 2nd letter issued again advising resident what needs to be removed from bin and warning of possible legal action.

If no action taken by resident then we will remove bin (replace with boxes) and issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) in accordance with relevant legislation. In this regard it is suggested that the FPN level is consistent with other FPN's issued by the authority for littering, dog fouling, etc (£75 reduced to £50 if paid within 14 days). This FPN level for littering, dog fouling etc has previously been agreed by the authority's Cabinet.

The bin will only be reissued where residents confirm in writing that they are fully aware of the items that they should place in their brown bin and undertake to comply with these requirements in the future.

Additionally the use of black bags to contain recycling within the brown bin is also causing issues at MRF's and we will have to advise residents that they should refrain from using black bags within their bins.

1.4 Members are asked to consider the recommendations.

Author: R. Barrett, Committee Services Officer, Ext. 4245

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 10th December 2013
- Agenda item 7(3)



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH DECEMBER 2013

**SUBJECT: KERBSIDE COLLECTION OF RECYCLABLES - UPDATE ON
RECYCLING MARKET ISSUES**

REPORT BY: ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Members on current market conditions facing the UK's recycling industry and their impact upon the authority's kerbside recycling collection service.

2. **SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Fluctuating market prices over recent months and an increase in demand for high quality input at material recycling facilities has had a significant impact on the Authority's kerbside recycling service. The Authority has implemented a range of short term arrangements with a variety of different contractors and is working towards re-procuring a new contract. In order to ensure greater stability in the long term at an affordable price the report contains a range of recommendations for improving quality in the kerbside recycling service including the publication and distribution of new literature, intervention from the Waste Advisory Wardens and a programme of bin removal and enforcement where necessary.

3. **LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Corporate Improvement Plan contains a number of targets relating to landfill reduction, recycling and composting. In addition, the Community and Leisure Services Divisional Service Improvement Plan contains specific objectives in response to adhering to Welsh Government and EU Guidance and meeting associated statutory targets. Kerbside recycling also contributes to the Greener theme of "Caerphilly Delivers", the Local Service Board Single Integrated Plan.

4. **THE REPORT**

- 4.1 In March 2013, Chinese authorities introduced 'Green Fence' to increase the enforcement of import standards for recovered materials. This has led to fluctuating market prices specifically affecting UK recovered mixed polymer bottle prices and this combined with limited local Material Recycling Facilities (MRF's) capacity has contributed to an increase in demand for quality which has impacted on the acceptability criteria at MRF's.
- 4.2 The Authority has been implementing a range of short term arrangements for the processing of recyclables with a variety of different contractors. From discussions with these contractors the quality of material is paramount and the Authority needs to implement a variety of intervention methods to maximise the quality of the recyclate.

- 4.3 Since May 2013, some employees have been redeployed to the Waste Transfer Station at Full Moon to assist with pre-sorting recyclate prior to onwards processing. Whilst this is not an ideal environment to undertake this pre-sorting of materials it does allow for the removal of larger items and other non-targeted materials and is crucial if we are to satisfy the enhanced acceptance criteria at Material Recovery Facilities and hopefully avoid paying premium prices for these materials to be removed at a later stage. All materials removed are sent for secondary sorting at a MRF that is better suited to dealing with these types of materials but this is often at an inflated price.
- 4.4 During this period our collection crews had been trying to identify properties that are placing non-targeted materials in their bins and attach stickers to the bins advising of the problems.
- 4.5 The above was supplemented with further monitoring over a more prolonged period with additional placing of stickers on bins, non-collection of bins, letter drops to the properties identified, visits from Waste Advisory Wardens and where there has been no improvement the removal of the brown bin and replacement with boxes.
- 4.6 Unfortunately the above exercise is very time consuming and is difficult to sustain longer term across the whole county borough with limited resources. However, it is something we are going to have to undertake again to ensure the materials are suitable for sorting by a MRF contractor at a reasonable price.
- 4.7 The above exercise resulted in a reduction in the amount of recycling we are collecting at the kerbside (over 15% in some areas) with a similar increase in tonnages being delivered to our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC). Whilst this material is not lost from our recycling performance, it is sent to a MRF better suited to dealing with a combination of materials. Again, this is at a substantially increased cost.
- 4.8 In the past, Officers have avoided the use of legal enforcement powers, concentrating instead on persuasion and education. However, given the current problems it is possible that enforcement becomes necessary if education and persuasion fails to achieve the desired outcome. Failure to address the issue(s) could result in significant financial implications for the Authority or in the worst case scenario no MRF outlet for collected recyclables.
- 4.9 It is however accepted that there is more work to do in advance of the above and we will be issuing new literature to all residents advising them again of the materials they can place out for recycling (this will not have changed significantly from when the scheme was first introduced) with additional advice on how they can deal with the rest of the materials (either having it collected in another waste stream or at one of our Household Waste Recycling Centres).
- 4.10 The new literature will be issued over the coming months and we will work with colleagues in Communications on other methods of ensuring residents are better informed on which materials should be placed out for recycling.
- 4.11 The materials that are suitable for collection from the kerbside are; Glass bottles and jars, plastic cartons and bottles, paper, magazines, junk mail, cardboard and cans. Inappropriate items that have been discovered in the kerbside recycling/brown bin collection service include food, nappies, textiles, animal excrement, hard plastic such as toys and garden furniture, dead animals, plastic film, bags, wood, garden waste and hardcore. Whilst these may be small in quantity they can disrupt the process being undertaken at the MRF and adversely affect the value of the materials.
- 4.12 The contamination can be divided into two categories, the first being materials that can be recycled and where there is a genuine misunderstanding by the residents e.g. textiles. plastic bags, hard plastic, children's toys etc. and the other category where residents just use the brown bin as an extension of their residual waste service. This is totally unacceptable and it is this contamination that is causing the main problem e.g. food, nappies, pet excrement, dead animals, residual waste, wood, garden waste, etc. etc.

Food and Green waste should be restricted to the separate weekly caddie/bag collection service provided for this purpose and the other unsuitable items either taken to a HWRC for recycling or placed in the residual waste bin.

- 4.13 We are currently working week to week with a variety of contractors to take our recycling but unfortunately there is limited local capacity and the further afield the materials are taken the greater the haulage costs incurred. Over the coming months a Procurement exercise will be undertaken to appoint a contractor who can deal with our materials in the longer term but it is critical in the meantime that we do all we can to enhance the quality/value of the materials as this will ensure we have the most economic, stable longer term arrangement in place.
- 4.14 Unfortunately going forward there is still uncertainty regarding permissible collection methods for recycling as we await further guidance from the Welsh Government. We currently offer a co-mingled service to residents which makes their recycling very easy but the Welsh Government preferred collection method is to move to Kerbside sort system where residents would be required to keep their materials in boxes and the collection crews undertake the sorting at the kerbside. Unfortunately whilst this system may make it more difficult for residents to place out non-targeted material for collection they would still remain in their residual waste stream and require collecting and disposal at premium rates and of course this new service may cost more to operate, require more collection crews/vehicles and may discourage residents from participating all of which could ultimately reduce the amount of materials we collect with the added risk of not reaching Statutory Recycling Targets. When there is more information regarding the guidance and requirements of the Welsh Government an update report will be provided for consideration by Members.
- 4.15 It is suggested that going forward that we need to address the current problem and ask Members to endorse the following actions:

- The issue of new literature to all properties within the borough

Work with Communications to publicise what should be placed in a recycling bins and the consequences of not adhering to the guidance provided, viz:-

1st collection - contaminated bin - place sticker and do not undertake collection (resident to remove contamination)

2nd collection - contaminated bin - place letter in property advising what needs to be removed from the bin for it to be emptied.

If there is no improvement on the 3rd collection attempt undertake a follow up visit from Waste Advisory Warden.

If no further improvement 2nd letter issued again advising resident what needs to be removed from bin and warning of possible legal action.

If no action taken by resident then we will remove bin (replace with boxes) and issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) in accordance with relevant legislation. In this regard it is suggested that the FPN level is consistent with other FPN's issued by the authority for littering, dog fouling, etc (£75 reduced to £50 if paid within 14 days). This FPN level for littering, dog fouling etc has previously been agreed by the authority's cabinet.

The bin will only be reissued where residents confirm in writing that they are fully aware of the items that they should place in their brown bin and undertake to comply with these requirements in the future.

Additionally the use of black bags to contain recycling within the brown bin is also causing issues at MRF's and we will have to advise residents that they should refrain from using black bags within their bins.

- 4.16 Wardens will continue to work with local communities and schools to raise awareness of recycling and provide advice on the materials that should be placed out for collection.
- 4.17 The Authority website will be updated to reinforce key messages.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no significant equality implications associated with this report although it should be noted that the Authority offers an assisted collection service for residents with medical, disability or age related conditions.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 If we have to pay a premium rate for the materials to be dealt with by an alternative MRF then every extra £10 charge per tonne adds approximately £150,000 pa to our treatment costs.

If we have to pay for 20% of the materials to be sorted at an alternative MRF (secondary/slower sort) then this could add an additional £180,000 pa to our treatment costs.

If we have to pay fines for not achieving our Statutory Recycling targets (£200 per tonne) if we lose just 10% of our recycling then this could cost us £300,000 pa (this is in addition to the additional disposal cost if residents stop recycling and place the materials in with their residual waste, approximately £180,000 per annum).

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The report reflects the views of the listed consultees.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of the report and recommend the following actions to Cabinet:
- The preparation/issue of new literature to all properties
 - Work with communications to publicise what should be placed in a recycling bin and the consequence of not adhering to the guidance provided.
 - Implementation of the procedures outlined in section 4.15 above and development of them as a new council policy.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 It is critical that we recognise the current issues regarding quality/value of materials and put measures in place to address the issues currently being experienced not only to ensure we have greater stability in long-term arrangements but also at a more affordable price.

11. STATUTORY POWERS

- 11.1 Environment Protection Act 1990, Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005.

Author: Tony White, Waste Strategy and Operations Manager,
whitet@caerphilly.gov.uk Tele: 01443 863705

Consultees: Sandra Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S. Williams, Head of Community and Leisure Services
Councillor Dave Poole, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services
Hayley Evans, Principal Waste Management Officer
Cllr Tudor Davies, Chairman of Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny
Committee
Mike Eedy, Finance Manager
Gail Williams, Monitoring Officer
David A Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



Caerphilly County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment

This integrated impact assessment (IIA) has been designed to help support the Council in making informed and effective decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Statutory Consultation v Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles

PLEASE NOTE: Section 3 Socio-economic Duty only needs to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions.

See page 6 of the **Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance.**

1. Proposal Details

Lead Officer:- Rhodri Lloyd

Head of Service:- Marcus Lloyd

Service Area and Department:- Waste Management

Date:- 21/09/23

What is the proposal to be assessed? *Provide brief details of the proposal and provide a link to any relevant report or documents.*

The aim of the contamination process is to provide residents with information, advise and guidance on how to recycle correctly. Our recycling crews are performing visual checks of recycling bins to check that they only contain recyclable materials and do not contain any contamination (non-recyclable items). The following process is in place:-

Step 1



If the bin contains contamination it will not be emptied. The crew will place a sticker on the bin highlighting the contaminant. The resident should remove the highlighted item before the next scheduled collection.

Step 2

If the bin contains contaminants for a second week, the bin will not be emptied. The resident will also receive a letter and an information leaflet with more details about recycling at home.

Step 3

If the bin contains contaminants for a third week, the bin will not be emptied. A member of the waste team will attempt to visit the property. The purpose of this visit to provide information, advice and guidance.

If we are unable to speak with the resident we will leave a second letter at the. The letter will explain that if the contaminants are not removed, the bin will be removed from the property.

Step 4

If the bin contains contaminants for a fourth week, the bin will be removed from the property.

Following an appraisal of how some exemplar Authorities are tackling this issue, the waste management team have discussed some options with the elected members of the Waste Review Working Group. There was a consensus to include additional elements to the engagement process, specifically to deal with those residents who are continuing to misuse the service and compromising the laudable endeavours of the majority of the population who participate correctly. The additional elements include i) the issue of legal notice requiring the correct placement of materials in the designated recycling bin ii) failure to comply/resolve within the 21 day period will result in the issue of an issue of a fixed penalty notice. As per established practice with other fixed penalty processes, there are options for reduced rate charges on early payment.

2. Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

*(The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups). Please note that an individual may have more than one **protected characteristics**.*

2a Age *(people of all ages)*

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

The proposal could have a negative impact on some older residents who may be confused by the service.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

Confusion may be mitigated through the visit from a member of the waste team whereby the service is explained face to face. However, this will only be the case if the resident answers the door. Telephone numbers are provided on all correspondence, correspondence is bilingual. All literature will also link to the council’s website.

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

The service is available to all individuals

2b Disability *(people with disabilities/long term conditions)*

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

The proposal could have an impact on those with a disability. Some people may struggle with their bins

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

During the visit the waste team can provide advice and guidance. However, this relies on the resident answering the door. Telephone numbers are provided on all correspondence, correspondence is bilingual. All literature will also link to the council’s website

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

The service is available to all individuals

2c Gender Reassignment (*anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth*)

- (i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

N/A

- (ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

- (iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

2d Marriage or Civil Partnership (*people who are married or in a civil partnership*)

- (i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

N/A

- (ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

- (iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

2e Pregnancy and Maternity (*women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave*)

- (i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

N/A

- (ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

- (iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

2f Race (*people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

N/A

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

2g Religion or Belief (*people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

N/A

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

2h Sex (*women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

N/A

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

2i Sexual Orientation (*lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

N/A

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

3. **Socio-economic Duty** (*Strategic Decisions Only*)

*(The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. **Socio-economic disadvantage** means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services)*

Please consider these additional vulnerable group and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People with low literacy/numeracy
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Carers
- Armed Forces Community
- Students
- Single adult households
- People misusing substances
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD)
- People involved in the criminal justice system

3a Low Income / Income Poverty (*cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

The issue of a fixed penalty notice will have a negative impact on low income/income poverty.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

The issue of a fixed penalty notice is a last resort. The process will be initiated with a sticker, letters/recycling information to follow and a visit from a member of the waste team. Telephone numbers are provided on all correspondence, correspondence is bilingual. All literature will also link to the council's website

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

The service is available to all individuals

3b Low and/or No Wealth (*enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

As above.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

3c Material Deprivation (*unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

N/A

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

3d Area Deprivation (*where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

N/A

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

3e Socio-economic Background (*social class i.e. parents education, employment and income*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

The proposal could have a negative impact on low with low literacy levels. The process relies on residents being able to read the recycling literature and letters sent to them in the post.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

This can be mitigated during the visit from a member of the waste team who can explain the service face to face. However, this relies on the resident answering the door. Telephone numbers are provided on all correspondence, correspondence is bilingual. All literature will also link to the council's website

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

The service is available to all individuals

3f Socio-economic Disadvantage (*What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

As above

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

As above

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

The service is available to all individuals



4. Corporate Plan – Council’s Well-being Objectives

(How does your proposal deliver against any/all of the Council’s Well-being Objectives? Which in turn support the national well-being goals for Wales as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Are there any impacts (positive, negative or neutral? If there are negative impacts how have these been mitigated?) Well-being Objectives

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all

The proposal will provide an educational service for those residents who may not know what can or cannot be recycled. By providing the advice, guidance and information through letters and face-to-face we can look to increase the environmental awareness of these people.

Objective 2 - Enabling employment

The department is looking to employ 6 Recycling Advisors to help us deliver the contamination campaign.

Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people’s well-being

Effective recycling supports a positive living environment for all residents living in the county borough which will ensure positive well-being.

Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impact on the environment N/A

Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports healthy lifestyle in accordance with the Sustainable Development principle with in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Effective recycling supports a positive living environment for all residents living in the county borough which will ensure positive well-being.

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

The proposal will provide an educational service for those residents who may not know what can or cannot be recycled. By providing the advice, guidance and information through letters and face-to-face we can look to increase the environmental awareness of these people allowing them to remain independent and improve their well-being.



4a. Links to any other relevant Council Policy (*How does your proposal deliver against any other relevant Council Policy*)

Waste Strategy
Decarbonisation
Well-being Plan
Corporate Plan

5. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Five Ways of Working (*Also known as the sustainable development principles. The Act requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline*)

How have you used the Sustainable Development Principles in forming the proposal?

Long Term

The proposal will support and encourage better waste and recycling practices in the long term and change people's way of thinking for future generations. The overarching aim is to reduce the total volume of residual waste collected by encouraging people to recycle more of their waste. Ultimately this will allow us to work towards a Circular Economy, reduce carbon footprint and become more resource efficient.

Prevention

By preventing non-recyclable materials from entering the recycling stream we can produce a better quality feedstock, enabling more materials to be recycled.

Integration

Working with partners across the organisation including the Enforcement team, recycling collection crews

Collaboration

Working with partners across the organisation including the Enforcement team, recycling collection crews

Involvement

When we talk about engaging our communities and stakeholders we make a commitment to engage, as appropriate, with:

- Residents – people from every part of the county borough and from every community and of all ages, making a particular effort to encourage those not currently engaged/seldom heard including:
 - Community groups and clubs including those on our various panels, community, voluntary and special interest groups

- Users of specific council services
 - Vulnerable groups and those with protected characteristics as identified within the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales)
 - Children and young people including those on the Youth and Junior Forums
 - Employees of the council
 - Relevant trade unions
 - Business owners/business forums
 - Those who visit, work or participate in activities within the county borough
 - Our democratically elected representatives
 - Town and Community Councils
 - Members of the Senedd and Members of Parliament
 - Partner organisations
 - Welsh Commissioners (Children's, Welsh Language, Older Persons, Future Generations)
 - Specific subject forums
 - Any other body or group with an interest in the work of the authority and the future wellbeing of the area
-



6. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Does the proposal maximise our contribution to the Well-being Goals and how?

A Prosperous Wales

The proposal will support Wales in being a 'prosperous society' by encouraging more sustainable waste management and recycling practices. This will be achieved through the encouragement of recycling and reducing reliance on residual disposal methods such as Energy from Waste/Landfill. Supporting the Welsh Government's Circular Economy, reducing carbon footprint and becoming more resource efficient. This will allow us to work towards to Welsh Government's aims in the waste Strategy – 'Towards Zero Waste.' The overarching aim is to become a 'zero waste' society by 2050.

The proposal will support and provide good quality jobs, in turn supporting the local economy through the development of local skills and providing training.



A Resilient Wales

The proposal will support and help us work towards a Circular Economy. Initiating this project now is the beginning of us working towards Zero Waste by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the reduction in resource use. This in turn will support biodiversity, which is significantly impacted during the extraction of resources for the products we consume. All key objectives in 'Towards Zero Waste' the Welsh Government's strategy for Wales.

A Healthier Wales

The proposal will encourage and provide employment opportunities, which in turn will benefit people's lifestyles and their mental and physical wellbeing. It will also provide training for staff to increase their knowledge and provide them the tools they need for potential career progression in the future. By increasing recycling we will encourage people to become more sustainable with their waste encouraging a cleaner and greener environment for all.

A More Equal Wales

The proposal will support people and our communities in an equal manner by providing employment for people from all backgrounds. This is a universal service for all residents in the county borough regardless of background or circumstances.

A Wales of Cohesive Communities

The proposal will help connect the Authority with the local community through collaborative working, face to face engagement, education etc, whilst also providing additional employment opportunities.

A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language

The proposal will comply with the Welsh Language Measure 2011 in all aspects of education, engagement, communication etc. The proposal is fully compliant with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and associated Welsh Language Standards and encourages any service users to speak their first language (where Welsh, English or any other).

A Globally Responsible Wales

The proposal will support and help us work towards a Circular Economy and become a more globally responsible Wales. Initiating this project now is the beginning of us working towards Zero Waste by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the reduction in resource use and increasing recycling. This in turn will support biodiversity, which is significantly impacted during the extraction of resources for the products we consume

7. Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards

(The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact a proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language and ensuring the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language) Policy Making Standards - Good Practice Advice Document

7a. Links with Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy and CCBC's Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 and the Language Profile

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

The department is committed to complying with the requirements of the Language Act and we are committed to complying with Welsh Government target for 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. And as a matter of course issues all its communications bilingually. The department has a significant proportion of Welsh speakers across all tiers and are able to communicate both verbally and in the written form to queries and service requests. The department supports all the Welsh Government sustainable waste campaigns all of which are emblazoned with bilingual narrative and branding.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

N/A

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view? e.g. the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Annual School Census

7b. **Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.** *Specifically Standards 88–93*

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

As above.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view? e.g. the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Annual School Census



7c. Opportunities to promote the Welsh language *e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community*

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

As above, everything we do is fully bilingual offering significant opportunities to promote the Welsh language. We will ensure that those requiring support to be delivered in Welsh are in no way treated differently to those who use English as their first language. The service will always be delivered using the service users preferred language.

- (ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?
- (iii) What evidence has been used to support this view? *e.g. the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Annual School Census*

7d. Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language *e.g. staff, residents and visitors*

- (i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?
As above
- (ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?
- (iii) What evidence has been used to support this view? *e.g. the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Annual School Census*

7e. Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

- (i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?
As above
- (ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?
- (iii) What evidence has been used to support this view? *e.g. the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Annual School Census*

7f. Having considered the impacts above, how has the proposal been developed so that there are positive effects, or increased positive effects on (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.



The service will be fully compliant with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure/Welsh language standards which will allow and encourage our service users to access information in their preferred language, whether that be English or Welsh

8. Data and Information

(What data or other evidence has been used to inform the development of the proposal? Evidence may include the outcome of previous consultations, existing databases, pilot projects, review of customer complaints and compliments and or other service user feedback, national and regional data, academic publications and consultants' reports etc.)

Data/evidence *(Please provide link to report if appropriate)*

Key relevant findings

How has the data/evidence informed this proposal?

Were there any gaps identified in the evidence and data used to develop this proposal and how will these gaps be filled? *Details of further consultation can be included in Section 9.*

9. Consultation

*(In some instances, there is a legal requirement to consult. In others, even where there is no legal obligation, there may be a legitimate expectation from people that a consultation will take place. Where it has been determined that consultation is required, **The Gunning Principles** must be adhered to. Consider the **Consultation and Engagement Framework**. Please note that this may need to be updated as the proposal develops and to strengthen the assessment.*

Briefly describe any recent or planned consultations paying particular attention to evidencing the Gunning Principles.

The waste management team have discussed some options with the elected members of the Waste Review Working Group to continue with the current contamination process but include the issue of a legal notice and fixed penalty notices for those residents who continue to abuse the recycling service.

Who was consulted?

Elected members of the Waste Review Working Group

When they were consulted did the consultation take place at the formative stage and was adequate time given for consultees to consider and respond?

Was sufficient information provided to consultees to allow them to make an informed decision on the proposal?

What were the key findings?

To continue with the current contamination process but to include the issue of a legal notice and fixed penalty notices if residents continue to fail to comply with the rules of the recycling service

How have the consultation findings been taken into account?

Yes

10. Monitoring and Review

How will the implementation and the impact of the proposal be monitored, including implementation of any amendments?

The proposal will be monitored based on recycling, residual and food waste tonnages collected through Waste Data Flow.

In cab (participation monitoring, contamination, hygiene, assisted, nappies etc).

What are the practical arrangements for monitoring?

Waste Data Flow – for example monitoring food waste tonnages, refuse, recycling etc.

How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

The use of the data will allow us to further improve the collection methods and frequencies to ensure our ways of working remain sustainable. The results of the monitoring will link directly into the Welsh Government's aim of zero waste by 2050.

When is the proposal due to be reviewed?

The proposal will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure the proposals are having the desired effect. Data will be collected through Waste Data Flow.

Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?

Rhodri Lloyd, Hayley Jones, Marcus Lloyd, Nathan Jones

11. Recommendation and Reasoning (delete as applicable)

- Implement proposal with no amendments
- Implement proposal taking account of the mitigating actions outlined
- Reject the proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality, poverty and socio-economic disadvantage

Have you contacted relevant officers for advice and guidance? (delete as applicable)

- Yes

12. Reason(s) for Recommendations

(Provide below a summary of the Integrated Impact Assessment. This summary should be included in the "Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment" section of the Corporate Report Template. The Integrated Impact Assessment should be published alongside the Report proposal).

To ensure Caerphilly is able to achieve the required Welsh Government statutory Recycling target of 70% in 2024/25.

To ensure Caerphilly is best placed to move beyond the required 2024/25 recycling target of 70% in subsequent years and be best placed to work towards the zero waste Welsh Government aspiration.



13. Version Control

(The IIA should be used in the early stages of the proposal development process. The IIA can be strengthened as time progresses to help shape the proposal. The Version Control section will act as an audit trail to evidence how the IIA has been developed over time) (Add or delete versions as applicable)

➤ Version 1

Author:-

Brief description of the amendments/update:-

Revision Date:-

➤ Version 2

Author:-

Brief description of the amendments/update:-

Revision Date:-

Integrated Impact Assessment Author

Name:-

Job Title:-

Date:-

Head of Service Approval

Name:-

Job Title:-

Signature:-

Date:-

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



CABINET – 18TH OCTOBER, 2023

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST - EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS SCHEDULE 12A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

**SUBJECT: NESS TAR AND FORMER WERNDDU BRICKWORKS SITES,
CAERPHILLY - DELIVERY OPTIONS REPORT**

REPORT BY: HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES AND MONITORING OFFICER

I have considered grounds for exemption of information contained in the report referred to above and make the following recommendations to the Proper Officer:-

EXEMPTIONS APPLYING TO THE REPORT:

Paragraph 14 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)..

FACTORS IN FAVOUR OF DISCLOSURE:

There is public interest in the way that a council makes decisions on the redevelopment of brownfield sites in the county borough.

PREJUDICE WHICH WOULD RESULT IF THE INFORMATION WERE DISCLOSED:

The report contains details of confidential information relating to the financial or business affairs of the parties involved and the various options available to the council. As a final option has not been agreed, negotiations between the parties have yet to be concluded.

MY VIEW ON THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST IS AS FOLLOWS:

My view on the Public Interest Test is that whilst there is a need to ensure transparency and accountability of the council in its involvement with the development of this brownfield site, this must be balanced against the fact that the report contains confidential financial and business information relating to the parties involved. Negotiations between the parties have yet to be concluded depending on the option chosen within the report. It is considered that these factors outweigh the need for the information to be made public at this stage.

On that basis I feel that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Members are asked to consider these factors when determining the public interest test, which they must decide when considering whether to exclude the press and public from this part of the meeting.

RECOMMENDED DECISION ON EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE:

On that basis I feel that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, and that the report should be exempt.



Signed:

Dated: 3.10.23

Post: **Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer**

I accept the recommendation made above.



Signed:

Proper Officer

Date: 04/10/23

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12, 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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