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For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Jo Thomas
(Tel: 07714600912 Email: thomaj8@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Date: 8th November 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held in Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 15th November, 2023 at 1.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided on request.

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

This meeting will be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore, the images/audio of those individuals present and/or speaking will be publicly available to all via the recording on the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chrissy'.

Christina Harrhy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

	Pages
1 To receive apologies for absence.	
2 Declarations of Interest.	

A greener place Man gwyrdach



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

To approve and sign the following minutes: -

3 Cabinet held on Wednesday 18th October 2023. 1 - 8

To note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

4 Cabinet Forward Work Programme. 9 - 14

To receive and consider the following reports on which executive decisions are required: -

5 Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre. 15 - 36

6 Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (SARS) Implementation. 37 - 76

7 Risca Comprehensive School And Leisure Centre New Artificial Pitch Provision. 77 - 90

8 Annual Report on Corporate Complaints 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. 91 - 148

9 Revised Town Centre Management Model - Updated Report. 149 - 194

10 Corporate Plan (including Well-Being Objectives) 2023 - 2028. 195 - 250

11 Mobilising Team Caerphilly Governance Arrangements. 251 - 258

12 Public Interest Test. 259 - 260

13 Write-Off Debts Over £20,000 - Business Rate Arrears For Ltd Companies. 261 - 266

Circulation:

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

And Appropriate Officers

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Agenda Item 3



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2023 AT 1PM

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

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

Together with:

C. Harrhy (Chief Executive), D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services) and M.S. Williams (Corporate Director of Economy and Environment)

Also in Attendance:

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), S. Pugh (Communications Manager), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), C. Adams (Highway Engineering Group Manager), S. Wilcox (Programme Development Manager), K. Watkins (Communications and Tenant Engagement Officer), H. Jones (Waste Strategy and Operations Manager), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), N. Taylor- Williams (Head of Housing) J. Roberts-Waite (Head of Strategy and Development), A. Bolter (Visitor Economy and Destinations Manager), A. Dallimore (Regeneration Services Manager), C. Boardman (Development Manager), R. Lloyd (Principal Waste Management Officer)

Also in Attendance:

Councillor J. Jones (Local Ward Member).

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 C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities), S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Housing) and S. Harris (Head of Finance Services and Section 151 Officer).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th September 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. REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER OAKDALE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SITE BY CAERPHILLY HOMES

Cabinet noted the report has been considered by the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the 19th September 2023 and further noted the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval 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, to seek approval of 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 and 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 and to seek approval to sign 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.

The Head of Strategy and Development addressed Cabinet providing an in-depth overview of the project. Cabinet was pleased to note that the new affordable housing products were being made within Caerphilly providing employment opportunities.

Cabinet thanked the Officer for the exciting proposal presented.

Following queries raised the officer advised Cabinet that the current residents of Ty Melin were one of the first that were consulted on the development plans and were unanimously in support and excited about the plans. Assurances were made that the residents would continue to be involved in the development.

The Officer advised Cabinet that the Social Value Plan is being developed to provide construction related employment support that links with the Councils current offer in relation to employment support. Caerphilly Homes are currently working with the Councils Employment team to formulate the programme.

Attention was drawn to the huge investment the Council is making towards the Oakdale and Ty Darren sites and advised that the investment is not just about delivering homes, but also opportunities in terms of employment and training.

Cabinet sought clarification on what Caerphilly's commitments are to the welfare of Veterans.

The Officer explained that Caerphilly is committed to working with Veterans and is currently working with the Armed Forces Covenant Officer and a charity to develop this section of the Social Value Plan.

There have been examples of the charity's work within England, where they have taken Veterans through a programme of initial training and also pastoral care which has not only assisted in the Veteran's obtaining a job but also a home at the end.

Cabinet noted that internally Caerphilly Homes are currently reviewing the Common Allocation Policy and the Common Housing Register and are hoping that Caerphilly will be in a position to offer some of the homeless Veterans a home should they participate in the programme.

The Deputy Leader expressed his delight in the report in its entirety but was particularly pleased to note that that all homes will offer occupants the highest level of energy and efficiency and comfort, thereby lowering energy costs for occupants. Which would be pleasing to the Caerphilly Homes customers from a financial point of view but also from a climate change perspective.

Cabinet noted technology that was utilised at the IHP schemes at Trethomas and Trecenydd to create cost effective homes will be used within the schemes at Oakdale and Ty Darren. There was a grant requirement as part of the Innovative Housing Programme to install monitoring technology through the building, which has informed Caerphilly Homes that that customers are receiving energy bills of around £180.00 per annum. thereby demonstrating that the building is working as intended.

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 that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. 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 be approved.
2. The signing of the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon which will allow the development to start on site in October 2023 be approved.
3. 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 be approved.
4. The proposal to develop a Social Value Plan which will relate to all developments undertaken by Willmott Dixon in the county borough be endorsed. 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.

6. CAERPHILLY HOMES - TY DARRAN REDEVELOPMENT

Cabinet noted the report has been considered by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny

Committee on the 19th September 2023 and further noted the comments made by the Scrutiny Committee.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval to sign the Delivery Agreement with Willmott Dixon to progress the scheme through to construction and completion by Autumn 2025, and to endorse the creation of a Social Value Plan which would encompass the Ty Darran, former Oakdale Comprehensive School and Ty Melin development schemes.

The Head of Strategy and Development addressed Cabinet providing an in-depth overview of the project. The Officer advised that this flag ship development has focused largely on having communal spaces which encourage interaction with the wider community and address issues that are all too common place around isolation and loneliness. There will also be the inclusion of flexible areas that can accommodate a range of needs, such as working from home or taking care of grandchildren. There are 45 apartments within the development all including balconies to facilitate easy access to fresh air.

Clarification was sought as to whether energy efficient homes are more expensive to build. The Officer clarified that currently everything is incredibly expensive to develop, particularly if you are creating energy efficient, low carbon homes. However, in the longer term these new properties will not require any further investment, as is the case with the current housing stock. This will deliver greater benefits for the tenants in terms of internal quality and lower energy costs.

In response to a query raised the Development Manager advised Cabinet that engagement sessions have been held with existing residents at Castle Court, Waunfawr House and St Marys Court residential homes and shown them both the internal and external plans. There has been feedback, both positive and negative and where there has been concerns, they have been taken on board and adjustments have been 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 that for reasons contained with the Officer report:

1. The content of the report was noted and the signing of the Delivery Agreement (DA) with Willmott Dixon to deliver a new, low energy, flagship later living scheme by Spring 2025 be agreed.
2. The formulation of a social value plan which will encompass the Ty Darran, former Oakdale Comprehensive School and Ty Melin development schemes with Wilmott Dixon be endorsed.

7. CWMCARN FOREST DRIVE COLLABORATION WITH NATURAL RESOURCES WALES – REVIEW OF AGREEMENT AND NEXT STEPS

Consideration was given to the report which proposed 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.

Cabinet were disappointed to note that the submission to UK Government for the Levelling-Up bid had been unsuccessful and sought clarification on how the Council plans to reduce the subsidy to the Drive.

The Visitor Economy and Destinations Manager explained that operational plans are to

minimise expenditure and maximise income, carry on a number of operations at the Forest Drive. The Council will now focus on the on-going operation.

Cabinet noted that the latest estimates show that the Council is on track to achieve the current subsidy reduction savings of £75,000 this year.

Concerns were raised with regards the price increase and whether there would be any provision in place for low-income families. Concerns were also raised with regards the limited car parking spaces provided at the Forest Drive. The Officer explained that over the past few years work has taken place to increase the number of car parking spaces available, which was carried out as part of the European Funding Project. The Forest Drive now offers 8 car parks at various locations throughout the Forest Drive. The Officer appreciated the concerns relating to the impact the price increases may have visitors. However, explained that although a rise of 25% seemed high in terms of percentages, it is only £2.00 for most visitors per car which will equate to an extra 50p person if there are four visitors in one car. Comparable costs of entry to other day vacation opportunities are far more per person.

The Leader acknowledged all the achievements at the Forest Drive over recent years, such as the children's play area which is fantastic and very well used, as are the walking and cycling routes and the installation of the glamping pod facilities. However, felt there is a still room for improvement, with regards to the catering facilities provided.

The Officer agreed with the Leaders comments and explained there had been some challenges over the recent years with regards to staffing. However, assured Cabinet that work is being undertaken to make improvements.

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 that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. The existing agreement be extended for a period of one year be approved. This should ensure that both parties can fully ascertain the finances associated with the operation of the drive at the attraction. It was 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.
2. 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 be endorsed.

8. B4251 YNYSDDU TO WYLLIE SAFETY REVIEW

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update on additional proposed safety measures for Ynysddu to Wylie highway B4251 and also sought Cabinet approval to undertake the associated works.

Cabinet noted that following a tragic accident a road safety review was undertaken in March 2020. The review identified a number of recommendations which were actioned during the summer of 2020 which included areas of resurfacing, chevron signing, and speed limit reduction coupled 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, the 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 15th June 2023 where all relevant parties met Council Officers, Gwent Police and the 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.

Cabinet welcomed Councillor Jan Jones (Local Ward Member) who was invited to speak on the report. It was acknowledged that Councillor Jones had been working closely with the Family of Laurie Jones who tragically lost her life in an accident on this stretch of road.

Councillor Jones addressed Cabinet who passed on the Family's appreciation that throughout the consultation and during all the meetings, they were able to discuss and explain their concerns which were listened to and heard, the Council's time and patience was appreciated, and the extra safety measures that were listed within the report were welcomed. However, disappointment was expressed that crash barrier and the street lighting proposals had not been agreed. Councillor Jones explained that the Family felt that the chain-link fence that has been installed provided no additional safety and Councillor Jones also expressed the Family's feeling that the Council was more concerned with its carbon footprint rather than the safety of its roads. However, Councillor Jones did acknowledge that there had been very few accidents at night.

Councillor Jones and Councillor Reed as Local Ward Members, expressed their appreciation for the time taken by Officers to meet with the Family and the extra measures planned were appreciated by Councillor Jones and Councillor Reed (Local Ward Members). However, they too were disappointed with the lack of crash barriers and that street lighting had not been agreed.

Councillor Jones acknowledged that their comments had been included within the report and was pleased with the Officers approach and transparency throughout the process.

The Leader expressed his thanks to the Family for working closely with the Authority at a such a very difficult time and assurance was given that the Authority was committed to the continuing review and monitoring of this stretch of road.

Cabinet sought clarification as to why it was not deemed necessary to install crash barriers. The Head of Infrastructure explained that there are concerns that the barriers themselves would cause an additional hazard due to the radius of the bend and position of the barrier. The Officer advised Cabinet that a 40mph speed limit had been implemented on the road.

Cabinet noted that all consultees and their comments had been included within the report.

Cabinet also noted that further additional preventative measures, such as solid lines and bollards are proposed to be in place put in place. Although the bollards only needed to be 5 metres apart, following the concerns raised by the Family, the Council had made adjustments and spaced them 3 metres apart on bend radii.

Following a query raised by Cabinet the Officer gave assurances that the maintenance issues identified within the Independent Review would be picked up by the Councils internal inspection process as the road is a strategic route therefore inspections take place monthly.

Clarification was sought as to why the road is not considered to be an accident black spot. The Officer explained, that although there have been accidents, there had not been any accident clusters or common factors at a single location and have occurred at different points along the road which included the straight sections of highway.

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 that for reasons contained within the Officers report Cabinet considered the content of the report and approved 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 of the report. These improvements will also be monitored against any recorded accident data received over the coming years.

9. RECYCLING CONTAMINATION PROCESS

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approve a proposal to refine and enhance the Councils current approach to public engagement specifically targeted to recycling contamination at the kerbside.

An update was provided in regards the progress of the Waste Strategy which is scheduled to be ready for consultation in early 2024.

Cabinet noted the educational aspect of the exercise and acknowledged the information provided within the report which explains the process and number of visits prior to a fine being issued. The report highlights that the numbers dramatically fall through the various stages which identifies this is not a money-making exercise in any way. It was further noted that around 10 Enforcement Notices could have been issued following recent monitoring and engagement at approximately 75,000 properties.

Cabinet requested an update on the recruitment status for the new staff, who will be implementing the new process. The Principal Waste Management Officer confirmed that Caerphilly have currently recruited 9 Household Recycling Centre Attendants, 7 Collection Operatives, 3 Technical Officers, a Health and Safety Officer and 6 Recycling Advisors, who will be responsible for door knocking and advising residents how to recycle more effectively.

In response to a query raised The Head of Infrastructure confirmed that since the enhanced education process has been implemented there has been indications that the contamination levels have dropped by around 5%, which is very positive.

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 that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. 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 be approved.

2. The proposal for the fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) to be set at £70 reducing to £35 if paid within 14 days be approved.
3. That a specific communication campaign is undertaken in advance of implementing the enhanced process be approved.

10. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

Members considered the Public Interest Test and concluded that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interests in disclosing the information and it was: -

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. NESS TAR AND FORMER WERNDDU BRICKWORKS SITES, CAERPHILLY - DELIVERY OPTIONS REPORT

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 that for reasons contained within the Officers report the recommendations at 3.1 i) to vi) be approved.

The meeting closed at 14.22 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 15th November 2023.

CHAIR

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 8th November 2023

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
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	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 Harrhy	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
15/11/2023	Mobilising Team Caerphilly Programme – Proposed Governance Arrangements	To update Cabinet on the proposed governance arrangements, narrative and decision-making principles that will support the MTC Programme.	Liz Lucas/Sue Richards/ Kath Peters	Cllr Eluned Stenner
15/11/2023	Review of Sport and Recreation Strategy Implementation	To update Cabinet on progress with delivery of the 10 year	Rob Hartshorn	Cllr Chris Morgan

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 8th November 2023

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
		Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.		
15/11/2023	Future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre	To seek Cabinet approval to commence formal consultation on the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.	Rob Hartshorn	Cllr Chris Morgan
15/11/2023	Replacement Artificial Training Pitch at Risca Leisure Centre/ Comprehensive School	To provide Cabinet with options for the replacement of the artificial pitch at Risca Leisure Centre / Comprehensive School and to recommend a way forward.	Rob Hartshorn	Cllr Chris Morgan
13/12/2023 13:00 p.m. Page 0	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 approve the publication of a Statutory Notice.	Sue Richards/Andrea West	Cllr Carol Andrews
13/12/2023	Housing Revenue Account Charges – 2024/2025 (Rent increase report)	For Cabinet to agree the level of rent increase for council contract holders (tenants) effective from April 2024	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	Fiona Wilkins/Julie Reynolds/Nick Taylor-Williams	Cllr Shayne Cook

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 8th November 2023

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
Page 11		<p>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.</p>		
13/12/2023	Greater Blackwood Masterplan	<p>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.</p>	Rhian Kyte	Cllr James Pritchard
13/12/2023	New Listed Buildings at Risk Strategy	<p>To seek Cabinet approval for the Authority's Buildings at Risk Register and Strategy which sets out a framework for the preservation and enhancement</p>	Rhian Kyte	Cllr Philippa Leonard

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 8th November 2023

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
		of listed buildings at risk over the period 2023-2028.		
13/12/2023	Consultation on Proposals to Implement Council Tax Premiums on Long-term Empty Properties and Second Homes	To seek Cabinet approval to undertake a consultation process on the implementation of premiums	Sean O'Donnell	Cllr. Eluned Stenner
13/12/2023	Cwm lfor Solar Farm final business case	Consideration of updated financial information and options for Cwm lfor 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 McMahan	Cllr Carol Andrews
17/01/2024	Grass Cutting Regimes – 2024 Season	To consider options and proposals for grass cutting for the 2024 cutting season	Rob Hartshorn	Cllr Chris Morgan
17/01/2024	Draft Waste Strategy	To approve the draft waste strategy for public consultation.	Marcus Lloyd/Hayley Jones	Cllr Chris Morgan

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 8th November 2023

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
17/01/2024	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
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
24/02/2024 13:00 p.m.	Additional Support Delegation - Education	To seek agreement to proceed with the delegation of additional support to schools.	Keri Cole/Sarah Ellis	Cllr Carol Andrews
21/02/2024	Community Benefits from Renewable Energy Developments Guidance	To seek Cabinet approval for the introduction of a policy for community benefits allocations arising from major developments.	Sue Richards/Heather Delonnette	Cllr James Pritchard/Cllr Philippa Leonard
21/02/2024	Budget Proposals for 2024/25	To seek Cabinet endorsement of the 2024/25 budget proposals prior to final determination by Council on 27th February 2024.	Stephen Harris	Cllr Eluned Stenner

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CABINET – 15TH NOVEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: PONTLLANFRAITH LEISURE CENTRE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To propose undertaking a consultation exercise on a proposal for Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre to remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) including a 4-court sports hall, with associated changing facilities, and a 3G pitch being made available for community use outside of school hours upon opening in Spring 2025. The proposal would also see use of the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site cease once the 3G pitch at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In 2019, the Council adopted a Sport and Active Recreation Strategy for the period 2019-2029. The Vision for sport and active recreation is “to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often”. The strategy references poor levels of health in certain areas of the county; reducing budgets; the large number of facilities across the County and the deteriorating quality of our older buildings as well as increasing population and consumer demand as some of the key challenges it is seeking to overcome. The strategy also references the need to maximise the impact of all sport and recreation facilities.
- 2.2 Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre is now nearly 50 years old. The building has a significant maintenance backlog and the associated 3G football pitch is at the end of its lifespan. The indoor leisure facilities closed as a result of the UK national lockdown in March 2020 and have not re-opened for leisure use. The budget for running Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and 3G pitch is £179,360 per year.
- 2.3 The Leisure Centre formerly operated as a shared site with the adjacent Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School which closed in 2016. The school buildings are currently being demolished ahead of the construction under the Council’s Sustainable Communities for Learning programme of a Centre for Vulnerable Learners. Due for completion in Spring 2025 the new Centre will include a 4-court sports hall, with associated changing facilities, and a 3G pitch (size 40 x 30 metres i.e. not full size) available for community use outside of school hours. Artist’s impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners are included at Appendix 3.

- 2.4 Islwyn High School opened in June 2017 to replace the existing Pontllanfraith and Oakdale Comprehensive Schools and includes a 4-court sports hall and dual use 3G football and rugby pitch. A new dual use 3G pitch opened at Blackwood Comprehensive School in 2020. In 2021 the existing Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP) at both Lewis School, Pengam and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, Fleur de Lys were upgraded to dual use 3G pitches and support community use. The Council is continuing to look at developing 3G pitch provision in the county borough.
- 2.5 Closing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and the associated 3G pitch permanently is consistent with the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and the Mobilising Team Caerphilly principal of doing things differently. The case for closure is made in view of the need to invest significantly in the existing facilities to sustain their use let alone bring them up to current standards when there are new, alternate, and modern facilities available on the adjacent site and nearby. Additionally, these modern alternate facilities can be operated far more efficiently than the existing Leisure Centre as they are located on joint use sites with schools. It is therefore proposed that a consultation exercise is undertaken regarding the proposal that Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remains closed permanently and that use of the 3G pitch ceases once the 3G pitch at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet approve a consultation exercise regarding the proposal that Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remains closed permanently and that use of the existing 3G pitch ceases once the 3G pitch at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To secure a more efficient and financially sustainable future leisure facilities offer in accordance with the adopted Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019 -2029.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In 2019, the Council adopted a Sport and Active Recreation Strategy for the period 2019-2029. The Vision for sport and active recreation is "to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often". The implementation of the Strategy encompasses a range of activity which supports the new Corporate Plan and in particular Well-being Objective 3 - Enabling our Communities to be Inclusive as well as the Council's broader Placeshaping plans.
- 5.2 The Strategy references poor levels of health in certain areas of the county; reducing budgets; the large number of facilities across the County and the deteriorating quality of our older buildings as well as increasing population and consumer demand as some of the key challenges it is seeking to overcome. The strategy also references the need to maximise the impact of all sport and recreation facilities.
- 5.3 Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre opened in 1975 and its facilities include a five-court sports hall, two squash courts, small fitness suite, small multi-purpose dance studio and a 3G football pitch.

- 5.4 Now nearly 50 years old, Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre has a maintenance backlog estimated at £475,159 based on a condition survey undertaken in 2019. The 3G football pitch at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre was installed in 2011. The typical lifespan of a surface of this nature is 8 – 12 years depending upon use. In 2018/19 the last full operating year before the Covid-19 pandemic, the leisure centre site cost the Council £131,350 to operate. In that period there were 79,923 visits as shown in the table below

AREA	ADULT	JUNIOR	TOTAL
3G Pitch	25,900	24,184	50,084
Fitness Suite	6,729	1,361	8,090
Squash Courts	1,060	56	1,116
Holiday Camps	0	490	490
Sports Hall	10,633	5,137	15,770
Group Exercise	4,373	0	4,373
TOTAL	48,695	31,228	79,923

- 5.5 On 10th April 2019 Cabinet resolved to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and on 24th June 2019 the High Court quashed that decision. There were 5 grounds of the Judicial Review and the Court dismissed 4, but did rule that there was insufficient evidence that Cabinet had properly discharged its duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. An Integrated Impact Assessment for this proposal has been undertaken, including full consideration of socio-economic duty as highlighted at Section 7. below.
- 5.6 The indoor leisure space at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre closed as a result of the UK national lockdown in March 2020 and has not re-opened for leisure use. Between September 2021 and June 2023, it was used by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board as a Mass Vaccination Centre to replace Newbridge Leisure Centre. All previous block bookings of the indoor sport and leisure space have relocated to other facilities across the county borough such as Oakdale Badminton Club at Islwyn High School for example.
- 5.7 The Leisure Centre formerly operated as a shared site with the adjacent Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School which closed in 2017. Under the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme the Council is developing a Centre for Vulnerable Learners on the former school site. Due for completion in Spring 2025 the new facility will accommodate between 80 - 120 pupils and will be equipped with high quality learning opportunities, indoor and outdoor sporting provision as well as access to first class support and will enable community use of the facilities outside school hours. Demolition of surplus school buildings is currently in progress. Artist's impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners are included at Appendix 3.
- 5.8 Sporting facilities at the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will include a 4-court sports hall, with associated changing facilities, and a 3G pitch (size 40 x 30 metres i.e. not full size). The sports hall will have a minimum ceiling height clear of any obstructions of 7.5 metres accommodating at least the Club Standard for Badminton Basketball Netball and Volleyball. Parking spaces and EV charging points will be available to the public outside of school times. There will be a Joint User agreement between Sport & Leisure Services and the Centre for Vulnerable Learners, with the out of hours usage

of the facilities managed by Sport & Leisure ensuring appropriate community use. The new 3G will support training provision but not competitive fixtures - although these can be played at Islwyn High, or Blackwood Comprehensive school.

- 5.9 The existing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre sports hall is x 5-court (so a reduction of 1 court). The majority of sports halls across the county borough are x 4 courts. The sizes of both facilities are set out below:

Element	Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre Sports Hall (5 Court)	CVL Sports Hall (4 Court)
Overall Width	17912mm	18250mm
Overall Length	36000mm	34730mm
Wall to Badminton Court Baseline	2260mm / 2300mm	2425mm / 2425mm
Between Parallel Badminton Courts	Varies (Min being 750mm)	2000mm
Wall from Side-line of Badminton Court	Varies (Approx. 1000mm)	2165mm

In summary, the CVL is marginally wider, but slightly shorter than the existing sports hall at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre, however this is negligible given the move from x 5 to x 4 number badminton courts hall.

- 5.10 The CVL will not include a fitness suite, squash courts or dance studio, but there has been significant investment in the Fitness Suite at Newbridge Leisure Centre along with a smaller but targeted investment at Heolddu Leisure Centre in both the Fitness Suite and Squash Court, there is also a Fitness Suite at Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre. The Sports Hall in the CVL is multi-purpose and as such can accommodate aspects of provision that the Dance Studio previously offered and provided. Also a new Dance and Group Cycling Studio were provided as part of the Newbridge Leisure Centre Fitness Suite project.

- 5.11 Use of the outdoor 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith recommenced on a phased basis in April 2021 without access to the changing rooms, supported by the Covid 19 re-opening plan. The full size 3G pitch is well used and in 2022/23, there were 30,257 visits as shown in the table below:

AREA	ADULT	JUNIOR	TOTAL
3G Pitch Hire	10,913	19,344	30,257

- 5.12 The 3G pitch has been the subject of ongoing repairs for some time. An inspection report produced in 2022 confirmed that the condition of the pitch is as to be expected given its age and intense usage (particularly the usage level when the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School was open) and that it is nearing the end of its lifespan. Any further repairs undertaken would only provide a short-term benefit and replacement must be considered. Replacement costs are approximately £280,000, although this does not include a review of the current 30 year old substructure that will require investigation to ensure that the integrity has not been compromised.

- 5.13 Islwyn High School is 3 miles away and opened in June 2017 to replace the existing Pontllanfraith and Oakdale Comprehensive Schools and includes a dual use 3G football and rugby pitch and 4-court Sports Hall. A dual use 3G pitch was also installed at Blackwood Comprehensive School and opened for use in 2020. In contrast to the single use, football only, 3G pitch provision at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre the 3G pitches at Blackwood Comprehensive School and Islwyn High School are capable of being used for both football and rugby (with resultant FAW and IRB approval).
- 5.14 The current 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre is one of the few pitches that meets the standard for Gwent County matches. The 3G pitches at Islwyn High School and Blackwood Comprehensive School do not meet that standard. However, Welsh League Reserve fixtures have been played at the Blackwood Comprehensive School 3G pitch this season along with FAW Academy fixtures over the past year. The county borough has six Gwent County level teams, and all of these teams play at their own local facility and have not expressed a desire to make any 3G their 'permanent' home. Should these teams aim to move through the league tiers then the options to support them in this would be discussed and explored.
- 5.15 It should also be noted that recent investment has taken place at both Lewis School, Pengam and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, Fleur de Lys in relation to upgrading the existing Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP) to dual use Rugby & Football 3G pitches. The allocation of bookings is undertaken in collaboration with the host school and Sport & Leisure Services. The sport and community facilities at both Islwyn High and Blackwood Comprehensive School are delivering full community programmes at present, but there is scope at Islwyn High School for weekend usage of the 3G pitch and Sports Hall. The Council is also continuing to look at further developing 3G pitch provision in the county borough.
- 5.16 With the above detailed 3G provision and following the opening of the CVL it will be possible to accommodate all current 3G pitch bookings alternative facilities if use of the 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith were to cease. Whilst the Sport and Leisure service would use best endeavours to meet the requests of users it is not possible to guarantee that all bookings could be transferred on a like for like basis in terms of time and day of the week. It should also be noted that the existing 3G pitch operates until 22:00 hours in the week and the CVL has a condition of planning consent permitting use of the 3G pitch until 21:00 hours. There are currently 2 bookings on the existing 3G pitch at 21:00 hours.
- 5.17 Closing the leisure facilities and 3G pitch would render the site surplus to requirements.

Conclusion

- 5.18 The indoor leisure facilities at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre closed as result of the UK National lockdown in March 2020 and has not re-opened for leisure use since, with previous block bookings being relocated to other facilities across the county borough. The existing leisure centre has significant outstanding maintenance liabilities, is not energy efficient and does not meet the aspirations set out in the Sport & Active Recreation strategy 2019 – 29 of providing modern, fit for purpose leisure facilities.
- 5.19 The 3G football pitch is coming to the end of its lifespan and requires regular and ongoing repairs to ensure it remains safe for community use. The cost to replace the facility is estimated at approximately £280,000.

- 5.20 The Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) development provides an option to replace the majority of facilities within the existing leisure centre with a modern, fit for purpose offer that will also help the Council meet its ambition in relation to carbon reduction.
- 5.21 The CVL will also offer a 3G facility, however it is acknowledged that the new offer will be smaller and only suitable for training purposes and not competitive matches. Most competitive matches are played on weekends, and as such can be relocated to Islwyn High School.
- 5.22 Closing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and the associated 3G pitch permanently is consistent with the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and the Mobilising Team Caerphilly principal of doing things differently. The case for closure is made in view of the need to invest significantly in the existing facilities to sustain their use let alone bring them up to current standards when there are new, alternate, and modern facilities available on the adjacent site and nearby. Additionally, these modern alternate facilities can be operated far more efficiently than the existing as they are located on joint use sites with schools. These proposals support the new Corporate Plan and the Council's Placeshaping plans.
- 5.23 It is proposed that a consultation exercise is undertaken regarding the proposal that Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remains closed permanently and that use of the 3G pitch ceases once the 3G pitch at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use. Further details regarding the proposed consultation can be found in paragraph 10 below and at Appendices 1 – 2. Feedback from the consultation exercise will help shape recommendations within a further report for Cabinet consideration at a future date to be agreed.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 As indicated in the report, a number of the financial figures are estimates. The completion and opening date for the Centre for Vulnerable Learners is based on current project projections.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and overall, given that the indoor leisure facilities have been closed for three and a half years, the 3G pitch is at the end of its life, and together with the other facility developments within the county borough there are no significant adverse impacts identified. New facilities are being provided at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners and these together with other alternative facilities will provide more accessible modern, fit for purpose offer for all groups and will have a positive impact. There is a potential for a negative impact resulting from the additional travel distance to Islwyn High School. However, this will only impact on travel to competitive 3G pitch fixtures where this results in longer travel times to alternative facilities depending on point of origin and the extent to which they use current provision for competitive fixtures. Feedback from the consultation exercise will be used to further develop the Integrated Impact Assessment.

Link to IIA

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The budget for running Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and 3G pitch is £179,360 per year. It became more expensive to run following closure of the adjacent secondary school in 2016 with the ending of a joint user virement of circa £26,000 from Education (as a result of the Leisure Centre previously being classed as a joint use centre located on a school site) following closure of the school. Also, a new rating valuation following the school closure resulted in an increase in non-domestic rates of £17,000.
- 8.2 As detailed above, there is a maintenance backlog estimated at £475,159, based on a condition survey undertaken in 2019. The 3G football pitch was installed in 2011 and is at the end of its lifespan and replacement costs are approximately £280,000 – although this does not include a review of the current 30 year old substructure that will require investigation. Some consideration may also need to be given to changing room provision if the 3G pitch facility were to be retained.
- 8.3 As stated above, the indoor sport and leisure space has not been in use since the national lockdown in 2020 and has for a significant period been utilised as the county borough's Mass Vaccination Centre. The majority of equipment in the Fitness Suite has either been relocated to other leisure centres or taken out of use to support ongoing maintenance and repairs across the other leisure centres. This would need to be purchased at a cost of approximately £60,000 - £80,000.
- 8.4 The likely savings between operating the CVL facilities in comparison to running the leisure centre will be determined upon developing the delivery model and clarifying the scope of public interest and the range of opening. Energy cost considerations are difficult to determine at this moment in time. It is proposed that there will be an agreement between Sport & Leisure and the CVL (Education) to reimburse the school for out of school hours usage with the facilities managed by Sport & Leisure – this will be covered by a Joint User agreement that sets out agreed areas of responsibility in support of ensuring appropriate community use.
- 8.5 In summary, whilst the annual revenue costs of operating facilities for community use at the CVL are not known currently they will be significantly less than the current annual budget for Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre of £179,360. New equipment would be required to reopen the Fitness Suite at a cost of approximately £60,000 - £80,000. Replacement costs for the existing 3G pitch which is at the end of its life are at least £280,000. In addition, the existing leisure centre has an estimated £475,159 maintenance backlog.
- 8.6 Closing the leisure facilities and 3G pitch would render the site surplus to requirements. Any potential capital receipt for the sale of the leisure centre and 3G pitch area would be dependent on a number of variables.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Any closure of the leisure centre will be progressed in accordance with relevant HR policies and in consultation with staff and Trade Unions as appropriate. The 3 staff based at the site have been working in support of the Mass Vaccination Centre along with a secondment to the Sport & Leisure Customer Services Team. The staff member who supported the Contact Tracing Team has been reallocated to Cefn Forest Leisure Centre to support an existing vacancy. It is clear that the delivery of community based

facilities from the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will require a dedicated and experienced staff resource and on that basis utilising the existing staffing would be advisable and support consistent and safe delivery practice.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly. Councillor Shane Williams was consulted in his capacity as Vice Chair of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee and additional information was added to the report; his comments were as follows:

Thank you for sight of the draft report regarding Pontllanfraith leisure centre.

You say several times throughout this report that “All previous users of the indoor sport and leisure space have relocated to other facilities across the county borough “. That is simply untrue. As you know some teams were temporarily relocated while it was used as a mass vaccination centre, but others were not. Many other users of the sports hall have not been accommodated anywhere else and have been left with the choice to give up sport or travel outside the borough. To continue to suggest they have all been relocated within the county is just wrong.

With regards to the 3g pitch you acknowledge “The full size 3G pitch is well used” and has “ intense usage”. Your officers have also recently acknowledged in correspondence that there is “significant increased demand for bookings across the 3g portfolio”. Furthermore in your report arguing for a new 3g pitch at Risca you state how important these full size 3g pitches are, and in fact you make the case for more.

To that end, how then can it be recommended to scrap such a well-used facility and replace it with a pitch half the size, which is only suitable for five a side kick a bouts?

That recommendation is compounded by the fact that your suggested alternatives at Blackwood and Islwyn High are already at capacity. As you acknowledge they “are delivering full community programmes”. The reality for many teams and pitch users now, is that they have already lost their slots on those 3gs, and they are being forced out of the county borough. That displacement will inevitably get worse and many will be forced to fold if you pursue the closure of this 3g pitch.

Furthermore you fail to point out in the report that the pitch at Pont is one of the few pitches that meets the standard for Gwent County matches. Other 3g pitches like the ones at Islwyn High and Blackwood do not meet that standard.

It is also concerning that all the emphasis is now being placed on the CVL as a replacement facility which is not due to open until 2025. The artists impression of the new MUGA doesn't properly reflect how small that MUGA will be, especially in relation to the current 3g pitch. So I don't know why that picture is included in the report. As I have shown such a reduced facility is totally unsuitable for so many teams that currently use Pontllanfraith and cannot act as a replacement. And as you point out it cannot open beyond 9pm.

You also acknowledge that the sports hall at the new CVL will be significantly smaller too, with only a 4 court sports hall. But it is not just significantly smaller than the current 5 court sports hall, it is also much smaller at 27.07 metres wide and 28.44 metres long, than the recommended minimum size for a 4 court sports hall.

In addition there will be no fitness suite, no squash courts or no dance floor, so these facilities will simply be lost.

I find it troubling that the CVL is constantly being championed throughout this report as a replacement for Pontllanfraith Leisure centre. Notwithstanding some of the reasons I have given why it cannot be viewed as replacement, the fact is, that the CVL was never intended to be a replacement facility but an additional facility. That was how it has been presented throughout, even at planning. Quite clearly then, the position the council have taken throughout, regarding the CVL has been misleading. But the fact remains the CVL is a significantly reduced facility that is wholly unsuitable for many of the current Pontllanfraith leisure centre users.

Whilst I could go on I make two further points.

The report suggests a maintenance backlog costing £475,159. There is no breakdown of this figure and I notice the report makes no mention of how much money was spent on the centre to make it suitable to be a vaccination centre.

The report also states that “Closing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and the associated 3G pitch permanently is consistent with the Council’s Sport and Active Recreation Strategy...and the case for closure is made in view of the need to invest significantly in the existing facilities”.

I don’t know how the closure is consistent with the Strategy, but to justify its closure so investment can be made in the other leisure centres throughout the county borough is quite frankly shocking.

For the reasons I have outlined above I totally oppose this report and urge it is rejected.

10.2 Subject to Cabinet approval it is intended that a 6 week public consultation be undertaken regarding the proposed closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre. The proposed consultation exercise, which, subject to approval, would commence on Monday 20th November 2023 and run until Wednesday 3rd January 2024. The consultation will seek views on the detail described within this report and will build upon the Integrated Impact Assessment for the proposal. It is proposed that the consultation will include:

- Consultation process publicised including promotion of face-to-face drop in engagement session dates/locations;
- Consultation for period of six weeks;
- Digital engagement page along with frequently asked questions and survey. Hard copies of survey are also available at locations to be agreed prior;
- Email to signpost stakeholder groups to various opportunities to participate in consultation;
- Face to face drop in engagement sessions to be held. Locations and timings to be agreed in discussion with local members;
- Targeted engagement with existing users of 3G facility;
- Targeted engagement with stakeholders;
- A Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting will provide a further opportunity for elected members to consider and comment upon the proposal.

10.3 Feedback from the consultation exercise will help shape recommendations within a

further report for Cabinet consideration at a future date to be agreed. Further details regarding the proposed consultation, including the draft question set, can be found at Appendices 1 – 2.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Author: Robert Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services

Consultees:

Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Mike Adams, Pontllanfraith Ward Member
Councillor Patricia Cook, Pontllanfraith Ward Member
Councillor Colin Gordon, Pontllanfraith Ward Member
Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Jeff Reynolds, Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager
Jared Lougher, Sport and Leisure Development Manager
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Andrea West, Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
David Roberts, Interim Finance Manager
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property
Hayley Lancaster, Transformation Manager - Engagement

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Draft Consultation Timeline
- Appendix 2: Draft Consultation Questions
- Appendix 3: Artist's impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners

Background Papers:

- **Report to Cabinet 20th September 2017 – “Proposals to commence a consultation exercise to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting.**
- **Report to Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee 1st November 2017 – “Consultation with respect to the closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting**
- **Report to Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee 12th December 2017 – “Outcome of consultation on the potential closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting**

- **Report to Cabinet 13th December 2017 – “The future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting**
- **Report to Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee 18th January 2018 – “Consideration of call-in request – Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting**
- **Report to Cabinet 28th March 2018 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre – Consideration of the call-in in the context of the leisure review” and relevant minute of meeting.**
- **Report to Cabinet 14th November 2018 – “Draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-29” and relevant minute of meeting**
- **Report to Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee 26th March 2019 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant Minute.**
- **Report to Cabinet 10th April 2019 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant Minute.**

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Proposed timeline of consultation/engagement activity:

Appendix 1

Date:	Consultation/engagement activity	Responsibility of:	RAG status
15/11/23	Report on Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre proposal is considered by Cabinet	Cabinet Member/Mark S Williams	Scheduled
	Assuming Cabinet are supportive of proposal to consult:		
15/11/23	Consultation process for the forthcoming six weeks is widely publicised including promotion of face-to-face drop in engagement session dates/locations	Hayley Lancaster/comms team	Scheduled
20/11/23	Consultation starts for period of six weeks	Hayley Lancaster	Scheduled
20/11/23	Engagement HQ digital engagement page goes live along with frequently asked questions and survey. Hard copies of survey are also available at locations to be agreed prior	Engagement Team	Scheduled
20/11/23	Email to signpost stakeholder groups (as identified in engagement strategy) to various opportunities to participate in consultation	Engagement Team	Scheduled
w/c 20/11, wc 27/11 and w/c 04/12	Face to face drop in engagement sessions to be held. Locations and timings to be agreed in discussion with local members. As far as possible, these sessions will be held on different days of the week and different times of the day, including early evening, to enable as many people as possible to attend.	Engagement Team Leisure Team	To be agreed
20/11/23 onwards	Targeted engagement with stakeholders and seldom heard groups – identification of these was supported through the development of in-depth integrated impact assessment (IIA) for the draft proposals	Engagement Team Leisure Team	Scheduled
12/12/23	A Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting will provide a further opportunity for elected members to consider and comment upon the proposal	Cabinet Member Mark S Williams Rob Hartshorn	Scheduled
03/01/24	Consultation period closes	Engagement Team	Scheduled
Jan 24	Timeline for report production, analysis of findings and consideration by members to be agreed	Mark S Williams	To be agreed
TBC	Webpage for publication of summary report and annexes to be prepared in readiness to coincide with further Cabinet consideration of the next steps	Engagement Team	To be agreed

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DRAFT - Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre survey questions Appendix 2

Caerphilly County Borough Council's Cabinet have agreed to consult on a proposal that would see Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) including a 4-court sports hall, with associated changing facilities, and a 3G pitch being made available for community use outside of school hours upon opening in Spring 2025

The proposal would also see use of the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site cease once the 3G pitch at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.

The consultation will take place between **Monday 20th November 2023 and Wednesday 3rd January 2024.**

Q1 Please indicate your interest in this consultation.

- A previous user of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre
- A current user of the 3G pitch at the site
- A user of another Caerphilly county borough leisure centre
- A local resident
- Representing a local sports club - please give details
- A member of leisure services staff
- A local elected member
- Other, please give details

Q2. Please provide your postcode: _____

(Q3, Q4 and Q5 below to be answered only by those who indicated they are a previous user of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre or a current user of the 3G pitch).

The indoor leisure space at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre closed as a result of the UK national lockdown in March 2020 and has not re-opened for leisure use. Between September 2021 and June 2023, it was used by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board as a Mass Vaccination Centre to replace Newbridge Leisure Centre.

Q3 Prior to the UK national lockdown in March 2020, how frequently did you use Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre/3G pitch (grid question to differentiate usage between the two)?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Less often

Q4 Prior to the UK national lockdown in March 2020, what was your main mode of transport to access the site?

- Walk
- Car
- Cycle
- Public transport
- Other – please specify

Q5 While Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre has remained closed for leisure use, what alternative arrangements have you made to enable you to continue accessing sport and leisure facilities?

- I've used another CCBC leisure centre/sports facility
- I've used another privately run leisure facility
- I've taken up a different sport/leisure activity
- I have not accessed sport and leisure facilities during this time
- Other – please specify

(Q6 to only be answered by those who responded they hadn't accessed sport and leisure facilities during this time)

Q6 Your response indicated that you have not accessed sport and leisure facilities during the time Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre has remained closed for leisure use. What are your reasons for this?

Q7 Are you a current user of the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site?

- Yes
- No

(Q8 and Q9 below only to be answered by those who indicated they are current users of the 3G pitch)

Q8 How often do you currently use the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Less often

Q9 What is your main mode of transport to access the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site?

- Walk
- Car
- Cycle
- Public transport
- Other – please specify

The proposal would see Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) being made available for community use outside of school hours from January 2025.

Q10 Would this proposal have a positive, negative or neutral impact on you and your household?

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

Please give reasons for your response:

The proposal would see Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) being made available for community use outside of school hours from January 2025.

Q11 If you feel the proposal would have a negative impact on you and your household, please outline how we could work with you to reduce this impact.

The proposal would see Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) being made available for community use outside of school hours from January 2025.

Q12 If the proposal would impact you differently as an individual because of any of the following (age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, religious belief or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages,

nationality, or responsibility for any dependents or because you or a member of your household are or have been a member of the armed forces) please give details below.

About you

These questions are optional but will help us understand how the proposal impacts differently on people with protected characteristics. Due to the localised nature of this consultation, to protect anonymity, the full range of equalities monitoring questions has not been included.

Are you a Caerphilly Leisure Lifestyle member?

- Yes
- No

Age group

- <17
- 17-25
- 26-39
- 40-49
- 50-65
- 66+

I am

- Female
- Male
- Prefer to self-describe
- Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Does your disability impact your day-to-day activities?

- Yes

No

Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. Feedback from this consultation will help shape recommendations within a further report for Cabinet consideration at a future date to be agreed.

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Appendix 3: Artist's Impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners







CABINET – 15TH NOVEMBER 2023

**SUBJECT: SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY (SARS)
IMPLEMENTATION**

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet on the substantial activity undertaken to implement the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-2029 and to seek approval of the Implementation Plan at Appendix 1.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council's 10 year Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019 – 2029 was approved by Cabinet on the 14th November 2018. The definition of Sport and Active Recreation in relation to this Strategy is based on the range of sport and physical activity opportunities provided by Caerphilly County Borough Council in conjunction with our key partners. As the mid-point of the life of Strategy approaches this report provides an update on the significant delivery and implementation of the Strategy together with a look forward to future.
- 2.2 The United Kingdom is reported to spend the smallest proportion of expenditure on recreation and sport out of 15 similar European countries. However, since the implementation of the Strategy in January 2019 there has been almost £3 million of investment in Caerphilly Council's sport and leisure facilities including 5 new dual use 3G football and rugby pitches, an athletics hub, a hockey hub, and the refurbishment and redevelopment of fitness suites in 2 leisure centres. These targeted investments recognise the importance of providing residents with high quality, fit for purpose, aspirational facilities to support high levels of engagement. As such, the leisure facility provision in Caerphilly County Borough Council and the ongoing investment is the envy of many other areas in Wales and there are exciting plans for further significant investment in the future.
- 2.3 Our vision for sport and active recreation is to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often. This report presents a wide range of interventions and activity including inspiring future generations of children and young people, supporting local sports clubs and sporting success, providing specialist interventions such as exercise referral, engaging volunteers, helping to keep older people active, maximising the use of all our community amenities and the local

environment, encouraging people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, working with our schools and maximising community access to school based facilities, and investment in strategic facilities. The aim for the remainder of the Strategy is to build upon the achievements to date.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet consider the content of this report and recommendations made by the meeting of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 31st October 2023.
- 3.2 That Cabinet approve the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-2029 Progress and Implementation Plan at Appendix 1
- 3.3 That Cabinet recognise the current budget pressures being experienced by the service and understand that steps will need to be taken to overcome these pressures. The SARS is a key component of addressing this issue.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To provide an update and facilitate Cabinet input into the implementation of the remaining period of the 10 year Strategy.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In 2016 a Wales Audit Office review concluded that the Council needed to develop and agree a holistic vision and strategy for its sports and leisure services. Following extensive public consultation Cabinet endorsed the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019 -2029 on the 14th November 2018 and it was formally implemented on 1st January 2019. In April 2020 Audit Wales returned to assess progress with the 2016 recommendation and recognised that with the Strategy the Council had taken effective action to develop and agree a holistic vision and strategy for its sports and leisure services with further important steps required to deliver those strategic ambitions. This report sets out progress against those steps and provides updates against the actions within the strategy.
- 5.2 The Strategy provides an ambitious and holistic vision and future purpose for the delivery of sport and active recreation across the county borough, establishing key principles which inform future direction and action including three key outcomes:
 - Better Health;
 - Healthier and Prosperous Communities;
 - Securing a more efficient and financially sustainable future offer.

The Strategy also sets out the following purpose, principles and priorities to further inform this approach, namely:

- to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be 'more active more often'
- by encouraging a collective responsibility and approach to provide and promote appropriate opportunities across a range of organisations
- to promote positive messages about health and physical activity
- to improve standards of performance and celebrate local success in sport

- 5.3 Reflecting the above the attached Implementation Plan at Appendix 1 encompasses a wide ranging programme of activity including direct delivery, working with and supporting partners, facilitating, and delivery by others. Noting the significant progress that is presented it should also be noted that a little more than one year after introducing the Strategy the world was engulfed in the coronavirus pandemic. The cessation of sport and leisure provision due to the pandemic resulted in the staff being redeployed to support the continued delivery of key and essential services and the use of leisure centres in Newbridge and then Pontllanfraith as Mass Vaccination Centres.
- 5.4 Services adapted dynamically in the face of the pandemic including the development of a dedicated free to access You Tube channel providing a range of Group Exercise classes that would traditionally be available in leisure centres. Through this approach clients of our National Exercise Referral Scheme were provided with continuity of their care virtually. The Sport and Leisure service has now developed a significant digital presence to support regular communication and engagement with existing and new users across a range of platforms. The service utilises all available social media platforms and has developed a service specific 'Leisure Lifestyle' app with over 43,000 downloads.
- 5.5 As can be seen from Appendix 1 the Council is involved in the delivery of multiple interventions with the support of partners including Public Health Wales, Welsh Government, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Aneurin Bevan Health Board, and Sport Wales. These interventions in conjunction with partners include:
- National Exercise Referral Scheme
 - Sport Caerphilly
 - Positive Futures
 - Good Boost
 - Green Prescriptions
 - Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
 - Free Swim Initiative
 - 60 Plus Active Leisure Scheme
- 5.6 In 2022/23 there were 57,700 visitors to Sport Caerphilly activities and 1752 attendees at the Positive Futures Outreach programme. In the same year there were 764 referrals into the National Exercise Referral Scheme with 60% of clients who attended the first exercise session completing the full 16 week programme. Sport Caerphilly have supported numerous clubs across the county in accessing just under £250,000 of funding through the Be Active Wales Fund during 2022/23. This continues to be a priority area with a target of £275,000 in 2023/24. Participants in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme have increased from 113 pre-Covid in 2018-2019 to 169 in 2023-2024 with an additional 80 having been offered a place, but are yet to take it up which would see numbers rise to 249.
- 5.7 The Sport and Active Recreation Strategy recognises that high levels of physical activity are enjoyed in a wide range of environments stretching from the countryside to highways, paths and bridle ways used for walking, cycling and jogging. Our natural resources provide significant opportunities to increase activity levels. In November 2020, the Council formally adopted a Green Infrastructure Strategy. A number of key developments and improvements have also taken place to help shape the outdoor environment and improve the scope and access for residents to participate in active recreation. For example, works to install a new jogger's path at the Showfield in Blackwood were completed in 2022 at a cost of £80K, which was funded by Parks

Services and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme. The relocation of Caerphilly Adventures to Cwmcarn Fforest Drive has been beneficial to both and has been backed up by additional investment in water sports facilities, E-bikes, and an orienteering course.

- 5.8 Our Healthy Walks programme is proving as popular as pre pandemic levels and the Volunteer Training Progression Plan continues to grow with more volunteers getting involved in leading walks. As part of the Caerphilly Landscape Partnership, all healthy walking routes have now been reviewed and graded and walking guides have been updated. The Caerphilly Challenge Series is organised by Countryside Services, in conjunction with Caerphilly Adventure Group and the Ramblers Associations as well as Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and continues to go from strength to strength. In May 2023 480 walkers, a record number of entries, completed the challenging routes of up to 22 miles across the stunning countryside of Caerphilly County Borough. Green Prescriptions are a form of social prescribing, a way for health and social care practitioners to connect with the people they are supporting with a range of non-clinical sources of support in the community. Working in conjunction with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB), Parks Services have been instrumental in developing an offering in the north of the county borough at Rhymney Park. This initiative allows participants to undertake community-based activities such as litter picks in conjunction with Keep Wales Tidy.
- 5.9 In terms of more formal outdoor facilities the Council continues to maintain 120 grass sports pitches, 20 outdoor bowling greens, several tennis courts and cricket squares. In August of this year a circa £100,000 investment to bring a football pitch back into use at The Ynys, Fleur de Lys was completed. In addition, a £755,000 Welsh Government grant funded the opening of the Oakdale Athletics Hub at Rhiw Syr Dafydd Primary School in March 2022. The facility includes a 300m 6 lane running track and off field events including high jump, long jump, shot put, javelin and discus.
- 5.10 Since the implementation of the Strategy outdoor and other facility investment has taken place including:
- £390,000 to provide a new hockey hub at Sue Noake Leisure Centre, Ystrad Mynach and a 3G pitch at Idris Davies School.
 - £315,000 replacement of the outdated Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) and supporting infrastructure, including fencing, lighting and changing rooms at Bedwas Leisure centre with a modern, dual use rugby and football 3G pitch.
 - An investment of £295,000 to replace the outdated Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP) at St. Cenydd Community School, Lewis School Pengam and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni with 3 new dual use 3G football and rugby pitches.
 - A £73,000 project to provide the Cruyff Court (Aaron Ramsey) at Trinity Fields School providing a safe place where children and young people can interact with each other socially and develop healthier lifestyles.
- 5.11 Following the implementation of the Strategy there has also been targeted investment in our indoor facilities and, for first time since direct debit memberships commenced in 2007, in excess of 6000 membership payments were collected in September 2023. Investments include:
- £875,000 at Newbridge Leisure Centre redeveloping the Fitness Suite, a new Dance and Group Cycling Studio, new pool play equipment and a changing room refurbishment.

- A £100,000 refurbishment of the Fitness Suite at Heolddu Leisure Centre

The service has also taken time to ensure that the customer voice and views are sought and implemented. The Net Promotor Score model is utilised which provides customers with an opportunity to provide real time feedback based upon their experience of the services they receive. At present Sport & Leisure has a score of 57% (benchmark 41%) which ranks the service in the top 25% of similar services across the United Kingdom

- 5.12 As can be seen implementation of the Strategy contributes to and is influenced by the Council's broader Place Shaping plans. There has been continued investment in leisure facilities and in terms of our leisure centres there has been a focus on our 4 strategic sites at Caerphilly, Risca, Newbridge, and Heolddu in accordance with the Strategy. Caerphilly Leisure Centre is due to be replaced by a new £33.6 million Leisure and Wellbeing Hub in 2026 supported by £20m of UK Government Levelling up Funding. This investment will provide a high quality, aspirational facility aimed at encouraging our residents to engage in active recreation as part of daily life and as such supports aspirations of generational change. Whilst the 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre is in use the indoor facilities are currently closed, the building having been used as a Covid-19 Mass Vaccination Centre by the Health Board since September 2021 until June of this year. Its future will be considered in the context of the wider leisure facilities including the Centre for Vulnerable Learners being built on the adjacent site and due to open next year.
- 5.13 Following discussions with three Secondary Schools to maximise the use of their community assets Sport & Leisure Services will manage facilities at Islwyn High, Blackwood and Ysgol y Gwindy ensuring a consistent delivery model and availability. Further discussions are scheduled to take place subject to the completion of the PFI process at Lewis School Pengam and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni. This builds upon the aspiration within the Strategy to create more sustainable facilities by managing and promoting community use within the Sport and Leisure facility portfolio and closer alignment to the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

Conclusion

- 5.14 The Council has worked hard to ensure that the principles, vision and ambitions set out in the Strategy are the focus for day to day operation and longer term policy and development planning, fully embracing the scope, opportunities and challenges this represents. The Strategy remains relevant, even more so, given the impacts on physical and mental health and well-being of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis, financial pressures of the Council overall, the Health Service, and the sport and leisure service budget position. The implementation of the Strategy encompasses a range of activity which supports the emerging Corporate Plan and in particular Well-being Objective 3 - Enabling our Communities to be Inclusive as well as the Council's broader Placeshaping plans.
- 5.15 There is a wide evidence base of the positive impacts of engaging with and leading a healthy lifestyle in areas such as personal health, educational attainment, mental health, regeneration, community cohesion and social wellbeing. The adoption and implementation of the Strategy has provided a robust policy platform upon which further efforts in support of these aims can be achieved.
- 5.16 Positive progress has been made against the backdrop of a global pandemic. In a recent report published by the Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA) the United

Kingdom was highlighted as spending the smallest proportion of general government expenditure on recreation and sport out of 15 similar European countries. The leisure facility provision in Caerphilly county borough council and the ongoing investment is the envy of many other areas in Wales. This review of the implementation of the Strategy reflects considerable ongoing investment in Caerphilly county borough. Many more challenges lay ahead, however it is clear that the approach being adopted by the Council and with its various partners and stakeholders is resulting in tangible improvements for the residents of the county borough. The aim for the remainder of the Strategy is to build upon the achievements to date.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no assumptions associated with this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 As this report provides an update on the progress and implementation of the existing Sport and Active Recreation Strategy an Integrated Impact Assessment has not been completed.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Like all other Local Authorities, Caerphilly CBC continues to face significant financial challenges. Due to the unprecedented levels of inflation experienced during the 2022/23 financial year (Consumer Prices Index (CPI) peaking at 11.1%), the current economic outlook, and a range of temporary budgetary measures that were approved as part of the Council's 2023/24 budget, our updated Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) shows a savings requirement of £48.335m for the two-year period 2024/25 to 2025/26.
- 8.2 More specifically, the Council's Leisure Centre budgets are under pressure with an overspend of £482k being reported against the 2022/23 budget of £2.424m, and with a projected overspend of £452k currently projected for the 2023/24 financial year. These overspends are largely driven by increased energy costs which makes a focus on more modern buildings all the more important.
- 8.3 Given the scale of the challenge that the Council faces, a financial strategy that seeks to continuously salami slice our services and deplete our reserves is not a sustainable or an appropriate approach. The Council will therefore require new approaches to service delivery to ensure that the projected savings requirement of £48.335m for 2024/25 and 2025/26 can be achieved. The Sport and Active Recreation Strategy sets out a clear vision that supports new ways of working that will ensure that high quality, fit for purpose and affordable facilities are available to support high levels of engagement across the county borough.
- 8.4 There are no direct financial implications arising from this progress update report. The costs of various projects and investments are reflected in the report and the Implementation Plan at Appendix 1, each of which will be subject to appropriate decision making processes

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications directly associated with this report. Staff are at the heart of the sport and leisure services that the Council provides and their passion and commitment is regularly recognised by service users.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The views of the listed consultees have been reflected within this report.

The Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (SARS) Implementation was considered by the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 31st October 2023.

A Member enquired about the evidence behind using Sport Wales funding for the over 60s on outdoor e-bikes and also asked about promoting the benefits of taking a walk. The Sport and Leisure Development Manager provided information on organised walks that were taking place across the County Borough and the 60 plus bike scheme which was developed during lockdown restrictions when leisure centres were closed. The Chair asked officers to note the Members' comments on promoting the benefits of a walk to the elderly.

One Member enquired if the Cruyff Court Aaron Ramsey at Trinity Fields School would be accessible to the wider community. The Sport and Leisure Development Manager advised that this would be the case but highlighted that a lack of floodlights limited its use during winter months. The Member also asked for an update on the installation of equipment in play areas. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services advised that to the best of his knowledge purchased equipment had been installed but that he would check with the service area and respond to the Member outside of the meeting.

A Committee Member questioned if the focus was still on the four strategic centres as originally outlined given the investment at other sites. The Member also questioned the assertion that users of the indoor space at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre had relocated to another site. In addition, he queried if the sports facilities at the Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) was a replacement for the leisure centre, as it was initially described as an additional facility for residents. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services advised that it was never the intention to invest solely in just the four strategic leisure centres. Members also heard that the CVL was included in the strategy as it was part of the whole offer in terms of leisure facilities across the County Borough. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment highlighted that most leisure facilities were linked to schools and therefore inextricably linked to the Schools Strategy. He also outlined how the CVL was described as an additional facility at the planning application stage because at the time a decision had not been reached on the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre. The Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager gave examples of clubs who had relocated from the indoor space at the centre, one example given was Oakdale Badminton Club which had moved to Islwyn High School. The Member stressed that he welcomed all investment in leisure facilities and outlined that he knew of some clubs who thought the relocation was a temporary measure whilst the centre was being used as a vaccination hub.

One Member had concerns that by recognising current budget pressures and steps that may be taken to overcome them, as outlined in the recommendations, Members might be sanctioning future closures of leisure facilities. The Member also queried if a struggling leisure centre in the future could be considered for a Community Asset Transfer. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services highlighted to Members that if a leisure facility was experiencing financial challenges transferring to a community-run model would not necessarily remove those challenges. Committee heard how the recommendation acknowledged the pressure on public sector finances. Members heard how savings of £48M would have to be made over the next two years, and the overspend identified in the report due mainly to increased energy costs was also highlighted by officers.

A Member raised the issue of disability sports and queried the role of CCBC in facilitating this sport. The Sport and Leisure Development Manager advised that the "Insport Series" was run by Disability Sport Wales in collaboration with the 5 Local Authorities in the Gwent Region. Information on sports available was promoted on the Council website and the officer agreed to share further information with the Member outside of the meeting.

The Council Leader welcomed the Strategy and highlighted the brave decision made by Councillors in 2018 to keep leisure services in-house rather than outsourcing the service like other Local Authorities.

Having noted the content of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations are supported and should be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By way of Microsoft Forms and with one verbal vote (and in noting that there were 13 for, 2 against and 0 abstentions) this was agreed by the majority present.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Author: Robert Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services
Hartsr@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees:

Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
David Roberts, Interim Finance Manager
Michael Headington, Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager
Jeff Reynolds, Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager
Jared Lougher, Sport and Leisure Development Manager
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Andrea West, Sustainable Communities for Learning – Manager
Philip Griffiths, Green Space Strategy and Cemeteries Manager

Jonathan Davies, Parks and Countryside Operations Manager
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
Sean Spooner, Sport and Leisure Services Area Team Leader
Sian Jones, Sport and Leisure Services Area Team Leader
Matthew Taylor, Sport and Leisure Services Area Team Leader
Natalie Thomas, Sport Caerphilly Team Leader
Niall Sheridan, Caerphilly Adventures Team Leader
Craig James, National Exercise Referral Team Leader
Kevin Lodge, Community Centre Services Manager
Andrea Goss, Business Support Team Leader

Background Papers:

Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-2029 – report to Cabinet, 14th November 2018

‘Sport and Active Recreation Strategy - Progress Update’ – report to Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, 14th September 2021

Making the UK the most active nation in Europe - Sport and Recreation Alliance

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Sport and Active Recreation Strategy Progress and Implementation Plan.

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#TeamCaerphilly
BETTER TOGETHER

Sport and Active Recreation Strategy Implementation Plan



Key

Black	Not yet started or too early to report any progress (achievements/changes)
Red	Started but not progressing well
Amber	Started with reasonable progress achieved
Green	Going well with good progress
Blue	Completed

Our First Key Outcome: Better Health

Action and Progress	Implementation Date	Status
<p>National Exercise Referral (NERS) Outreach Interventions</p> <p>The National Exercise Referral Scheme is a Welsh Government funded scheme delivered by Caerphilly Council. The Scheme aims to standardise exercise referral opportunities across all Local Authorities and Local Health Boards. The Scheme is an evidenced based health intervention that incorporates physical activity and behavioural change, it supports clients to make and maintain healthier lifestyle choices which will improve their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The aim of the Scheme is to reduce the inequalities in ill health by providing access to tailored and supervised physical activity. The target population is aged 16+ who are not used to being regularly physically active and are at risk of or currently experiencing a long term or chronic health condition. The Scheme is designed to provide opportunities to exercise that are fun, rewarding and that can be incorporated into everyday life.</p> <p>Referrals are received from a wide range of health professionals including: GPs, Consultants, Physiotherapists, Dieticians, Practice nurse specialists. Chronic condition pathways included Cardiac Rehabilitation, Pulmonary Rehabilitation, Diabetes and Obesity program, Falls Stroke and Neurological Disorders pathway. Additional referral categories included were the primary prevention of cardiovascular and cardiopulmonary disorders, low back pain, mental health, and cancer rehabilitation</p> <p>In 2020 NERS was suspended by Public Health Wales due to Covid-19, however services were quickly moved online and clients were provided with continuity of their care virtually. 451clients took the opportunity to participate in NERS activities virtually. A total of 274 you tube video classes were produced covering a wide range of options. These include aerobic exercise for fitness, chair based class for falls prevention, low impact and low intensity to general circuits, yoga and Pilates, create your own home gym classes, low back pain, and food wise for health.</p>	<p>2007 onwards.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Action and Progress	Implementation Date	Status
<p>School Improvement Team</p> <p>Sport Caerphilly are working with the School Improvement team to address wellbeing in the new curriculum. With a lack of readily available resources for the new curriculum around wellbeing, Sport Caerphilly are supporting Education in writing a wellbeing strategy for primary and secondary schools. This will promote lifelong participation, support in areas of deprivation in the borough and funding has been accessed to support the mentoring and upskilling of teaching staff in physical literacy to assist in providing a positive experience of sport and physical activity.</p>	<p>April 2023</p>	<p>In progress</p>

Healthy Walks

As part of Healthy walks programme, our timetable of walks are back in place and proving as popular as pre pandemic levels, with The Pengam Strollers, Penallta Strollers, Bedwas Strollers, Islwyn Ramblers, Caerphilly Ramblers and Caerphilly Adventure Group all back leading weekly walks.

The Caerphilly Challenge Series continues to go from strength to strength. The Council’s Countryside and Landscape Service, in conjunction with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Caerphilly Adventure Group, Caerphilly Ramblers, Islwyn Ramblers and other partners, host this annual event for walkers and runners of all abilities. In May 2023 480 walkers, a record number of entries, showed their mettle by completing the challenging routes of up to 22 miles across the stunning countryside of Caerphilly County Borough.

Our Volunteer Training Progression Plan continues to grow with more volunteers getting involved in leading walks. To date training has taken place in healthy walks leading, Hill and Moorland leading, Mountain leading, national navigation awards and outdoor first aid.

The Caerphilly Landscape Partnership has continued community engagement activities through close partnership working with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB). This has followed direct engagement and promotion of the project and its aim of encouraging members to enjoy the landscape on their doorstep, and to experience the health and well-being benefits of walking. The Rhacca Ramblers has continued following completion of the project in Graig-y-Rhacca. Following outdoor emergency first aid and walk leader training the community volunteers continue to independently lead the weekly walk without ABUHB staff. Unfortunately, no volunteers could be recruited to enable walks to continue in Lansbury Park.

As part of the Caerphilly Landscape Partnership, all healthy walking routes have now been reviewed and graded according to level of work needed to bring up to standard. All walking guides have been updated and are due to be added to the green spaces website. A plan of physical works has been created which includes waymarking on route. A new brand has been created that will be rolled out and promoted over the next year.

Programme is on-going & set to continue.

Ongoing

Action and Progress	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Positive Futures</p> <p>A combination of funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Sport Wales is allocated to Sport Caerphilly is to deliver a Positive Futures programme that aims to encompass the mentoring of young people through a 1-1 process and provides an alternative Education pathway for those that have been excluded.</p> <p>Aside to day referral work, there is an outreach programme which is project based through activities such as skateboarding, rugby and various other sports. They address community safety and risk-taking behaviour through regular scheduled evening sports and activity sessions are delivered in areas of significant poverty, deprivation, and high crime levels. Delivery takes place within local leisure centres, community centres, Multi Use Games Area, streets or a patch of grass for young people to voluntarily attend, free of charge, in their local targeted area.</p> <p>Open access provision allows staff to fulfil a contextual safeguarding role for vulnerable young people due to their presence in the community where young people live and see what is happening in the young person's life; what they are eating and drinking, who they are hanging around with, where they go after the session. This information is vital to feedback to partners. Reactive responses to anti-social behaviour concerns identified via Gwent Police and or/and Safer Caerphilly are key to the work that is undertaken.</p>	2019	Ongoing
<p>Good Boost</p> <p>The Council has engaged with colleagues at Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to roll out the Good Boost programme which aims to support residents who have been identified with Multi musculoskeletal issues through a range of activities that can either be delivered in a taught / class environment or individually through the use of a specially designed tablet. The approach provides residents with a flexible platform to manage their condition and maximises the facilities that are available through the leisure centre platform. Tablets have been delivered to identified sites and appropriate training will be delivered across the coming months. This will be supported by an appropriate communication plan.</p>	October 2023	In progress

Action and Progress	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Green Prescriptions</p> <p>This is a form of social prescribing, a way for health and social care practitioners to connect with the people they are supporting with a range of non-clinical sources of support in the community. Working in conjunction with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB), Parks Services have been instrumental in developing an offering in the north of the county borough at Rhymney Park. This initiative allows participants to undertake community-based activities such as litter picks in conjunction with Keep Wales Tidy. The group meet every Friday and other local events / activities are organised which include wildflower plug planting (involving the local primary school), ongoing use of the community garden at the rear of the bowls pavilion. Participants can also meet on a social level utilising the bowls pavilion for refreshments. Investment has already been made and an outdoor gym has been installed at the park to encourage physical activity.</p>	<p>Initial works are completed but the programme is set to continue.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Green Flag Award</p> <p>There are 34 urban and 6 country parks across the county borough. Three of our urban parks have successfully achieved Green Flag status (Morgan Jones Park, Caerphilly, Ystrad Mynach Park and Waunfawr Park, Crosskeys). Two of our Country Parks also hold this prestigious accolade (Parc Cwm Darran and Parc Penallta). The Council's headquarters at Ty Penallta is also designated as achieving Green Flag Status, which is one of the very first workspaces in the UK to achieve this. More information in relation to activities and events can be found at www.greenspacescaerphilly.co.uk</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Action and Progress	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Ynys Hywel Covid Memorial Woodland</p> <p>During 2021, the Council were approached by Welsh Government to nominate suitable sites within their jurisdiction to develop a COVID memorial garden, the authority put forward Ynys Hywel Farm which is a holding of 120 acres. The farm, which is council owned, is primarily grazing land situated on the Valley side to the west of Cwmfelinfach. It is located within the Sirhowy Valley Country Park and is accessed via a country lane that serves several properties and leads to Mynydd y Grug. The farm holding had been developed to demonstrate traditional Welsh hill farming and has a complex of buildings including a barn, education room, office and storage areas.</p> <p>Subsequently plans were approved to approved by WG to utilise the site for tree planting which will not only be a focus for those who lost loved ones during the global pandemic but also as part of the wider carbon off setting objectives.</p> <p>The works took place in early 2022 and amounted to approximately 4 ha of which 1 ha was planted by community groups and volunteers during the second week of March 2022. The larger area was planted by the Council at a cost of some £64,000.</p> <p>Subsequently Welsh Government funding of £499, 000 has been provided for a project running through to 2028 to develop and manage the Covid Memorial Woodland. Additional tree planting is being supplement with the provision of stone dust footpaths, new timber entrance gates, drystone walling and timber benches. Ynys Hywel is one of three Memorial Woodlands memorial woodlands is intended to be a symbol of Wales’ resilience during the pandemic, and one of regeneration and renewal as the new woodlands grow. It is hoped they will be places of quiet reflection for families and friends to remember lost loved ones.</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Action and Progress	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Outdoor Facilities</p> <p>There are over 800 km of Public Rights of Way across the borough for our communities to access and enjoy, 120 grass sports pitches, 20 outdoor bowling greens, several tennis courts and cricket squares. There are 80+ allotments across the borough for our communities to utilise and enjoy physical activity whilst cultivating fruit and vegetables.</p> <p>Works to install a new jogger's path at the Showfield in Blackwood were completed in 2022 at a cost of £80K, which was funded by Parks Services and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard programme. Users can now safely walk, run or jog around the perimeter of the Showfield whatever the weather. The path measures a total circumference of 1.2 km and is accessible for wheelchair uses and pushchairs.</p> <p>Play is key to a child's development; we currently provide over 177 play areas across the borough ranging from fixed equipped playgrounds, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs), skate parks, youth shelters, kick walls and a splash pad. For something a little different we also have a linear assault course, the 'Ogilvie Olympics' at Parc Cwm Darran.</p>		
<p>The Ynys, Fleur de Lys</p> <p>The grass football pitch at The Ynys has not been usable for a number of years. A project to bring the pitch back into use has been completed involving the addition of many tons of topsoil, drainage works, and grass seeding to provide a completely new playing surface. This has been supplemented with 5 metre highball fencing behind each of the new goals and some recommissioning works to the pavilion at a total project cost of circa £100.000.</p>	<p>August 2023</p>	

Action and Progress	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Tennis Courts</p> <p>As part of a borough wide collaborative investment in tennis facilities between the Council and Tennis Wales, we have improved facilities at Blackwood Showfield, Morgan Jones Park, Pontymister, Rhymney, Ynysddu and Ystrad Mynach Park. The investment includes court re-surfacing, anti-slip court and line painting (green courts/ blue surrounds / white lines), new posts and nets for all courts, fencing repairs and installation of an e-gate entrance system. The e-gate system will allow booking courts via an app. CCBC Parks Operations and Sports & Leisure Development are very excited to be working in partnership with Tennis Wales improving Tennis Facilities within Caerphilly County Borough.</p>	<p>October 2023</p>	
<p>Cwmcarn Fforest Drive</p> <p>Having closed in 2015 to allow for the felling of 150,000 trees affected by the disease Phytophthora Ramorum, Cwmcarn Fforest Drive reopened in 2021 following significant investment from Natural Resources Wales and Caerphilly Council. Visitors can enjoy the spectacular Cwmcarn Forest and breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. Children can burn off some energy in three adventure playgrounds, sensory tunnels, and a woodland sculpture trail or follow the several all-ability trails along the route.</p> <p>Caerphilly Adventures relocated to Cwmcarn Fforest Drive in June 2018 and several additional enhancements have followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Changing rooms have been developed for water sports users ➤ E-Bike storage facility has been installed in Caerphilly Adventures area. ➤ Water sports storage container has been installed offering easy access to the Lake with funding from Welsh Government play sufficiency capital investment. ➤ An orienteering course has been established. 	<p>2018</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Action and Progress	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Duke Of Edinburgh Award (DofE) Caerphilly Council has been offering DofE to schools for more than 30 years and holds a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award direct licence to deliver and support DofE across all education and youth provision in the local authority. Caerphilly Adventures currently has the delegated responsibility for the day-to-day management of the programme, employing a Development Officer working alongside a School Improvement Officer to re-engage and support schools and young people across Caerphilly. The Council Authority is continuing to work in partnership with DofE Wales to increase opportunities for young people in Caerphilly to take part in and achieve a DofE Award. DofE is the perfect way to help young people build life-long belief in themselves, supporting them to take on their own challenges, follow their passions, and discover talents they never knew they had. The services provides an annual update with Education and did this in February 2023.</p>	<p>2019</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Free Swim Initiative Welsh Government Free Swimming Grant is used to support our Aquatic Development Pathway and Education Curriculum by funding top up lessons during holiday periods in the 6 swimming pools. We also use this funding to support GAVO in offering Free lessons to those who would not traditionally access swimming lessons. As part of a Free Swim Review in the Summer 2023 we have also started to work with Families First to target primary schools in deprived wards and offer Free swimming lessons and parent/child sessions to children that would not have the opportunity other than school to take part in swimming lessons.</p>	<p>September 2023</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Action and Progress	Implementation Date	Status
<p>60 Plus Active Leisure</p> <p>Within the Healthy Weight Healthy Wales (HWHW) Action Plan 2020-2022 Sport Wales have been given responsibility by Welsh Government to oversee annual investment into a national leisure offer for over 60s to encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices. This is intended to ensure a targeted approach to reduce health inequalities and reduce social isolation. CCBC have £37,355 per year for this programme. The scheme aims to enable the 60 Plus population in Wales to live longer, better and happier lives by improving their physical activity levels, confidence, strength and balance.</p> <p>The following investment priorities are identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted provision of physical activity opportunities to contribute to the reduction of Health Inequalities amongst the local 60 Plus Population that are currently inactive or the least active. • Integration alongside other initiatives such as exercise referral, Free Swimming Initiative (FSI), social prescribing, and other local 60 Plus provision to provide a menu of opportunities for this population <p>CCBC have invested the funding in providing 60 plus outdoor e-bike activities. This gives people the opportunity to know a bit more about their bike, with a bike maintenance session and then taken on lead rides across the great outdoors.</p>	<p>April 2022</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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Our Second Key Outcome - Healthier and Prosperous Communities

Action:	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Community Asset Transfer (CAT)</p> <p>In May 2019, the Council formally adopted a set of guiding principles in relation to the transfer of playing fields and or pavilions to sporting organisations. In the current financial climate, it is acknowledged that the Council has limited financial resources to improve playing fields and changing room provision. Whilst our ethos is to get more people, more active, more often, the adoption of a set of guiding principles will allow officers to work closely with sports clubs to reach their aspirations, obtain grant funding to improve facilitates (which we as a Council cannot access) and subsequently protect our assets for future generations. This also aligns with the principles set out within the Council’s adopted Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.</p> <p>5 projects are currently with the legal team for completion. 1 project is awaiting allocation within Property Services. 3 projects are preparing paperwork to progress to the next stage. A further 10 projects have been mooted and the interested parties are considering them.</p>	<p>On-going and set to continue as applications from clubs are received.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Be Active Wales Fund</p> <p>With the introduction of the Be Active Wales Fund during Covid19 this has been a catalyst in making sporting community clubs and organisations within in Caerphilly CBC to become stronger, sustainable and stop them from closing during such challenging times. The Be Active Wales Fund offers grants from £300 to £50,000 for projects in Wales that intend to do at least reduce inequality, create long-term sustainability or/and introduce new or diverse ways of operating their clubs. Clubs have accessed the funding to upskill volunteers, purchase equipment, deliver physical activity /sport in new ways, use technology to support further and engage more people and support communities that are in deprivation.</p> <p>Sport Caerphilly have supported numerous clubs across CCBC in accessing just under £250,000 of funding through the BAWF during 2022/23. This continues to be a priority area for us especially during the cost-of-living crisis with a target of £275,000 in 2023/24.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Progressing well</p>

Action:	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Oakdale Athletics Hub</p> <p>A flood lit synthetic running track area will on the school fields located at Rhiw Syr Dafydd Primary School – 300m x 6 lane plus a 6 lane sprint straight. The facility includes provision for off field events e.g. high jump, long jump, shot put, javelin and discus. These new sports facilities provide an opportunity for 90 schools and the community to use an athletics track supporting the increase in demand for this type of sporting provision as well as the drive to increase participation to include women and girls through targeted interventions and partnership working with the Authority’s Sports Development team, Sport Caerphilly, Disability Sport Wales and a number of our key partners.</p> <p>The total cost of the project was £755,000 and funded from Welsh Government’s Community Learning centre capital grants programme. The site is open to local schools through the school day and then the community for public open sessions, and the local Athletics club, Rhymney Valley Athletics Club and the wider community in the evening.</p> <p><i>Link to Launch Press release 4th March 2022-</i> https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/news/news-bulletin/march-2022/the-leader-is-thrilled-to-open-the-new-community-a</p> <p>The facility supports the development of Athletics Clubs across the county borough, the delivery of primary and secondary PE lessons, along with offering a safe place for individuals to visit and train throughout the year. A further investment has recently been made to provide a classroom/meeting room facility that encourages a range of education and developmental programmes, along with enhancing the environment on a day to day basis.</p>	<p>March 2022</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Action:	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Penallta Parkrun</p> <p>Taking place within Parc Penallta, Parkrun is a free, community event where you can walk, jog, run, volunteer, or spectate. The Parkrun is 5k and takes place every Saturday morning and the junior Parkrun is 2k, dedicated to 4–14-year-olds and their families, every Sunday morning. CCBC and Sport Caerphilly assist Parkrun in getting this community event up and running for its launch on 27th June 2015. This event has flourished since its launch and has as of 10th August 2023 had 55,294 finishers. Parkrun is positive, welcoming, and inclusive, there is no time limit, and no one finishes last. Everyone is welcome.</p>	<p>June 2015</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Caerphilly 10K</p> <p>Now a regular feature in the sporting calendar the Bryn Meadows Caerphilly 10K is set to return in 2024 on Sunday 12 May along with the Bryn Meadows Caerphilly 2k. With 2,500 runners of all abilities expected to descend on Caerphilly from across the country to enjoy the event, we are looking to the 2024 event to be bigger and better to support the health and wellbeing of our residents.</p>	<p>May 2024</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Let's Go Girls</p> <p>Sport Caerphilly's <i>Let's Go Girls</i> campaign aims to get more women, more active, more often. By doing so, it will increase confidence to allow them to be the best version of themselves physically, mentally and socially while allowing physical activity to be the 'norm' in everyday life. We work with a number of community clubs and partners to provide various opportunities to allow females to find the best place to support them in their journeys.</p> <p>Current provision is heavily focussed on young girls in secondary schools (years 8/9) which has been a great success. A new programme addressing pre/post-natal exercise with mums has been launched and received well. There is scope to deliver this further 23/24 and target further areas of deprivation in the Borough.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>Families First Targeted Youth and Family Engagement Project Welsh Government Funded project working in partnership with the Youth Service delivering Outdoor Experiences for vulnerable families.</p> <p><u>Families First- TYFE Provision</u></p> <p>Caerphilly Adventures receive funding from Families First to provide outdoor activities for families referred to the Targeted Youth and Family Engagement Project and Young Parents. The projects aim to promote family cohesion, confidence through a wide range of activities. Caerphilly Adventures has been working in partnership with Families First since 2019. In that time, they have worked with approximately 184 families.</p> <p><u>Family Engagement</u></p> <p>Family Engagement supports families with children and young people adversely affected by poor relationships. Group sessions focus on improving relationships through building trust, supporting personal development and well-being and skills development. Group sessions bring relevant family members together to support specific needs, to introduce families to new activities and experiences and to provide information and advice to families on a range of topics, along with introductions to new services where needed.</p> <p><u>Young Parents Project</u></p> <p>The Young Parents Project supports new and expectant young parents up to the age of 25 who would benefit from meeting other young parents their own age, making new friends and receiving support for a variety of challenges. Young Parents can receive information and advice, participate in a range of activities that will build confidence, help develop new skills and experience learning with their babies and children.</p>	<p>2019</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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Action:	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Workforce / Volunteer Development</p> <p>Caerphilly Adventure Group is continuing to train and develop volunteers to help run its walking and water-sports programmes.</p> <p>Sport Caerphilly deliver a volunteering and coaching pathway which provides young people the opportunity to develop their skills to lead / coach in sporting settings such as schools, community clubs and events. With COVID19 putting our coaching and volunteering pathway on hold it has taken some time to rebuild. The programme is now in a good place and is going from strength to strength and we have recruited a further 10 coaches who will enhance opportunities we can deliver. This pathway continues to grow and allow community clubs to increase membership and participation through school clubs links.</p> <p>As Caerphilly Sport and Leisure Services emerged from the Covid lockdown, it was clear that every swimming pool we managed, like many in the UK, had lost a number of swimming teacher staff members and that we would have to approach our future swimming teacher recruitment slightly differently. We explored the potential of using volunteers within our communities and train them up as the future generation of Swimming Teachers. The first cohort of Aquatic Volunteers were recruited in April 2021 and 9 volunteers aged from 14 year to 66 years were deployed at our swimming pools. These volunteers received the following training prior to their deployment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DBS checks • Adult and Child Safeguarding training • Health and Safety training • CCBC corporate training • A site-specific induction training sessions. <p>In July 2021 they were then deployed at sites with a swimming teacher mentor, to assist them through the first 12 weeks of volunteering. After 6 months of volunteering with hours being logged, they were then able to attend the ASA Level1 Swimming Teachers Course, with 6 of our Aquatic volunteers now trained up and actively teaching as part of our Learn to Swim Programme.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Action:	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Coach of the Future</p> <p>This programme is an opportunity to support and develop the best young coaches, in addition, to gaining valuable experiences and life skills – not just in coaching. The focus of the programme is on key aspects of personal development such as confidence, organisation, teamwork, problem solving, self-belief, leadership, and communication. The pupils who undertake the programme will complete and achieve Community Sport Leadership Qualification via Sport Leaders.</p> <p>During the academic year of 2021/22, 24 pupils completed the course, with 26 during 2022/23 and 21 selected for 2023/2024.</p>	<p>July 2023</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Elite Caerphilly</p> <p>The Elite Caerphilly Scheme has been established to assist the development and potential success of sports people. The scheme aims to reduce the financial burden of training costs for talented athletes, many of whom aspire to participate and represent both Wales and/or Great Britain in their respective sports on the international stage.</p> <p>Aspiring athletes who live in Caerphilly County Borough can apply to receive free access to train at sporting facilities operated by CCBC sport and leisure services. This funding aims to support talented people across our county to fulfil their potential and realise their sporting aspirations.</p> <p>Eligible applicants are those competing within Olympic, Paralympic, Deaflympic and Special Olympic official sporting disciplines at a regional level or above. Confirmation of athlete’s clarification and level will be sought from relevant sport governing bodies to ensure CCBC sport and leisure services are supporting pathways appropriately within each respective sport.</p> <p>The number of people engaged in the programme are:</p> <p>2020- 33 (Covid Lockdown) March 2020 2021- 4 (Covid Lockdown) March 2021 2022- 35 2023- 23</p>	<p>2019/2020</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Caerphilly Leisure & Wellbeing Hub

The Council have been successful in securing £20m funding as part of Round 2 UK Government Levelling up Fund (LUF). Together with £13.6 million of approved match funding from the Council the £33.6 million project will see the development of an accessible and affordable leisure and wellbeing offer that is attractive to residents (memberships and access to a range of free and low-cost services), sports clubs, community groups and a range of public sector partners (schools, GP referrals and social prescribing, youth services, skills providers, Council’s Employability Team, third sector organisations etc.) The new Leisure & Wellbeing Hub will replace Caerphilly Leisure Centre which was built in 1962 and will include:

- A six-lane community swimming pool with pool pod access, learner pool, leisure pool with flumes and interactive water features;
- Wellness spa;
- Children’s adventure soft play
- Tag Active Arena
- 4 court sports hall
- 2 squash courts
- 100-station fitness suite
- Multi-purpose community room
- Future studio/group exercise studio, cycling studio, wellbeing suite and consultation room.
- Changing rooms, in addition to a reception area and café providing community space.

There will also be a multi-agency health and wellbeing offer that complements the leisure offer, with the intention to support residents to become more physically and economically active. Providing a base for public and community partners to deliver programmes, including the Local Health Board and third sector organisations (delivery of wellbeing programmes (e.g. smoking cessation and National Exercise Referral Schemes)). Affordable multi-purpose community spaces will be available to third sector organisations, community groups, sports clubs and private residents (for local sport competitions, community events and birthday parties etc.).

January 2026

In progress

Action:	Implementation Date	Status
<p>The facility will provide gateways to employment, through the delivery of skills training, events and support and the creation of meaningful employment, apprenticeship and volunteering opportunities</p> <p>The Wellbeing Suite will support people aged 55+, including those with long term health conditions, and those rehabilitating by providing a social and non-intimidating environment with state-of-the-art equipment.</p> <p>The Leisure & Wellbeing Hub will be 660 metres, an 8 minute walk, from the town centre’s Transport Interchange Hub and situated within the active travel corridor, promoting accessibility and inclusion, increased footfall in and around the town centre and Basin and will actively contribute to the objectives</p> <p>Current timelines indicate that the facility will be open for full customer use from January 2026.</p>		
<p>Islwyn Indoor Bowls Club</p> <p>Since the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 Islwyn Indoor Bowls club (IIBC) was not able to deliver full provision, i.e. Bowls and Hospitality. All activities were closed during periods of lockdown and the Club lost all their paid staff. When Welsh Government Covid restrictions were lifted indoor activities were one of the last activities to start back and by this time the IIBC committee made up of club volunteers were running the operational duties of opening and closing the club and keeping the bowls section going.</p> <p>Approval was given for Officers to procure a commercial operator and implement an appropriate commercial agreement on behalf of the Council, so it can act as the catalyst for investment at IIBC to fulfil the potential of the facility within the community and reduce the risk to the Council.</p> <p>A cabinet report was approved on 25th January 2023 and officers have developed a process to go to the market in July- August 2023, in preparation for a commercial operator to commence in September/ October 2023.</p>	<p>September 2023</p>	<p>In progress</p>

Action:	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Tots Sessions</p> <p>Sport Caerphilly provides tots sessions in a variety of sports such as hockey, netball, football and athletics. The aim of the community sessions is to develop the physical literacy skills of children aged between 3- 6 years across various leisure centres in the borough. The sessions are well attended and have coaches and volunteers supporting its delivery. Coaches and Volunteers are also upskilled to increase and develop their knowledge to provide high quality and informative sessions to children and parents. This programme is a huge success, and it is our plan to develop it further across more sites in the Borough. This year we have run the following sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newbridge LC – Football Tots – Tuesdays – 5pm-6pm • Newbridge LC – Netball Tots – Thursdays – 5pm-6pm • Newbridge LC – Athletics Tots – Thursdays – 5pm-6pm (Summer Term) • Caerphilly LC – Football Tots – Thursdays – 5pm-6pm • Sue Noake LC – Hockey Tots – Tuesdays – 6pm-7pm • Sue Noake LC – Netball Tots – Tuesdays – 5pm-6pm <p>Numbers attending, across all sessions average 17 per session</p>	<p>2019</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Working collaboratively</p> <p>We work collaboratively with partners and other deliverers where there is an identified need and/or others can deliver more effectively and efficiently. Sport & Leisure have engaged with a number of providers across a number of levels to deliver programmes that support the aims and ambitions of ‘more people, more active, more often’. Work will continue in this area to either support local providers or work in a more directly focused manner to deliver where Sport & Leisure does not have capacity or expertise. For example, programmes have been delivered in partnership with organisations such as Forces Fitness, Cwac Cwac and the Urdd.</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>

Action:	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Communication & Digital First</p> <p>The service has developed a significant digital presence to support regular communication and engagement with existing and new users across a range of platforms</p> <p>The service utilises all available social media platforms, has developed a service specific app (with circa 43k+ downloads), has a dedicated website that offers access to all part of the service area, utilises the Gov Delivery platform (with circa 10k+ users registered), along with engaging with customer experience and communication platform Net Promotor Score.</p> <p>The service will continue to explore further developments in this space, including at a local / site level to enhance the customer experience, improve efficiencies and ensuring we remain at the forefront of health, fitness and wellbeing solutions</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Carbon Reduction</p> <p>The service has recognised the importance of acknowledging, recognising and contributing towards the Councils ambition in relation to carbon reduction and the climate emergency. Steps have been taken to replace 3G pitch floodlights, internal facility lighting, the use of inverters and pool covers to support carbon reduction and increased energy efficiency. An energy design and advice note is also being prepared in relation to the Caerphilly Leisure & Wellbeing Hub to ensure that the facility maximises all available funding and technology is support of a low carbon, energy efficient building.</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Our Third Key Outcome: securing a more efficient and financially sustainable future offer

Action:	Implementation Date	Status
<p>Facility Investment</p> <p>The Sport & Active Recreation Strategy established a position that investments would be focused in strategically beneficial areas that would provide high quality, aspirational facilities that will support the ambition of increased level of engagement in an active lifestyle. Investments must meet the requirements established within the Strategy and are financially viable from both a capital and revenue perspective. The service will also pay close attention to maximising external funding opportunities from a variety of sources that will allow for investment opportunities to be maximised. Strong progress has been made in this area with a number of investments detailed above that have significantly improved the service offer. These include:</p>		
<p>Newbridge Leisure Centre</p> <p>£300k investment in redeveloping the Fitness Suite with a supporting Dance and Group Cycling Studio to add for purpose, contemporary offer that accurately reflects the ambition set out the strategy.</p>	2021	Complete
<p>Newbridge Leisure Centre</p> <p>£50k pool play equipment that significantly enhanced the offer and experience available to children and young families in support of utilising the safe and fun use of water as part of engagement in active recreation</p>	2021	Complete
<p>Newbridge Leisure Centre</p> <p>£25k changing room refurbishment that provides a dedicated, contemporary in facility changing provision that enhances the offer to Fitness Suite users along with providing an additional layer of safeguarding to support the joint use offer.</p>	2023	Complete
<p>Newbridge Leisure Centre</p> <p>3G pitch replacement</p>	2023	At tender process

<p>Sue Noake Leisure Centre</p> <p>An investment of £390,000 through Sport Wales and CCBC funded replacement surfaces at Idris Davies School and Sue Noake Hockey Hub that provides a significantly improved facility to support both curriculum delivery and community use provision. The project developed the county borough's first Hockey Hub.</p>	2021	Complete
<p>Bedwas Leisure Centre</p> <p>£315,000 replacement of the outdated Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) and supporting infrastructure, including fencing, lighting and changing rooms at Bedwas LC to a modern, fit for purpose dual use rugby and football 3G pitch.</p>	2022	Complete
<p>Lewis School, Pengam 3G</p> <p>An investment of approximately £90,000 funded through retained underspend reserves was initiated to replace the outdated Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) at Lewis School Pengam with a new dual use 3G football and rugby pitch. The upgraded facility will support both improved access for curriculum delivery and community access, supporting development opportunities across a broad range.</p>	2021	Complete
<p>Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni</p> <p>An investment of approximately £90,000 funded through retained underspend reserves was initiated to replace the outdated Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni with a new dual use 3G football and rugby pitch. The upgraded facility will support both improved access for curriculum delivery and community access, supporting development opportunities across a broad range.</p>	2021	Complete
<p>Idris Davies 3-18 Community School</p> <p>An investment of £390,000 through Sport Wales and CCBC at Idris Davies School and Sue Noake Hockey Hub funded replacement of the outdated Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) with a new dual use 3G pitch that provides a significantly improved facility to support both curriculum delivery and community use provision.</p>	2021	Complete
<p>St. Cenydd Community School</p> <p>Using Welsh Government's Place for Sport fund allocated to Sport Wales a new dual use 3G pitch has been installed to replace the previous Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP). At a cost of £110,000 the upgraded 3G pitch provides a facility for pupils, leisure centre users and the wider community to use to play and train all</p>	2020	Complete

year around. The multi-use pitch can be used in all weather and is utilised by a number of different sports including football and rugby.		
<p>Heolddu Leisure Centre</p> <p>A £100,000 refurbishment of the Fitness Suite has provided a range of new cardio equipment including rowers, air bikes and SkiErg ski machines as well as new resistance machines and free weights. The new facilities will benefit students at Heolddu Comprehensive School, the local community and new and existing Leisure lifestyle members.</p>	June 2023	Complete
<p>Heolddu Leisure Centre</p> <p>Heolddu Leisure Centre offers a 25 metre swimming pool, Health Suite, Fitness Suite, Squash Court, 3G pitch and dedicated Group Cycling Studio. Heolddu Leisure Centre is circa 50 years old is co-located with Heolddu Comprehensive School and that options for its future will be considered in connection with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.</p>	2028/29	
<p>Cruyff Court Aaron Ramsey, Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre</p> <p>The facility has been built in partnership with Caerphilly County Borough Council and the Aaron Ramsey Foundation with the help of funds raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery at a total cost of £73,000. The Cruyff Court Aaron Ramsey at Trinity Fields School is dedicated to children with additional learning needs which was one of Johan Cruyff's initial motivations as he sought to connect sports and children. The Cruyff Court provides a safe place where children and young people can interact with each other socially and develop healthier lifestyles.</p>	June 2023	Complete
<p>Nelson Handball Court</p> <p>Nelson Handball court had a resurfacing and repainting programme of works in July/ August 2023. This works was to upgrade this landmark and is recorded as the only full-size handball court on mainland Britain. The investment was £15,445.</p>	August 2023	Complete
<p>Risca Leisure Centre ATP</p> <p>The artificial turf pitch (ATP) at Risca Leisure Centre is coming to the end of its useful life. Site investigation works are being undertaken to inform options for replacement.</p>	March 2024	
Abercarn Primary School Mini 3G	2023	At Procurement stage

<p>To replace the current schools mini-ATP with a modern 3G surface and floodlights, that will allow this facility to be opened up outside of school hours to support community sport and clubs.</p>		
<p>Centre for Vulnerable Learners, Pontllanfraith Under the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme the Council is planning to build a Centre for Vulnerable Learners on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School site. The new facility will accommodate between 80 - 120 pupils and be equipped with high quality learning opportunities, indoor and outdoor sporting provision and will enable community use of the facilities outside school hours.</p> <p>Sporting facilities will include a 4 court sports hall, with associated changing facilities, and a 3G pitch (size 40 x 30 metres i.e. not full size).</p>	<p>January 2025</p>	
<p>Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic and the immunisation programme that followed, Pontllanfraith LC has acted as the county borough's Mass Vaccination Centre (MVC) from September 2021 until June 2023. The 3G pitch has maintained a full programme of community use, however the users of the indoor space have relocated to alternative facilities.</p> <p>The council is committed to repurposing elements of the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School site with the development of a new Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) and respite centre. The new CVL will include a 4-court sports hall and a multipurpose 3G pitch, albeit not full size. As a result of these and wider developments there is requirement for the council to adopt a position on the future of the site as part of the broader place shaping ambition.</p>	<p>2024</p>	<p>Demolition of former comprehensive school in progress</p>
<p>Community Focussed Schools Sport & Leisure have initiated discussions with three Secondary Schools to maximise the use of their community assets. Sport facilities at Islwyn High, Blackwood and Ysgol y Gwindy will be managed by the service ensuring a consistent delivery model and availability. Further discussions are scheduled to take place at the completion of the PFI process at Lewis School Pengam and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni.</p> <p>The position builds upon the aspiration within the Strategy to create more sustainable facilities by managing and promoting community use by managing within the Sport and Leisure facility portfolio.</p>	<p>September 2023</p>	

Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy

In November 2020, the Council formally adopted a Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy. The scope of the strategy was broad in its outlook and includes elements of GI such as: -

- Parks and Gardens (urban and country and formal gardens)
- Amenity greenspace (informal recreation, housing green spaces, domestic gardens, village green, urban commons etc.)
- Natural and semi natural green spaces (woodland, scrub, grassland, heath, derelict land etc.)
- Green corridors (rivers, canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, hedgerows, public rights of way)
- Other features such as allotments, farms, community gardens churchyards, green roofs, recreation grounds etc.

The strategy was developed in conjunction with key partners / stakeholders to generate widespread support and understanding and the full role and function of green spaces across the county borough. It identifies and prioritises GI within the borough as well as on a regional and national context. It identifies clear and practicable mechanism for delivery and clearly measured targets and outcomes and provides the foundation and supporting document for the future preparation and submission of grant bids to relevant funding bodies. A five-year rolling delivery and action plan sets both local and regional delivery priorities.

An update report was received & noted by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 25th October 2022. An all-members Seminar was held in October 2022 to raise awareness of our Bio-Diversity Duty, the Gwent wide 'Nature isn't Neat' campaign and our grass cutting regimes going forward.

Regional working through the Gwent Green Grid Project has continued both on the ground and in policy terms with the preparation of both a Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy and Strategic Access Plan. Developments within country parks have included both revised land management and recreation provision. Emphasis has been placed on biodiversity and decarbonisation/landscape improvements with a range of nesting and hibernation infrastructure being put in place and the second phase of the Covid Memorial Woodland being planted.

2020

In Progress

<p>Additional grant funding from the National Lottery for pan Gwent GI improvements was secured and preparatory planning commenced to secure funding for capital GI improvements, bio-diversity support and Local Places for Nature until 2025.</p>		
<p>Community Centres</p> <p>There are currently 35 Community Centres as part of the CCBC supported network. Each facility plays a key role in the delivery of sport and active recreation at a local level. The vast majority of programmes are delivered in a low cost, encouraging environment delivered by local groups and organisations. There are also examples of high-level activity being delivered in some Community Centres, particularly in martial arts.</p> <p>In accordance with the Welsh Government 'Facilities for Future Generations' framework, Community Centres are classified as providing local, door step options for those who either prefer this environment or have difficulty accessing a larger facility. Significant improvements have been made by both CCBC and the local Community Centre management committees to improve and enhance both the fabric and structure of the facility, offering a more engaging and inclusive environment.</p> <p>Sport & Leisure Service will continue to support both ongoing facility investment where appropriate and required, along with providing advice and guidance to those delivery partners active within local communities.</p> <p>The service has committed to a formal review of the Community Centre Service to establish a long - term vision that aim to ensure that there a sustainable and appropriate delivery model that is needs lead and supports local communities.</p>	<p>2024</p>	
<p>Armed Forces</p> <p>Sport & Leisure have continued to provide Free Swimming to all Armed Forces personnel in receipt of a Defence Card and this is offered across all 6 swimming pools</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>Refugee Support</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

<p>Sport & Leisure have provided support through the provision of free memberships to those individuals and families who have become refugees in Caerphilly as a result of major issues in their home countries. There has been a steady take up of the offer and positive feedback from those families that have engaged in the scheme</p>		
<p>Gwent Drug & Alcohol Service (GDAS) In partnership with GDAS, the service has provided free supported access to those residents that are engaged in programme of self / supported help to utilise the benefits associated with engaging in active, healthy lifestyles</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	





CABINET - 15TH NOVEMBER 2023

**SUBJECT: RISCA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL AND LEISURE CENTRE
NEW ARTIFICIAL PITCH PROVISION**

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on the latest position in relation to Risca Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) and to seek Cabinet approval to proceed with a replacement 3G surface as a result of funding secured from Welsh Government to enhance the current provision.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In 2019, the Council adopted a Sport and Active Recreation Strategy for the period 2019-2029. The Vision for sport and active recreation is “to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often”.
- 2.2 The strategy references poor levels of health in certain areas of the county; reducing budgets; the large number of facilities across the County and the deteriorating quality of our older buildings as well as increasing population and consumer demand as some of the key challenges it is seeking to overcome.
- 2.3 The strategy also references the need to maximise the impact of all sport and recreation facilities. It acknowledges that 120 sports pitches, there are more artificial turf pitches than in any other area in Wales. Ten of these pitches are 3G football/rugby surfaces. A full sized floodlit 3G pitch can provide the same level of use as 5 grass pitches. The strategy acknowledges that 3G pitches are an important part of future outdoor pitch provision and that there is a case to be made for more strategically located 3G pitches to support grass-pitch provision, also taking account of the potential to maximise the beneficial use of school facilities.
- 2.4 Caerphilly Council has secured £1M from Welsh Government’s Community Focussed Schools capital grant for the installation of a 3G pitch on the existing Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) pitch at Risca Compenensive School and Leisure Centre. A further £1M grant allocation for a new 3G pitch at the site within the Shared Prosperity Fund has also been made available but it is proposed that this is used to maximise provision elsewhere in the county borough at a location yet to be confirmed.

- 2.5 The current Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) and supporting infrastructure (floodlighting, fencing, changing rooms) is coming to the end of its life and is not currently fit for purpose. The current pitch is used during the day by the Comprehensive School to support curriculum delivery, and at evenings and weekends by a range of community sports clubs.
- 2.6 The current users of the ATP include Risca Hockey Club and various local Rugby and Football clubs. The existing ATP surface is the preferred surface for Hockey for both training and competitive match formats. The recent and significant development of third generation artificial grass pitches (3Gs) are used primarily for Football and Rugby. Hockey training is permitted on 3G pitches, but is not the preferred surface.
- 2.7 There are two existing mini 3G pitches in use at Risca Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre which do support football and rugby usage but cannot facilitate full scale eleven or fifteen aside football and rugby matches.
- 2.8 In 2021 an investment of £390,000 funded replacement surfaces at Idris Davies School and Sue Noake Hockey Hub replacing the outdated ATP at Sue Noake. The project was implemented to promote and develop Hockey participation at a strategic location in the county borough. Financial support for the project was provided by Sport Wales collaboration funding; a mechanism which includes Hockey Wales, Welsh Rugby Union, and Welsh Football Trust.
- 2.9 With the investment in a high quality, dedicated surface at the central Hockey Hub at Sue Noake, the availability of the £1m Community Focused Schools capital grant at Risca provides the Local Authority with a unique opportunity to further the intent of its Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet approve:
- 1) The replacement of the existing Artificial Turf pitch at Risca Comprehensive School and leisure Centre with a new 3G surface.
 - 2) The use of the £1m Welsh Government Community Focused Schools Capital Grant to support the replacement 3G pitch at the preferred location.
 - 3) The use of the £1m SPF funding to support a further 3G pitch at a separate location across Caerphilly yet to be determined.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To advise Cabinet Members of the £1M grant funding secured from Welsh Government and to seek approval for progressing a new pitch replacement at Risca Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre.
- 4.2 To continue to deliver modern sporting facilities in accordance with the adopted Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019 -2029.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In 2019, the Council adopted a Sport and Active Recreation Strategy. The agreed Vision for sport and active recreation was “to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often”. The Strategy acknowledges poor levels of health in certain areas of the county as well as the reducing levels of budget. Aside from this, the Council operates a large number of facilities across the County and must also meet the costs associated with maintaining its ageing buildings.
- 5.2 The Council has a significant number of sports pitches and more artificial turf pitches than in any other area in Wales. Ten of these artificial pitches are 3G football/rugby surfaces. A full sized floodlit 3G pitch can provide the same level of use as 5 grass pitches. The strategy acknowledges that 3G pitches are an important part of future outdoor pitch provision and that there is a case to be made for more strategically located 3G pitches to support grass-pitch provision, also taking account of the potential to maximise the beneficial use of school facilities.
- 5.3 Officers from the Council’s Sport and Leisure Service and Education’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Team have been working collaboratively to secure funding to enhance the sporting facilities at Risca Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre to improve both curriculum delivery and community provision and to reduce the financial impact on the Council. Welsh Government have approved £1M grant funding to deliver a replacement pitch and refurbished changing rooms.
- 5.4 Community Focused Schools is a key Programme for Government 2021-2026 commitment, which will ‘invest in the learning environment of Community Focused Schools, co-locating key services, and securing stronger engagement with parents and carers outside traditional hours.’ Welsh Government require the funding to be spent by April 2024, although a variation in this is possible to April 2025.
- 5.5 The current ATP pitch is coming to the end of its life. The ATP surface is the preferred surface for hockey for both training and competitive match formats. The recent and significant development of third generation pitches (3Gs) are used primarily for Football and Rugby. Hockey training is permitted on 3G pitches, but is not the preferred surface.
- 5.6 In 2021 a combined investment of £390,000 funded a 3G replacement surface at Idris Davies School and the Sue Noake Hockey Hub which replaced the outdated ATP with a fit for purpose Hockey surface. The project was implemented to promote and develop Hockey participation at a strategic, central location in the county borough. Financial support for the project was provided by Sport Wales collaboration funding; a mechanism which includes Hockey Wales, Welsh Rugby Union, and Welsh Football Trust. The county borough now has a dedicated professional standard Hockey Hub to support Hockey infrastructure across Caerphilly as a whole as well as the aspirations of the clubs
- 5.7 There are currently 60 sessions available to book on the Risca ATP Monday – Friday for community use between 16:00pm - 22:00pm. The current pitch bookings confirm there are only 25 sessions (41.7%) booked with 35 sessions (58.3%) still available for hire and are not in use. Of the current bookings, 13 bookings are for Football, 6 for Rugby and 6 for Hockey.
- 5.8 There are currently 36 sessions available to book on the ATP on weekends, Saturday and Sunday’s, between 09:00am - 18:00pm. Of the current bookings, only Hockey use the pitch on some weekends for matches: 4 sessions are booked for Hockey matches

on a Saturday and Sunday, 10:00am – 12:00 noon or 14:00pm -16:00pm. In summary, 11.1% are booked with 88.9% of the sessions still available for hire and are not currently used. Football and Rugby do not currently use the ATP at weekends as the surface is not suitable for competitive fixtures.

5.9 The current registered membership numbers for the 3 user groups of Hockey, Football and Rugby across the county borough are as follows:

Sport	Clubs	Teams	Adult members	Mini & Junior members	TOTAL
Hockey	2	6	62	79	141
Rugby	26	156	1123	2452	3575
Football	43		1733	3256	4989

The current registered membership numbers for the 3 user groups of Hockey, Football and Rugby in the locality are as follows:

Sport	Clubs	Number of clubs	Total Members
Hockey	Risca Hockey Club	1	101
Rugby	Abercarn RFC Cross Keys RFC Newbridge RFC Risca RFC Chargers - Female Hub	5	834
Football	Argoed Reform Club Risca Town Coed Duon Women FC Risca United FC Trinant AFC Newbridge Town AFC Fields Park Athletic FC Crumlin FC Pentwynmawr Athletic AFC Abercarn United FC Wattsville FC Treowen Stars AFC	12	1512

- **Hockey** figures are from Hockey Wales, the sport's governing body and are registered players as of 15th September 2023.

- **Rugby** figures are from the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU), the sport's governing body, and were registered players as of the 31st of August 2023.
 - **Football** figures are from the Football Association Trust (FAW), the sport's governing body, and are registered players as of 15th September 2023.
- 5.10 As can be seen from the above the current ATP is significantly underused. Replacing the existing surface with a new ATP surface would perpetuate that underuse. It is possible to replace the current ATP with a like for like ATP and construct a new 3G pitch on one of the school grass pitches. This option would require an estimated £900,000 additional funding, on top of the current £1M grant that has been secured. There is a further £1M allocation for a new 3G pitch within the Shared Prosperity Fund, but this would not be available to maximise provision elsewhere in the county borough if it were used to fund this option.
- 5.11 Replacing the current Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) with a 3G pitch would maximise the usage of the facility and go towards addressing some of the unmet demand that exists. As stated above, 3G is not the preferred surface for hockey and Risca Hockey Club can be offered the opportunity to transfer their bookings to Sue Noake Hockey Hub which is able to accommodate the current hockey bookings at Risca.
- 5.12 There are also two existing mini 3G pitches in use at Risca Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre which do support football and rugby usage but cannot facilitate full scale eleven or fifteen aside football and rugby matches.
- 5.13 The current users of the ATP at Risca Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre have been invited to provide their views on whether to renew the existing ATP with a new ATP or a new 3G surface and the responses received are included at Appendix 1. In summary, the headteacher at the school and the football club responses support the 3G proposal, with Risca Hockey club, opposing the 3G proposal.

Conclusion

- 5.14 The existing ATP surface is underused and replacement of it with a 3G pitch would maximise the use of the facility for the greatest number of users. To replace the existing surface with a new ATP would likely result in a relatively low level of usage as at present and detailed above.
- 5.15 Cabinet are asked to consider the proposal to proceed with replacement of the existing ATP surface with a 3G pitch. Subject to approval, officers will progress a procurement process to meet the Welsh Government funding timeframes of project completion by 31st March 2024. Officers will support Risca Hockey Club in transitioning to the Hockey Hub at Sue Noake Leisure Centre

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and positive impacts are identified as a result of the proposed upgraded facilities. There is a potential for a negative impact resulting from the additional travel distance to Sue Noake Hockey

Hub. However, this will only impact on travel where this results in longer travel times to alternative facilities depending on point of origin.

Link to IIA

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The authority has secured £1M Welsh Government grant funding to deliver a replacement pitch and refurbished changing rooms at Risca Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre at time of application with no additional cost to the authority. Welsh Government require the funding to be spent by April 2024.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this project and report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly. Cllr Shane Williams was consulted on this report in his capacity as Vice Chair of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee and responded as follows:

This hockey facility is vital for all those who play and seek to play hockey in this part of the borough. The fact that there are over 60 children that participate, along with successful senior teams, demonstrate the continued growth and success of the sport. The suggestion that these young children should now travel miles to Ystrad Mynach to try and continue their sport beggars belief.

By concentrating only on rugby and football in Risca, this will inevitably mean that many of these children, and seniors alike, will now be denied the chance to play hockey. And for those that can travel, there is no guarantee of suitable availability at Sue Noake given its current usage.

As this is a thriving and growing club, its benefit particularly on women and girls playing sport is immeasurable. The planned removal of the hockey pitch at Risca will at a stroke, further undermine our best efforts to get more women and girls playing sport.

Sport Caerphilly's stated aim is to get, and I quote:

"more women, more active, more often. By doing so, it will increase confidence to allow them to be the best version of themselves physically, mentally and socially while allowing physical activity to be the 'norm' in everyday life".

Taking away this hockey provision, will do exactly the opposite of what we have pledged to do, and it will have a lasting negative impact on many women and girls particularly.

It seems the decision, despite this 'consultation', has already been made. But even so, for the reasons I have given above, I oppose this report and the planned removal of this hockey facility from Risca.

- 10.2 The current users of the ATP at Risca Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre have been invited to provide their views on whether to renew the existing ATP with a new ATP or a new 3G surface and the responses received are included at Appendix 1 and summarised in 5.13. above.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government)
School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

Author: Jared Lougher, Sport and Leisure Development Manager

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces
Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Nigel George, Risca East and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways
Councillor Philippa Leonard, Risca East and Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection
Councillor Arianna Leonard, Risca East
Councillor Bob Owen, Risca West
Councillor Ceri Wright, Risca West
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services
Sue Richards, Head of Transformation
Andrea West, Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property Services
Jeff Reynolds, Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning

Background Papers: None

Appendix 1: Responses from user groups.

Appendix 1

The below information was shared with the current ATP user groups of Risca Community comprehensive school and Leisure centre as part of the engagement process.

RE: Risca Leisure Centre – Facility Development Options

For the past few months, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Sport & Leisure Services have been undertaking exploratory works to establish the options available to replace the current Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) that is reaching an end-of-life position and as such not being fit for purpose and not providing the level of experience that our customers expect.

Following these exploratory works, we are now able to present to current users a proposal for your consideration and input.

PROPOSAL: The replacement of the existing Artificial Turf pitch at Risca Community Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre with a new dual use 3G surface.

ATP – Is a second-generation sand based short pile surface used primarily for training purposes and competitive Hockey. Not suitable for competitive Rugby and Football fixtures

3G – Is a third-generation synthetic surface that replicates grass surfaces and is used for both training and competitive fixtures for Rugby and Football. Not suitable for competitive Hockey

To inform the decision-making process and ensure the most appropriate development and outcomes for Risca Community Comprehensive School and the users of Risca Leisure Centre, Sport & Leisure welcome your observations and views and request that these are provided in writing to leisure@caerphilly.gov.uk by Wednesday 25th October 23.

User Group Observation and comments

Following the user group engagement process above, we received observations from three community Clubs, AFC Pontymister Seniors, Risca Hockey Club and AFC Pontymister Youth as well as Risca Comprehensive and community school Headteachers comments.

AFC Pontymister

To whom it may concern,

We at AFC Pontymister are very much in favour of a new 3G pitch at Risca Leisure Centre for the follow reasons.

As a football club, the surface is much more conducive for both training and playing on as the roll and bounce of the ball is more akin to playing on grass pitches.

The hard surface of an ATP is very unforgiving, and users can and often do get injuries should they fall on the surface or even from the sheer impact on the bodies joints from running on it.

Both Rugby and Football are way more popular in the area and a 3G surface will be of great benefit to these 2 sports.

A 3G pitch will have a greater financial benefit to the borough as clubs will be queuing up to use it on weekends to play competitive fixtures on. Should the facility be constructed to the FAW's criteria for tier 3 clubs, then the facility will be able to host 'big' games and attract large crowds.

Clubs frequently have games postponed due to bad weather however, having access to a 3G pitch will be of benefit to football clubs such as ours.

The area and indeed the school deserves a new 3G pitch as seeing other schools get new pitches, we feel that Risca has been left behind.

With the greatest respect to those that play the game, we believe that hockey is a minority sport. We realise that those who play the game are passionate about the game and want to play in their hometown however, with a new hockey pitch being constructed at Bassaleg school, they won't have to travel far to play their sport.

As a club who have trained at RLC for decades, firstly on the 'red gravel' surface and now on the ATP it would be great to have a facility which is tailored to our sport.

There is far more demand for 3G pitches throughout the area than there is for an ATP.

Whilst some of our reasons may appear to be a little selfish, we believe we speak on behalf of all those Football and Rugby clubs out there. Furthermore, none of the reasons given in the letter are intended to be discriminatory in any way or a slight on those who are in favour of an ATP.

We hope that the above reasons are self-explanatory however, should you require anymore detail, please feel free to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Chairman/Secretary
AFC Pontymister

Risca Hockey Club

I am writing to you to express our concerns, observations and points to consider regarding your proposal to transform the current ATP pitch at Risca Leisure into a 3G pitch.

Whereas we appreciate the need to replace the current ATP due to the age and state of the pitch, we are strongly against the replacement of the ATP pitch with a 3G pitch because, as stated in your proposal, hockey is not a sport that can be played on a 3G pitch.

Please consider the following reasons against the current proposal to replace the ATP with a 3G at Risca Leisure Centre:

Risca Hockey Club is home to a large number of senior female players that form 3 teams in the South Wales Women's Hockey League that has been a successful club for 30+ years - one in Division 2, one in Division 5 and a Development Team that caters for those members who are developing their hockey skills, returning to hockey, coming up from our Junior Section as a stepping stone or have never played hockey before. These three women's teams highlight the fact that the club support promoting women in sport and are vital for creating provision for women to access competitive sport in the local community.

Our Junior Club is thriving with members on our books ranging from age 6 to age 13 that train every Wednesday and play most weekends at Tournaments and Hockey Festivals. These children live in the local area to Risca and the club provides high quality training from our resident Junior Coach, a social opportunity to mix with children from local schools in the area and a chance to play competitive hockey with children from other clubs.

Our 5 year plan set back in 2021 at our AGM was to expand our club and create a men's team at Risca. We are currently increasing our uptake of boys within our Junior Section to nurture and create a growing interest from young males in order to grow our club to provide sport for both male and female members.

Another point to consider, is that Risca Hockey Club is an advocate for creating a safe, approachable and inclusive space for all members regardless of age, race, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic minority or culture in the local community. 11% of our club identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, a community that need a space to be able to feel safe, included and welcomed in a social setting.

By proposing to update the ATP to a 3G pitch, not only are you limiting the usage of the pitch to Rugby and Football only, you are totally removing the opportunity for hockey players local to Risca to play hockey on a pitch that is one of only playable league-fit pitches in the area within a certain proximity to Risca. This would have a detrimental effect on our members should we have to consider playing elsewhere, not only for the geographical location close to Risca itself but for members that would have to travel further to play. For example, some members live in Newport City Centre and to continue playing for Risca Hockey Club, should we take the advice to move up to Sue Noakes Leisure Centre to train, that is approximately a 16 miles journey taking around 36 minutes without any traffic implications. This is quite a large difference to a 5.9 mile journey taking around 19 minutes. Risca Leisure Centre is a central meeting point for a lot of our members.

Next, we have the argument of appealing to a wider selection of sports. A 3G pitch is very limiting to the amount of sport that can be played on the grounds. Whilst we understand the need to enhance the facility, we worry that this will have an adverse effect on not just the Hockey community but other sports too, for example, wheelchair sports. Wheelchair sports are vital to be available to access for inclusivity and accessibility. 3G pitches can't

accommodate for wheelchair users as the chairs damage the ground. An ATP can accommodate wheelchairs and a variety of wheelchair sports with no damage due to the type of surface.

Already, there have been a number of ATP pitches across England and Wales that have been turned into 3G pitches without considering the wider impact of other sports aside from Football and Rugby. Talking from a hockey perspective, many teams in Wales have had a similar problem where proposals have been granted to upgrade ATPs to 3Gs without considering the national problem that this will inevitably create where there becomes a very limited access to ATPs across England and Wales.

Another question to consider is where would the children at Risca Comprehensive play and learn how to play hockey? A varied selection of sports need to be available to play on appropriate ground to be able to teach sports alligning with the National Curriculum for Wales. Hockey is an integral part of the variety of sports learned during P.E lessons. How will the children learn how to play?

Unfortunately, Risca Leisure Centre, if this proposal was to be passed and approved, would play a part in creating a very limited opportunity for a sport like hockey to thrive and will join other leisure centres in the local area and across the nation in completely eliminating a sport.

I hope that before taking a vital decision in upgrading the pitch to a 3G forcing the club to train and play elsewhere away from their home ground, you will consider our observations, points and wishes as valued customers for a large number of years. This pitch is important to us and has provided a haven to a huge amount of members over the years to be able to play sport, socialise and have fun.

In conclusion, we are asking you to reconsider and provide an alternative option for all 3 sports (hockey, football and rugby) to be included at Risca Leisure Centre. There should be provision at a large, local leisure centre for all three popular sports to be played.

Thank you for your consideration and an opportunity to put an argument forward to overturn this decision, we hope that you find this helpful, informative and that we have outlined our passion for our sport, drive to keep our home turf and the importance of appealing to the wider community.

Kind regards,

(Chairperson and Secretary of Risca Hockey Club)

AFC Pontymister youth

We at AFC Pontymister youth are very much in favour of a new 3G pitch at Risca Leisure Centre for the follow reasons.

As a football club, the surface is much more conducive for both training and playing on as the roll and bounce of the ball is more akin to playing on grass pitches.

The hard surface of an ATP is very unforgiving, and users can and often do get injuries should they fall on the surface or even from the sheer impact on the bodies joints from running on it.

Both Rugby and Football are way more popular in the area and a 3G surface will be of great benefit to these 2 sports.

Clubs frequently have games postponed due to bad weather however, having access to a 3G pitch will be of benefit to football clubs such as ours.

The area and indeed the school deserves a new 3G pitch as seeing other schools get new pitches, we feel that Risca has been left behind. As we have no access to quality winter training anywhere down our end of the valley

With the greatest respect to those that play the game, we believe that hockey is a minority sport. We realise that those who play the game are passionate about the game and want to play in their hometown however, with a new hockey pitch being constructed at Bassaleg school, they won't have to travel far to play their sport.

As a club who have trained at RLC for decades, firstly on the 'red gravel' surface and now on the ATP it would be great to have a facility which is tailored to our sport.

There is far more demand for 3G pitches throughout the area than there is for an ATP.

The new pitch would be a missive boost to the local area for football rugby and the school.

We hope that the above reasons are self-explanatory however, should you require anymore detail, please feel free to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Chairman
AFC Pontymister youth

A response was also received from Risca Comprehensive and Community School:



Martin Hulland
Head Teacher
Prifathro

**OUR COMMUNITY,
OUR SCHOOL**
...making the difference

**EIN CYMUNED,
EIN HYSGOL**
...yn gwneud
gwahaniaeth

**Risca Community Comprehensive
School,**
Risca Community Campus,
Pontymason Lane,
RISCA,
South Wales NP11 6YY
Tel: 01633 612425
riscacomprehensive @sch.caerphilly.gov.uk

**Ysgol Gyfun Gymunedol
Rhisga,**
Campws Cymunedol Rhisga,
Lôn Pontymason,
RHISGA,
De Cymru NP11 6YY
Ffôn: 01633 612425

26th October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am delighted to be able to support the proposal from Caerphilly County Borough Council to replace the outdated ATP at Risca Community Comprehensive School with a new dual use 4G surface at the school. This is an exciting opportunity to transform sport in the local area and promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and social cohesion. The school is proud to be a "Community School" serving the local community with passion and professionalism over many years. Sport has a high profile at the school and this new facility will benefit our current students and the wider community. We are proud to support our local sporting clubs and this facility will extend partnerships and promote higher levels of engagement. The school has a highly effective and committed WRU "Hub Officer" who links up with other schools and clubs to promote high levels of activity. A new 4G will make a huge difference to participation rates and develop Rugby skills further. In addition, it will allow us to play football and rugby on days when the current grass pitches are unplayable or there is insufficient natural light. Further, a new 4G pitch will raise the profile of the school further and cement its place at the heart of the community. It further enhances the natural link between sport, education and the community.

From a curriculum perspective, the new 4G pitch will align with the 4 purposes of the New Curriculum, most notably the aim for "healthy, confident" pupils. The PE and PSE curriculum will be enhanced greatly and we can host far more competitive fixtures with this excellent facility. The new pitch should foster a lifelong love of sport and promote the twin values of healthy living and playing by the rules. This will, of course, have wider community benefits and positively influence future generations. Ultimately, this is part of a wider strategy across a forward-thinking local authority committed to sport and active recreation. I am totally committed to the value and importance of sport and know it has the power to transform lives and build bridges in an increasingly complex world.

Your Sincerely,

Mr M. Hulland
Headteacher/Prifathro

Risca Ward Members were also informed of the engagement process and the following response was received from Cllr Arianna Leonard:

I am writing to give my opinion, as requested, on the proposed change to a 3G pitch at Risca Leisure Centre, instead of the existing ATP pitch that is currently in existence. I am very much against the move.

You will be already aware that this change would mean that Hockey will be a sport that cannot be played on the pitch.

Hockey in Caerphilly, and in many areas is predominantly played by women. This move will disproportionately impact female sport in the borough, an area in which we should be trying to actively encourage women to be getting involved with not taking away options. Team sports are already dominated by men, in Caerphilly & across the country and this will move us backward & not forward, especially when it is being replaced with a 3G pitch which favours Football & Rugby (mostly male sports).

Risca Leisure Centre has a critical placement for women in Newport & Caerphilly in relation to Risca Womens Hockey Club, as it is accessible to many people. The only comparable pitch is at Sue Noakes over 12 miles away from their current home at Risca and would mean there would be no Hockey facilities at all in the Eastern part of the borough. As many of the club members already come from a large geographical area, this move further afield will mean many of the individuals who attend will no longer be able to.

As well as Risca Hockey Club it actively used by Gwent Hockey Club, Sue Noakes Hockey Club and is regularly used for Welsh Master games. Risca Comprehensive School also uses the Hockey Pitch, taking it away will mean Hockey cannot be taught effectively as part of the curriculum in the future.

We must think about how this will be affecting local women & young girls in the area. It will have an immediate negative impact on many young girls, affecting their wellbeing, fitness levels, comradeship, inclusion & potentially sporting careers.

Risca Women's Hockey Club alone, has 3 ladies teams & a growing squad of 65 juniors, it has been running for over 40 years and keeps growing.

They have said 'It is a club where many young girls start playing hockey and stay here throughout their life due to the invaluable community built, as well as the lack of any other sporting opportunity for girls in the area.'

As members of these teams already travel to get to Risca, there will be many individuals who will be unable to remain at their clubs if they have to travel 12 miles further afield to each session, especially young women who rely on parents or public transport to get them to training. This would be a terrible shame for a thriving sport, but also a terrible shame for many young women & their wellbeing in Caerphilly. This is why I cannot agree with the change from a ATP pitch to a 3G pitch.

Thanks,
Cllr Arianna Leonard.



CABINET – 15TH NOVEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT ON THE CORPORATE COMPLAINTS RECEIVED FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2022 TO 31ST MARCH 2023

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an overview of the complaints dealt with under the Corporate Complaints policy for the annual period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 together with the outcomes and lessons learned. This report will also be presented to a meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides a summary of the complaints dealt with under the Corporate Complaints Policy during the annual period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, the outcomes and lessons learned.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to note the complaints data contained in this report and to review and assess the effectiveness of complaints handling for the annual period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021 sets out provisions for the Governance and Audit Committee to "review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively and to make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively".
- 4.2 The guidance from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales requires the data to be reviewed by Cabinet.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 By way of background, Cabinet at its meeting on 24th March 2021 adopted a new Corporate Complaints Policy (the Policy) along with an updated policy dealing with unacceptable and unreasonable actions by complainants under the complaints policy. The Policy became effective on 1st April 2021 and a copy is included at Appendix 1 of this report for members information. The report considered by Cabinet is also included as a background paper.
- 5.2 Cabinet received the first Annual Report on the complaints dealt with under the new Policy for the period April 2021/2022 at its meeting in October last year. This report sets out details of the complaints dealt with for the annual period from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 and will also be considered by a forthcoming meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee.
- 5.3 The Policy deals with corporate complaints only. There are separate complaints processes for dealing with social services complaints and school-based complaints. The Social Services Complaints Procedure Wales Regulations 2014 outlines the procedure for handling complaints from persons receiving a service from social services and school-based complaints are dealt with by the School and Governing Body. For completeness the report to the relevant scrutiny committee outlining the complaints dealt with under the Social Services complaints process for the same annual period is attached at Appendix 7 to this report. In addition, Freedom of Information complaints and complaints about Data Protection matters are within the remit of the Information Commissioner.
- 5.4 The Policy consists of an internal two stage process with the right for a complainant to refer their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales should they be dissatisfied with the response.
- 5.5 As part of the implementation of the Policy, complaints officers across the various directorates continue to raise awareness amongst their respective staff of the importance of recognising complaints and dealing with them in accordance with the Policy. One of the benefits of recording complaints more effectively is that we can recognise trends more readily and take steps to put things right and learn from any issues identified within the relevant directorate and beyond where appropriate.
- 5.6 In addition a cross section of officers from various departments have taken up the training offered by the Ombudsman. In 2021 the Ombudsman providing training to over 80 staff and further training was rolled out across the Directorates in February, April and May this year on complaint investigation skills and managing difficult behaviours and expectations. This training is further supported by the Complaints Officers within each Directorate who provide advice, guidance and support to their respective service areas on how to deal with complaints efficiently and effectively and are supported by the Corporate Complaints Officer based within Legal Services who maintains the overall database. The Corporate Complaints Officer is also the contact officer for the Ombudsman's office.
- 5.7 As part of the ongoing improvements to the way in which we hold and analyse complaints data, the testing of a new digital complaints system is ongoing with assistance from colleagues in Digital and Customer Services. The aim of the system is to streamline controls and improve data records within the complaints process. Adjustments are being made to the system as a result of the ongoing feedback with a view to launching the system when all checks have been completed. Until that time officers are continuing to utilise existing data systems which still require much

administration and manual interrogation in order to produce meaningful intelligence and learning.

5.8 To support the work of complaints officers and each directorate, officers have a long established Learning from Complaints Group (“the Group”) comprising Complaints Officers from each directorate, the Corporate Complaints Officer, the Council’s Senior Policy Officer (Equalities Welsh Language and Consultation), representatives from the Council’s Corporate Policy Unit and a representative from the Council’s Internal Audit Section. The meetings are chaired by the deputy Monitoring Officer and meet at least quarterly to discuss the complaints data and reporting procedures.

5.9 These meetings have resulted in the establishment of the formal template included at Appendices 2 to 6 which provides a more in depth information and analysis on all aspects of the complaints data and its relevancy to the service areas within the directorates.

5.10 General Overview

The total number of complaints dealt with during the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 under the Corporate Complaints policy is 456 and is broken down as follows:-

Directorate	Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated	Total
Social Services	59	0	7	66
Education	5	2	1	8
Economy & Environment	157	17	28	202
Housing	132	3	25	160
Corporate	13	5	2	20
TOTAL	366	27	63	456

The Outcomes are as follows.

Directorate	Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn	Ongoing	Total
Social Services	5	61			66
Education		8			8
Economy & Environment	127	73	2		202
Housing	52	93	15		160
Corporate	9	11			20
TOTAL	193	246	17		456

Ombudsman Referrals

Directorate	Number	Outcome
Social Services	1	Not Investigating
Education	3	Not Investigating
Economy & Environment	13	Not Investigating
Housing	12	Not Investigating
Corporate	5	3 Early Resolutions 2 Not Investigating
Unknown	4	Not Investigating

TOTAL	38	
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5.11 Detailed Data broken down by Directorate.

The data is broken down in more detail per Directorate in the following Appendices which are attached to this report.

Economy and Environment	Appendix 2
Housing	Appendix 3
Education and Libraries	Appendix 4
Corporate Services	Appendix 5
Social Services (Corporate only)	Appendix 6

5.12 Members will note that the data produced at Appendices 1-5 of this report outlines in particular the upheld complaints for each directorate. Whilst it is difficult to compare the types of complaints upheld between directorates, the Learning from Complaints Group were tasked with analysing their own data on upheld complaints to ascertain common themes which have arisen over and above the core categories identified within the Appendices.

5.13 With Education the issue was less clear as the service area had a small number of complaints which in the main related to the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion service. These complaints centred on the implementation of the new curriculum for Wales which had led to confusion and frustration of some of our stakeholders, especially parents. In this respect the Council will continue to listen and adapt its processes in line with feedback.

5.14 However in terms of the Economy and Environment Directorate, the Housing Directorate, Social Services a key finding identified from this task was the issue of communication. This is also reflected albeit to a lesser extent in the complaint outcomes for the Corporate Services Directorate.

5.15 Communication itself is not framed or recorded as a complaint category as this issue often forms part of the main complaint for example a dissatisfaction with a decision which has been made. As such the communication issues are not fully reported within the data.

5.16 Further discussions within the Learning from Complaints Group identified the following communication issues which were running through many of the complaints which were upheld.

- Making contact with customers
- Not keeping customers informed or updated
- Lack of ownership or responsibility for communication and managing expectations
- Impression that the council is dismissive and doesn't care so there is no point
- Organisational or system issues
- Internal communication

5.17 It is recognised that we must act on this knowledge and use it as a positive opportunity to learn from experiences to drive continual organisational improvement. We strive to provide a fully rounded journey for every customer whether it be via the telephone, in writing or via electronic means. To this end,

complaints officers have assisted with the staff training for the complaints handlers within their respective service areas which it is anticipated will have a positive impact on the customer journey when interacting with the council and thereby aiding complaint handling. Staff across directorates have also attended the training sessions provided by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

5.18 Directors have also held Staff Engagement Sessions which also included training exercises and discussions around the customer journey and communication.

5.19 In addition, the digital software complaints database which is to be rolled out shortly will streamline our lines of communication and provide prompts where timeframes for responding need to be met or extended where further investigation is required.

5.20 In terms of Housing, the service are looking to make the webpages for Caerphilly Homes more user friendly for contract holders.

5.21 **Conclusion**

Members are asked to consider and note the information contained in this report and Appendices.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions are necessary as the content of the report is based on data collected and analysed.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 As the report is for information only an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The report has been circulated to the consultees listed below and any comments have been incorporated into this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019

Author: Lisa Lane Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Consultees: Corporate Management Team
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring officer
Gemma Hoare, Senior Housing Officer (Customer Services)
Gareth Jones Housing Officer (Customer Services)
Karen Williams, Customer Services Digital Hub Manager
Liam Miles, Customer Services/Complaints Officer
Nicola Broom, Complaints and Information Manager Social Services
Michelle Moore, Social Services Complaints and Information Officer
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager
Andrea Jones, Corporate Complaints Officer
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation)
Deborah Gronow, Audit Group Manager
Karen L Williams, PA to Chief Executive
Leigh Brook, PA to the Director of Social Services and Housing
Lianne Fry, PA to Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services
Sian Wilkes, PA to the Interim Corporate Director of Communities
James Penfold, Transformation Manager
Ian Raymond, Business Improvement Officer

Appendices

Appendix 1 [Link to - **Corporate Complaints Policy**](#)

Appendix 2 Economy and Environment

Appendix 3 Housing

Appendix 4 Education and Libraries

Appendix 5 Corporate Services

Appendix 6 Social Services (Corporate complaints only)

Appendix 7 Report to Scrutiny Committee re annual complaints dealt with under the separate Social Services complaints procedure

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Link to Report to Cabinet 24th March 2021](#)

Number of complaints by Stage Type, Service, and Targets Met

Table showing summary of complaints by stage type reference.

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	157	142	90.45
Stage 2	17	16	94.12
Escalated Stage 1 to 2	28	26	92.86
Totals	202	184	91.09

Table showing how the complaints were received.

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Contact Centre	5	0	0
Email	104	14	25
Letter	3	0	3
On-line	39	1	0
Other	0	0	0
Telephone	6	2	0
Totals	157	17	28

Tables showing summary of complaints by service, for each stage type

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Community & Leisure	97	90	92.78
Infrastructure	43	36	83.72
Property	0	0	0
Public Protection	10	10	100
Regeneration & Planning	4	3	75
Other - Combined	3	3	100
Totals	157	142	90.45

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Community & Leisure	2	1	50
Infrastructure	6	6	100
Property	0	0	0
Public Protection	3	3	100
Regeneration & Planning	6	6	100
Other - Combined	0	0	0
Totals	17	16	94.12

Service	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Community & Leisure	14	14	100
Infrastructure	9	8	88.89
Property	0	0	0
Public Protection	2	1	50
Regeneration & Planning	2	2	100
Other - Combined	1	1	100
Totals	28	26	92.86

More detailed information on the above corporate complaints data, is currently maintained, by the Directors PA on a dedicated database.

There were various reasons identified with regards to response times not being met. Some examples are listed below:

- Insufficient staff to undertake necessary inspections.
- Health and Safety issues taking precedence which were beyond the staffs' control.

The Director's PA continues to provide training to all staff where required, which covers a wide range of topics, focusing particularly on compliance procedures and ways to avoid missing the deadline dates. For example, staff are advised that an extension of time letter can be sent to the complainant advising them that more time is required to deal with the matter in question. This keeps the complainant informed of any progress made and an update on any amended deadlines which then avoids missing the compliance date. This training has been very successful as we are managing to sustain reasonable response times.

1. Key complaints - identified by type or theme

List of key specific types, or themes, of repetitive, or pertinent complaints received during this reporting period.

Complaint Themes	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Grand Total
CA Sites	7	1	1	3	12
Delays in responses	2		4		6
Illicit Tipping	2				2
Refuse-Recycling-Green Waste-Missed Collections	8	11	9	14	42
Refuse-Recycling-Green Waste-Other	5	7	6	6	24
Planning-General	3		4	1	8
Parking	2	3	1	3	9
Other matters	9	12	14	18	53
General Weed Control-Grounds Maintenance		3			3
Poor communications	1	4		2	7
Drains-Flooding	1		1		2
Grass Cutting	1	1			2
Trees	2	1	4		7
Highway maintenance works	1	1	5	2	9
Cleansing	1			2	3
Delays in service delivery		3	2	2	7
Footpath Quality		1			1
Park maintenance-cleanliness			1	1	2

Bulky Waste			1		1
Street Lighting				2	2
Grand Total	45	48	53	56	202

Identification of Trends – Particular to services

Trends
During this period the complaints received seem to be quite varied. A number of complaints were received regarding missed collections but given the fact that we undertake circa 9.75 million collection per annum, the amount received didn't cause any major issues. It is also worth noting that a percentage of recycling wasn't collected due to the fact that the contents of the bin were contaminated and relevant advice would have been provided before the next collection took place.
Examples
Non collection of contaminated recycling, questioning processes.
Food waste missed on a regular basis, 4 times since January. After complaining in the past the crew leave food bin on the road rather than outside door. A food bag from another caddie has been left in the middle of the road.
Continuous missed waste collections including hygiene waste collections - reported on numerous occasions (CRM).

To ensure continuity in collection services the supervisors investigate each complaint to establish why there are recurring instances with regards to missed collections. The teams are addressed and reminded of expectations going forward. Training will be provided if this is identified.

2. Number of complaints by Category

Table showing complaints by category.

	Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1	Collaborative Working	1
2	Decision Making	12
3	Delay in Service Provision	85
4	Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	5
5a	Following Council Policies	45
5b	Following relevant Legislation	-
6	Accessibility of Services	2
7	Clarity/Accuracy/Timelines of information	7
8	Quality of Work	42
9	Openness/Fairness and Honest	2
10	Compliance with Complaints Procedure	0
11.	Combination of Categories (non-specific)	1
	Totals	202

3. Number of complaints by outcome and lessons learned

Table showing complaints by outcome.

Outcome Data	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Upheld	127
Not upheld	73
Totals	200

*Two complaints were withdrawn

The following tables shows more information regarding the complaints counts above, that were, Upheld, Not Upheld, by Service Area.

Services – Stage 1	Upheld	Not Upheld
Community & Leisure	57	39
Infrastructure	8	35
Property	0	0
Public Protection	2	8
Regeneration & Planning	0	4
Other - Combined	0	3
Totals	67	89

Services – Stage 2	Upheld	Not Upheld
Community & Leisure	0	2
Infrastructure	0	6
Property	0	0
Public Protection	0	2
Regeneration & Planning	0	6
Other - Combined	0	0
Totals	0	16

Services – Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	Upheld	Not Upheld
Community & Leisure	5	9
Infrastructure	1	8
Property	0	0
Public Protection	0	2
Regeneration & Planning	0	2
Other - Combined	0	1
Totals	6	22

List of lessons learned. The table below comments on key findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that may help curtail, prevent, or impede future repeats.

Nature of complaint	Lessons learned	Category
Non collection of contaminated recycling, questioning processes	From the initial complaint the recycling bin had now been cleared of contamination to a level that allowed waste to be removed.	5 Following Council Policies/relevant Legislation
Food waste missed on a regular basis, 4 times since January.	Supervisor has reprimanded the team for the failings identified and reminded them of the importance of maintaining	8 Quality of Work

	collections and presenting replacement in an acceptable fashion. Situation to be monitored.	
Continuous missed waste collections including hygiene waste collections - reported on numerous occasions	Incorrect information provided on council website. Resident updated on correct collection days and technical support advised to change on website.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Customer is requesting sandbags urgently due to ongoing flooding issue; Water is running off road and into property. Constantly chasing Highways Customer Service. Never get hold of anyone. Initial complaint never acknowledged or responded too.	Staff should be aware that high priority items should be passed to others to respond when they are not available. This issue is to be highlighted in the next Team meeting.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Green Waste sacks not returned - objecting to paying for new sacks	Whilst we cannot determine the exact reasoning for the loss of the original provision it can only be assumed that the sacks had blown away or been taken. It is recognised that there is a potential that the original provision was not secured in a fashion that would have prevented this scenario from occurring. The supervisor has advised the team to take every care in securing the provision as best as is practicable going forward.	5 Following Council Policies/relevant Legislation
Inconsistent food collections	Operative addressed and additional control measures put in place to ensure no further failing of this collection. For example crews are required to be more vigilant and take time while providing the service.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Roadworks at Birchgrove, Risca	Highway Engineer to check TM prior to work being carried out to ensure every TM measure in place prior to commencement of any roadworks being scheduled.	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information

Some of the key learnings identified include

- Continuity of service needed, to reduce and prevent reoccurrence's (system failures)
- Need to ensure accuracy of data pre and post communications
- Cross service communications and prioritisation needs enhancing - complaint responses
- Improve citizen engagement and listening fist-time
- Staff changes and turnover, could improve with better induction and suitable plant and equipment

4. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Table showing a count and list of findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that specifically relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics.

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Age	1
Disability	8
Gender Reassignment	-
Marriage and Civil Partnership	-
Pregnancy and Maternity	-
Race	-
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	-
Sex	-
Sexual Orientation	-
Welsh Language	-
Totals	9

Examples of Age and Disability Complaints are

Details of Complaint	Service Area	Lessons Learned	Does the Complaint relate to Equalities or the Welsh Language?
Complaining on behalf of her parents regarding non collection of assisted waste	Waste Strategy & Operations	Failing from team addressed by supervisor. Crew reminded to ensure assisted collections are undertaken.	Age
Bins not emptied again, regular occurrence. Registered for Assisted Waste Collection	Waste Strategy & Operations	Lesson learned is to make every effort to progress the requirement of collection as soon as notified of the difficulty/failed collection to close the loop. Unfortunately, it seems that this particular location, is subject to indiscriminate parking on a regular basis which has exacerbated the situation.	Disability
Non collection of assisted waste	Waste Strategy & Operations	Lesson learned is to ensure continuity in collection service and	Disability

		supervisor to investigate why recurring instances have happened and eliminate. For example, if alternative crews are provided relevant paperwork is required to alert them of residents receiving this service.	
Roadworks at Birchgrove, Risca	Highways Operations Group	Highway Engineer to check TM prior to work being carried out to ensure every TM measure in place prior to commencement of work	Disability
Problems with non-collection of assisted collection	Waste Strategy & Operations	Improvement with communications at this most challenging of times for the Authority when new collection staff have been deployed to unfamiliar rounds.	Disability

5. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period

Service Area	Date received	Decision
Planning	19 th May 2022	Not Investigating
Planning	21 st June 2022	Not Investigating
Planning	11 th November 2022	Not Investigating
Planning	5 th January 2022	Not Investigating
Planning	18 th January 2023	Not Investigating
Planning	2 nd March 2023	Not Investigating
Environmental Health	28 th April 2022	Not Investigating
Environmental Health	13 th September 2022	Not Investigating
Environmental Health	16 th September 2022	Not Investigating
Traffic Management	22 nd August 2022	Not Investigating
Waste	5 th September 2022	Not Investigating
Rights of Way	7 th September 2022	Not Investigating
Parks	20 th September 2022	Not Investigating

6. Directors Summary – Overall Assessment and Evaluation

Overall, the Directorate is sustaining service delivery and performance levels, with some specific areas posing more challenges than others at present.

Our front-line and back-office services continue to sustain reasonable levels of service delivery in this post covid period, despite many changes experienced in working practices and public expectations,

which has posed some challenges to ongoing services and succession planning. In particular, staff retention and replacement in some services, and plant and equipment in others.

By nature of our front-facing and diversity of services delivered, we rely heavily on public feedback. Intelligence gathered through the engagement, our compliments and complaints including trends and feedback, direct service contacts, and recent 'what matters to you' programme, all provide us with sufficient knowledge to understand any areas for improvement. In addition, a training programme has been rolled out across the Directorate to improve the timeliness and quality of responses to complaints and further staff engagement sessions and training is planned which will focus on customer focussed service delivery.

There is also a system in place across the Directorate for the capture of compliments as these are equally important in terms of measuring the effectiveness of service delivery and customer satisfaction as complaints. The benefits of staff training programmes are now starting to be experienced and these will be cyclically delivered and kept under continuous review.

For further information, please contact

Mark S Williams and Sian Wilkes

Tel 01443 864948

Email williams@caerphilly.gov.uk and wilkes@caerphilly.gov.uk

Directorate of Housing

Brief description of Directorate and Service Framework

Caerphilly Homes is the brand name for the council's housing division. Some of the services delivered by Caerphilly Homes include Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), Estate Management, Tenancy Enforcement, Rents and Tenancy Support, Tenant and Community Involvement, Older Persons' Housing, Housing Repair Operations, Housing Advice, Homeless Prevention and Common Housing Register, Private Sector Housing, Grants and Loans, Housing Strategy, Affordable Housing and Adaptations

1. Number of complaints by stage type, service, and targets met

Table showing summary of complaints by stage type reference

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	132	58	43.9%
Stage 2	3	3	100.0%
Escalated from Stage 1 to 2	25	14	56.0%
Totals	160	75	46.9%

*Target response rates for first 6-month period of 2022/23 were 69.9%

Tables showing summary of complaints by service, for each stage type

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Adaptations	1	0	0.0%
Allocations	16	11	68.8%
Antisocial Behaviour	3	2	66.7%
Enforcement	2	1	50.0%
Grants	2	2	100.0%
Homelessness	3	0	0.0%
Housing Management	29	14	48.3%
Leaseholder	1	1	100.0%
Heating	7	3	42.9%
Private Landlord	1	1	100.0%
Rents	2	2	100.0%
Response Repairs	61	18	29.5%
Sheltered Housing	1	1	100.0%
WHQS External	1	0	0.0%
WHQS Internal	2	2	100.0%
Totals	132	57	43.9%

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Allocations	3	0	0.0%
Grants	2	2	100.0%
Housing Management	11	8	72.7%
Heating	2	1	50.0%
Response Repairs	10	6	60.0%
Totals	28	17	60.7%

Generally, where target response times were not met, it has been identified that it was due to awaiting further information from other officers, other departments, or the complainants themselves. There is a notable drop in the compliance rate from the previous 6-month period. Two key areas are Response Repairs where the target figure significantly dropped from 80% to 29.5%. There are ongoing issues with a backlog of repairs which is having a negative impact on the target rate due to managers, supervisors and operatives turning their attention to reducing the backlog and placing their focus on this area as a key priority. Recruitment issues have also been experienced within this area which is strongly felt throughout this service, evidencing the knock on effect witnessed with investigation times and target rates. Housing Management also have a notable decrease in target rate from 62.5% in the first 6 months to 48.3%. Key members of the Housing Management team have also been involved in the planning and implementation of the changes required for Caerphilly Homes to successfully introduce the Renting Homes Act 2016. This was initially due to be completed by the 15th of July 2022 however this had been postponed until the 1st December 2022 and has now been successfully implemented. The introduction of this legislation is paramount and therefore has taken priority over some other duties. The Housing Department has also commissioned a new computer system called CX. Managers and officers have been involved with the building and testing of the system via workshops and group meetings, this new system was introduced in October 2022 and ongoing testing, adjustments and implementation continue to ensure Caerphilly Homes has an efficient housing recording system. These changes have been managed whilst operating on a reduced staffing capacity due to recruitment challenges which are being experienced nationwide. To encourage improvements in target response times, data will be provided monthly to managers and directors who attend SMB and HMT to discuss cases which fall short of meeting the target deadlines and to establish if trends can be identified in this area. Managers/Officers have attended training sessions provided by the CSA to ensure consistency and customer focus, ultimately improving quality of complaint investigations, and reducing escalation of complaints. Managers/Officers will be provided with a list of open cases for their section on a fortnightly bases which will include brief details of the case when it was received and the target date for closure. This approach will be monitored to see if this has a positive impact on our target time percentages.

Table showing how the complaints were received.

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Telephone	60	2	8
Email	57	1	17
Letter	3	0	0
On-line	12	0	0
Contact Centre	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Totals	132	3	25

*In 2021/2022, the main source of contact was via e-mail however this has now changed, the main method of contact is via the telephone.

2. Key complaints - identified by type or theme

- Resident unhappy with the quality of works completed in back garden following WHQS upgrade.
- Delay in payment for decoration allowance.
- Missing information on completed housing application, possibly jeopardising opportunity to be allocated a property.
- Residents concerned with delays in visible action following reports of a neighbour's garden being overgrown and time it takes to implement the garden procedure.
- Incorrect information provided by Housing Advice Officer.
- Resident unhappy with the service they have received from the Housing Repairs Operations team including delays in undertaking repair work, not allocating enough time to complete repairs, and missing agreed appointments without prior notification.
- Resident concerned with delay in considering succession application and the impact it has claiming housing benefit payments.
- Increased concerns relating to potential damp and mould issues in properties following increased media coverage.

In terms of identified trends, the re-let standard of some properties were identified as poor. Going forward meetings between managers were scheduled to discuss potential training needs and to agree the focus of awareness raising sessions with team members who are responsible for ensuring that our Lettings Standard is met and that there is a clear understanding of Tenant Maintenance responsibilities (Tenants Handbook). These changes worked hand in hand with updates required to meet the Renting Homed Act 2016.

Number by Category(Commissioner Case Type)

Table showing complaints by Commissioner Case Type, for prescribed Categories

	Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1.	Collaborative Working	1
2.	Decision Making	13
3.	Delay in Service Provision	23
4.	Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	9
5a.	Following Council Policies	3
5b.	Following relevant Legislation	1
6.	Accessibility of Services	0
7.	Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	7
8.	Quality of Work	102
9.	Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	1
10.	Compliance with Complaints procedure	0
11.	Combination	0
	Totals	160

*Quality of work (8) remains the most common category for reason for contact.

3. Number by Outcome and lessons learned comments

Table showing complaints by Outcome Data sets as categorised by the Complaints Standards Authority.

Outcome Data	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Upheld	52
Not upheld	93
Totals	145

*Please note, 15 complaints were withdrawn

The following table shows more information regarding the complaints counts above, that were, Upheld, Not Upheld, Non-specific, Investigation Not Merited and Investigation Discontinued, by Service Area.

Stage 1 Complaints

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
Adaptations	0	1
Allocations	4	11
Enforcement	0	2
Energy Works	0	0
Grants	0	2
Homeless	0	1
Housing Management	15	11
Leaseholder	0	1
Private Landlord	0	1
Rents	2	0
Response Repairs	23	34
Sheltered Housing	0	1
WHQS External	0	1
WHQS Internal	2	0
Heating	0	4
Antisocial Behaviour	0	3
Homeless Prevention	0	1
Totals	46	74

Stage 2 Complaints

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
Allocations	1	2
Grants	0	2
Housing Management	2	8
Response Repairs	3	6
Heating	0	1
Totals	6	19

List of lessons learned. Comment on key findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that may help curtail, prevent, or impede future repeats.

Details of Case	Lessons Learned	Category
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<p>Resident unhappy with the quality of the works carried out under WHQS in his back garden.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, the poor service and quality of works received by the resident was due to the contractor ceasing trading.</p>	<p>8 Quality of work</p>
<p>Resident has raised a number of issues including delay in decoration payment - discretionary housing payment confusion - unfinished repairs - query over tenant's handbook and the meaning of it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Gas central heating system was not operational for the first 6 weeks of the tenancy - Internal systems have now been changed by the Principal Contracts Officer and these will be reviewed by Housing Operations Manager to ensure that they are robust and will prevent this happening in future. •Standard of the new home – discuss potential training needs and to agree the focus of awareness raising sessions with team members who are responsible for ensuring that our Lettings Standard is met and that there is a clear understanding of Tenant Maintenance responsibilities (Tenants Handbook). •Delay in redecoration BACS Payment – The current procedure for making payments to tenants will be reviewed to ensure that any payments are processed as quickly as possible. •Tenant Handbook change to wording – This has already been amended for the new supply that are currently on order. 	<p>8 Quality of work</p>
<p>Resident completed housing application, but we had missing information on our system and the information communicated was incorrect. Resident concerned they may have missed out on an offer of a property.</p>	<p>Discussions held with Clerical Officers to ensure they check applications before replying.</p>	<p>7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information</p>
<p>Resident unhappy with the service received whilst having the wall between the kitchen and lounge injected with damp course and replastered - also still waiting for decoration allowance payment</p>	<p>Improved communication requirements identified between us CCBC, the Contractor and the Contract Holders. HRO operatives will be reminded of the importance of this. The Contract Holder should have been advised of the duration of works and access restrictions to parts of her</p>	<p>8 Quality of work</p>

	property prior to and while the works were being undertaken.	
Reported neighbouring garden being overgrown and damaging his property on a number of occasions but issue is still not resolved	Covid limited any actions or investigations at that time, however Officers were reminded that photos should have been requested from the customer to see the issue and to bear this in mind to provide a more efficient service. The resident had been complaining for some time and we didn't act promptly enough to resolve it.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Incorrect information provided by Housing Advice Officer	A meeting was held with the case officer, and we talked through the information that was shared regarding CAP and former tenancy debt and to ensure that they double checked facts / figures and CAP before engaging in the conversation to avoid the scenario happening again. A workshop is being held with staff to review and reinforce pathways for service delivery and as part of this a session on the CAP and a refresher for all the team is being arranged	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information
Resident unhappy with the mess in the area and feels the garden procedure takes too long and the emo is not acting quick enough	We acknowledge the length of time to deal with this request and note EMO's have been less active in the community due to Covid restrictions, but meetings are being held to rectify this as restrictions are now lifted.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Contract holder contacted to advise they are unhappy with the repairs service they have received.	On this occasion we should have renewed the door earlier due to the number of repairs that were undertaken on the door. We do have a Lesson learnt procedure in place at the moment, that is if the same repair is reported on three occasions, then the Foreman would go out to check and advise if the repair has been carried out correctly. I know this did happen at least once at this property, but the number of repairs recorded against the front door should have acted as a warning for the door to be renewed.	8 Quality of work
Contract holder gained succession and it was backdated leaving them with an arrears balance and	Arrange to meet with the relevant EMO and talk about sending of the correct letters in a timely manner. This matter will be raised	8 Quality of work

backdated Housing Benefit cannot be claimed due to receiving Universal Credit	with EMO Teams meeting, as the introduction of Renting Home Wales Act 2016 (RHW) 1st December 2022 there will be stringent timescales	
Contract holder told she could partition bedroom, but now informed consent is required so has to wait whilst her and the children are sleeping downstairs. Not happy by the way I have just been forgotten about as a contract holder and I'm not happy the way that I've been spoken to.	We receive calls from frustrated customers regularly and dealing with us as a council can be a bureaucratic process. We can't expect customers to know every one of our procedures and we need to be understanding of that, and respond supportively rather than assuming customers are trying to circumvent our procedures We need to do more training on providing excellent customer service and improving the experience of our customers who contact us. We have started this with the restorative training and I'm hoping to continue by looking at customer journeys. When we get call recording, we can use this for training purposes.	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information
Housing register application being closed down again	Manager has raised the inaccuracies of the tenancy rent reference with the relevant department and further training will be offered to the team to hopefully alleviate any future mistakes. We will also look to update the Tenancy Reference Form which rents are sent so the information required is easy to process.	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information
Following chimney being removed 2 months ago bags of rubble still left on garden. Tenant has called 5 times to request removal but has still not been removed	There was a definite breakdown in communication between us and the contractor, and the tenant should have been informed that there was a possibility that the waste would not be collected within a reasonable timescale. Moving forward we will ensure tenants are kept updated with any potential delays in service.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Contractors working on property and left cans and food in house.	The Engineers that carried out the work on our behalf have failed to meet our standards within the agreed Tenant's Charter of Trust by respecting yourself and your home. To avoid any instances of this nature reoccurring the Contractor has held Toolbox talks with their	4 Officer/Contractors contact with public.

	Engineers and have assured us that this will not happen again going forward. We will also request that in house Surveyors carry out more spot checks and visits on future installations, this would ensure that Engineers are acting in a professional manner whilst undertaking the work	
Contract holder requesting review of decision not to renew kitchen - disagrees with signing the form to opt out of new kitchen	Although the customer did refuse works previously and had signed an opt out form, this should not have stopped the surveyor as the customers' needs had changed, hence moving forward we need to focus on why the customer is now asking for the work to be done. In this instance the customer had asked for the tumble dryer to be relocated into the kitchen from a shed in the garden as a member of their family has health issues this was achievable by removing an old pantry, The surveying team needs to understand that at any given time the customer has the right to reverse their decision. The surveyors line manager has been informed that on this occasion we failed the needs of the customer we have asked the line manager to hold a toolbox talk with all the surveyors highlighting that if an opt out form has been signed the customer is still entitled to reverse their decision, this will also be communicated throughout the Housing Technical department.	9 Openness/fairness and Honesty
Private owner of unhappy that the garden of a contract holder is overgrowing with grass and brambles and coming into his garden causing damage to plastic around shed this has been ongoing for many years	The need to identify whether service requests for garden conditions when received for this location, are seasonally recurring and, if so, consider previous responses/cumulative impact when determining a reasonable response to requests, whilst we identify a longer-term solution to a recognised issue. Officers reminded of the need to consider file histories when determining our responses to concerns raised about garden conditions in this location	8 Quality of work
Contract Holder was due to have two windows fitted in the kitchen on 24/10, tenant	to ensure materials are available before making an appointment for a repair and to ensure when	8 Quality of work

called twice to confirm the fitters were calling, they did not attend and on final call was told appointment was mistake.	communicating with the Contract Holder checks are made to ensure the information we provide is correct.	
Contract Holder raised concerns as having issues with damp and mould and wants them investigated.	After investigation it was established the MDF used was damp. Operatives advised this must not be repeated.	8 Quality of work
Contract Holder reported damp and wet walls for previous 7 years and the issue is still not resolved.	To ensure an in-depth Inspection is carried out for issues of recurring damp, to ascertain the actual cause and treat accordingly.	8 Quality of work
Contract Holder required another appointment to fit an extractor fan when they thought it would be completed in same day.	Established that SOR code for fitting fans does not cover coring out hole for fan which takes longer. A request has been made for this to be included to the surveying team who are responsible for the SOR codes. This should no longer happen for future repairs of this nature.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Contract Holder reported they had been living in damp property with rising damp for three years. To undertake the necessary works to rectify this, they have been decanted to another property which is also very damp.	Ongoing problem with our void's inspections identified. Improvements have been made to start rectifying this issue.	8 Quality of work
Son of Contract Holder unhappy with letters father has received regarding rent arrears as they have previously made contact with the Rents Department to make a complaint, but this was not recorded appropriately.	identified some staff are not fully aware of the corporate process of receiving and logging complaints and differentiating between a service request and a complaint. We should not rely on sending letters when we are awaiting information but telephone tenants to discuss matters.	8 Quality of work
Contract Holder unhappy with quality of finish following WHQS works, they reported it a while ago but now had to log some repairs. Contract Holder did not sign the work off as satisfactory so wants to know who did.	investigations indicated the contractor walked off site and did not return to complete the remedial works as the Contract Holder refused access. The WHQS works were completed 4 years previous.	8 Quality of work
Housing applicant is unhappy with banding as feels due to medical conditions they should be in a priority banding.	it was recognised that there were no real misgivings on how this case was approached however noted that maybe reviewing the rent account sooner to ensure a	8 Quality of work

	collaborative response was provided along with requesting up to date medical history information.	
Contract Holder contacted to advise they have numerous unresolved repairs still outstanding.	it was acknowledged that poor communication and inconsistent inspection/surveys were the root of the problem, so toolbox talks were arranged to discuss the issues raised.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Contract Holder unhappy as thought sewerage in kitchen should have been initially logged as an official complaint and wants to investigate why it took 6 weeks to sort out.	£200 compensation offered for delay in arranging another appointment. Officers were reminded of the importance of follow up calls to ensure appointments.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Contract Holder unhappy with stage 1 response in relation to failures with replacing his kitchen after a leak.	Due to a number of ongoing issues including this complaint, the Contract Holder met with Christina Harray and Rob Tranter and an offer of £5000 was made and accepted along with an offer of an alternative property to better suit the Contract Holder's needs.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Contract Holder had an appointment to fit windows. Operatives didn't turn up and was not contacted to let her know it had been cancelled and rearranged.	relevant member of staff reminded of procedure which must be followed to ensure accurate communication is provided.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Contract Holders have been waiting for 2 years to have door fitted. Both are very ill and cancelled a hospital appointment for door to be replaced and no one turned up or called to cancel the appointment.	relevant member of staff reminded of procedure which must be followed to ensure accurate communication is provided.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Contract Holder unhappy with the re-let standard of the property and concerned with the amount of mould.	Poor communication and inconsistent inspections/surveys. Review of Void Process and letting standard and reissue updated version to all Staff involved in the completion and letting of empty homes.	8 Quality of work

4. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Table showing a count and list of findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that specifically relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics.

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Age	

Disability	4
Gender Reassignment	0
Marriage and Civil Partnership	0
Pregnancy and Maternity	0
Race	0
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	0
Sex	1
Sexual Orientation	0
Welsh Language	0
Totals	5

Extracts from cases linked to the Disability characteristic:

- Following shower being fitted the boiler was adjusted to ensure hot water was coming from shower. This has caused water from the hot water tap to be deemed too hot for her daughter concerned daughter will scald herself. This issue was considered at both stage 1 and Stage 2 and was not upheld.
- Contract Holder advised they were unhappy with the banding they were placed on the Common Allocations Register due to their medical conditions and feel they should have a priority banding. This complaint was considered at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 and was found to be upheld with lessons learnt.
- Resident raised issues of sexism within Housing Solutions Team as there would be more options available to him if were female. The resident later decided to withdraw this complaint.

5. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period

Identify how many referrals to the Ombudsman and list and append any relevant supplementary information here, namely, points to note, or an example data set.

Twelve cases were referred to the Ombudsman for Housing in this reporting period. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate and subsequently closed their records. The first Ombudsman case related to a delay in providing a Stage 2 response however even though the response was provided out of timescale, the Ombudsman felt it was justified to provide an in-depth response. The second Ombudsman case was regarding the banding for a housing application. The Ombudsman confirmed that the procedure was followed, and they will not investigate a properly made decision. The third contact was from a family member on behalf on their parents. They were disputing the 50% contribution for costs to replace the fencing. The Ombudsman confirmed they cannot investigate a complaint for which there is a remedy by way of proceedings in a court of law. The fourth related to mess in the resident's estate and the time it takes to exhaust the garden procedure, the Ombudsman reported it cannot investigate complaints about a properly made decision that a public body or a provider of public services is entitled to make. The fifth was of a similar nature regarding a neighbouring fence which the Ombudsman felt was a property made decision. The sixth was in relation to a garden fire which damaged a neighbour's garden furniture. The Ombudsman decided it cannot determine cause of liability and therefore would be remedied by the way of court proceedings. The seventh case related to a delay in outstanding repairs which we apologised for and communicated with the Contract Holder, considering this, the Ombudsman noted are efforts and agreed there were not further actions for us to take. The remaining five complaints were made prematurely to the Ombudsman and were dismissed due to the complainant not completing the complaints process available to them.

For further information, please contact

Gemma Hoare
01443 811436
hoareg@caerphilly.gov.uk

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Directorate for Education
Number of complaints by stage type, service, and targets met

Summary of complaints by stage type reference

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	5	5	100
Stage 2	2	2	100
Escalated Stage 1 to 2	1	1	100
Totals	8	8	100

Summary of complaints by service, for each stage type

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
ALN and Inclusions Services (ALN)	5	5	100
Totals	5	5	100

Service	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
ALN and Inclusions Services (ALN)	1	1	100
Totals	1	1	100

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Early Years / ALN & Inclusion	1	1	100
Youth Service	1	1	100
Totals	2	2	100

How the complaints were received

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Telephone	0	0	0
Email	5	2	1
Letter	0	0	0
On-line	0	0	0
Contact Centre	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Totals	5	2	1

More detailed information on the above corporate complaints data, is currently maintained, by the Education Customer Service and Complaints officer on a dedicated database.

1. Key complaints - identified by type or theme

Schools have their own complaints policy/process that must be dealt with by the school. However, the L.A may provide advice and guidance on the school-based policy but direct complainants back to the school for response.

All governing bodies are required by law to have a procedure in place for dealing with complaints from parents, pupils, members of staff, governors, members of the local community and others in relation to matters for which the governing body has statutory responsibility.

An overview of the complaints received and dealt with are as follows:

- ALN and Inclusion Service – Lack of support
- ALN and Inclusion Service – Lack of education and ALN Involvement/Communication
- ALN and Inclusion Service - Dyslexia testing and The Educational Psychologist Service (EPS)
- ALN and Inclusion Service - Delay in request for an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) needs assessment in breach of its legal duty on the grounds of timescale
- ALN and Inclusion Service – Member of staff from our Advisory / Specialist Teaching Service and the LEA's assessment process to establish if intervention/support was required from our Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) Team
- Youth Service - Treatment by two members of staff
- Early Years and ALN/Inclusion Services – Child to continue attending current Early Year setting and Matrix report used by ALN/Inclusion Services

2. Number by Category (Commissioner Case Type)

Complaints by Commissioner Case Type, for prescribed Categories

Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1 Collaborative Working	0
2 Decision Making	0
3 Delay in Service Provision	0
4 Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	1
5a Following Council Policies	0
5b Following relevant Legislation	1
6 Accessibility of Services	1
7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	0
8 Quality of Work	0
9 Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	0
10 Compliance with Complaints procedure	0
11 Combination of categories	5
Totals	8

3. Number by Outcome and lessons learned comments

Complaints by Outcome Data sets as categorised by the Complaints Standards Authority.

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
ALN and Inclusions Services (ALN)	0	6
Early Years and ALN/Inclusion Services	0	1
Youth Service	0	1
Totals	0	8

Stage 1 Complaint – (Category 5b). Lack of Support

The complainant raised a number of concerns in relation to the LEA and school setting.:

- Incorrect information provided by LEA staff
- LEA staff's failure to provide a response to email correspondence
- Safeguarding concern
- After 15 consecutive days of non-attendance, it is the LEA's legal responsibility to provide alternative provision

The investigation was conducted into the LEA provided services only. The complainant was advised to raise school-based concerns with the school directly. In terms of the issues relevant to the local authority they were thoroughly investigated. **Complaint not upheld.**

Stage 1 – Category (6), Escalated to Stage 2 – Category 11 (1, 2, 3, 5b, 6, 7). Lack of education and ALN Involvement/Communication

Stage 1 – Allegation that correspondence received from complainant was filed away and no action taken. Complainant had been liaising with the Lead Officer for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) & Inclusion and her local Assembly Member but was unhappy with the lack of education received by complainant's two children. Delay in finding a suitable education setting for the two children.

The correspondence referred to by the complainant was logged in a timely manner and emails were exchanged subsequently.

(The Lead officer for ALN) and colleagues had been working to explore the best way forward to find solutions to the difficulties the family faced. As part of this process, meetings had taken place with the lead officer, the family and/or the Assembly Member. Any questions raised in the meetings/communication by the family and/or Assembly Member have been investigated by the Local Education Authority (LEA) officers and/or lead officer and a response provided. Where discussions have taken place without the Assembly Member present. The lead officer ensured the Assembly Member was always kept up to date.

The timescale to find a suitable education setting for the children had taken longer than the complainant expected, but the LEA must follow the relevant policies/processes. An essential part of this process is to ensure all information has been received from all parties involved as this enables the LEA to gain a true understanding of how best we can support and identify the appropriate education setting that best suits the needs of the children. A setting for the children was identified.

The correspondence received was recorded in a timely manner by education and communication between the complainant and LA was maintained. The LA worked with the complainant and/or Assembly Member to ensure the appropriate education setting was identified for the children.

Escalation to Stage 2 – A total of 45 points were raised within the Stage 2 complaint. In terms of the issues raised, all points were thoroughly investigated by the Lead for Additional Learning Needs & Inclusion Services. Complaint not upheld.

Lessons learned:

While the decision was not to uphold the complaint in its entirety, there were areas where lessons will be learnt based on the following grounds:

Communication between school(s) and LA and parents can be improved. Expectations need to be clear and agreed between all parties to avoid doubt. Where expectations are not aligned or cannot be met this needs to be communicated clearly and the way forward agreed. Communication can be initiated by all parties, that is, the school, LA or parents.

The rationale for decision making needs to be clear. Where parents are unclear this must be raised in a timely way and clarified for the avoidance of doubt. Where decisions are made that are unclear there must be an agreed mechanism to raise any concerns and for these to be resolved before reaching a point of dispute or formal complaint.

Where requests are made for support or referrals made to other agencies parents should be aware of the outcome of such referrals through the relevant agencies process. If parents make any requests for support / involvement of other agencies through referrals and this is not deemed appropriate, this should be clearly communicated. Where parents are able to make referrals, this should be considered if the rationale provided is not agreed.

Statutory processes should be followed and where there is any change to timescales this should be clearly communicated with parents.

Stage 1 – Category 11 (3 & 6). Dyslexia testing and The Educational Psychologist Service (EPS)

Allegation the LEA would not observe Pupil A, refused a dyslexia test and Information provided by the school that Pupil A was not referred to see an Education Psychologist due to budget cuts and Pupil A not meeting criteria. All issues were thoroughly investigated by the LEA Complaint Officer:

The LEA Complaint Officer was able to establish that officers from our Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) Team worked/met with parents and the school for the last 2 years in relation to how best the school could support Pupil A. The SpLD manager confirmed that a request for observation would not be denied if a pupil met the current referral criteria and at no point can the SpLD Team recall denying the request for an observation. The SpLD Team communicated with parent (and the school) regarding the support/interventions the school can/have put in place. The SpLD Team made it clear at every opportunity that neither the SpLD nor Educational Psychology Service (EPS) diagnose dyslexia.

The EPS did not see a reduction or cut-back to their budget. While staffing levels reduced in the service by 50%, this was a result of staff leaving the authority. The service was actively seeking to recruit new staff to fill all vacant positions and ensure the service was running at full capacity. Despite a reduction in staffing levels, at no point did the EPS instruct schools to refrain from making referrals due to budget cuts and as such, schools continued to make referrals to the EPS throughout. Taking this information allegedly came from the school, parent was advised they may wish to raise this with the school directly.

In addition to the EPS referrals, schools also have access to cluster consultations with the EPS. The school used their most recent consultation to seek advice around Pupil A. During the consultation, the expectations of the EPS involvement was discussed and what helpful next steps might look like to support Pupil A. The SpLD Team do not refer any pupil to the EPS for Dyslexia diagnoses. The EPS have a planning meeting protocol with schools, the same as the SpLD Team. **Complaint not upheld.**

Stage 1 – Category 11 (3 & 5b). Delay in request for an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) needs assessment and as a result, the LEA was in breach of its legal duty on the grounds of timescale

Allegation parent submitted a request for an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) needs assessment on behalf of Pupil A under section 36(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014. The request was sent by e-mail before 5pm and therefore assumed to have been received on the date on which it was sent. Parent also alleged the LEA breached its legal duty under Regulation 5(1) of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 (the LEA are required to notify parents/guardians within 6 weeks of receiving this request of the decision as to whether it is necessary to secure an EHC needs assessment) as more than 6 weeks had passed since we received the request and parent had not received notice of the decision. All issues were thoroughly investigated by the LEA Complaint Officer:

The LEA Complaint Officer was able to establish the Lead for Additional Learning Needs & Inclusion Services (ALN) received the email from parent on x date which was passed to the Senior Educational Psychologist (SEP) two days later and contact was made with parent the following day. As a result of the email received, the SEP and Statutory Officer worked and communicated with the school/parent throughout to identify how best to support Pupil A and a Person-Centred Planning meeting (PCP), was arranged. This meeting would identify Pupil A's needs and how best the school could support Pupil A moving forward. This process would also identify if further advice and/or guidance was required from the LEA during/after the process.

The regulation the parent was referring to relates to the Education, Health, and Care Plan legislation for pupils in England, not Wales. In Wales, the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Education Tribunal Wales Act 2018 applies. Under the ALN Code schools have 35 days to complete the statutory assessment unless it is impractical to do so due to circumstances beyond their control.

In line with the new ALN reform, schools are gradually moving pupils across to the new ALN system, which has come into effect in Wales from September 2021. This academic year will see all pupils in Year 10 moving over and so it was the appropriate time for Pupil A to be considered for an Individual Development Plan (IDP). As stated above, a PCP meeting was arranged to look at how best to support Pupil A moving forwards and to consider the IDP process. **Complaint not upheld.**

Stage 1 – Category 11 (3 & 5b). Member of SpLD staff and the LEA's assessment process to establish if SpLD intervention/support was required

Parents raised concerns in relation to a member of staff during a meeting held at school and during the assessment process. Parents also raised concerns regarding the LEA's assessment process for SpLD intervention/support. The LEA Complaint Officer conducted the investigation with the member of staff in question and two members of school staff who were present during the meeting, one of which was present during the assessment process. In terms of the issues raised against the member of staff, they were thoroughly investigated. In terms of the SpLD intervention/support assessment, the Complaint Officer was able to establish that the assessment process was in accordance with the LEA's criteria. **Complaint not upheld.**

Lessons Learned:

While the decision was made not to uphold the complaint in its entirety, there was an area where a lesson will be learnt on the following grounds:

Staff will have consideration to differences of opinions to the points raised in meetings and allow opportunities for all stakeholders to voice those opinions.

Stage 2 – Category 4. Treatment by two members of staff at the Young Mums Group

The complainant provided a number of concerns raised between November 2021 and March 2022 in relation to the treatment she received from two members of staff at a group setting.

Each concern was individually investigated by the Senior Youth Service Manager, and the appropriate evidence obtained.

The information provided by the two officers, managers and daily logs confirmed there was no evidence to substantiate the complaint. **Complaint not upheld.**

Stage 2 – Category 11 (5a & 5b). Child to continue attending current Early Year setting and Matrix report used by ALN/Inclusion Services

The first element of the complaint was in relation for Pupil A to continue attending his current setting on the grounds that they do not become statutory school age until March 2023.

This element of the complaint was investigated by the Early Years Manager:

While the child was not legally required to attend their statutory school placement until the term after they turned 5 years of age (April 2023). The reception placement is offered from the September in the academic year in which the child turns 5 (Sept 2022). For clarification, the query was raised with WG. The response from WG confirms the Childcare Offer would not be eligible after August 2022 should the parent(s)/guardian(s) chose not to accept the reception place offered for your child:

At the start of the school term when a child is eligible to receive a full-time education place, the child will no longer be eligible to access the Offer. In the majority of local authorities, children will be offered a full-time education place from the September after they turn 4. Where a school offers a staggered start to the term, parents will not be eligible to use the Offer for these term-time day(s) / week(s) when their child is not actually in the school.

The second element of the complaint was in relation to the ALN Matrix document designed for children/young people aged 3-19yrs on roll at Local Authority and Grant Maintained Schools and Referral Units. Parent believed the Matrix document is a tick box exercise and not specific to a pupils needs. As such, how it can be used to write an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for Pupil A? Parent also requests that CCBC overhaul their policies & procedures to offer a truly person-centred approach to ALN.

This element of the complaint was investigated by the Lead for Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Services:

The Matrix document is the first edition and the South East Wales Consortia (SEWC) are continuing to develop the Matrix for different interfaces. Comments relating to Early Years will be considered as part of future developments. The LA previously confirmed that the Matrix has been developed as an 'online' tool. The purpose of the Matrix is not to categorise or diagnose, but to identify the barriers to learning a pupil may be experiencing. The ALN Assessment Matrix is a pupil centred tool, which identifies the complexity and interrelationship of difficulties, which require Additional Learning Provision (ALP). The ALN policies and procedures have been produced regionally in line with the ALN Code and follow a person-centred approach to ALN. **Complaint not upheld.**

4. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Complaints that relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Age	0	0	0
Disability	0	0	0
Gender Reassignment	0	0	0
Marriage and Civil Partnership	0	0	0
Pregnancy and Maternity	0	0	0
Race	0	0	0
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	0	0	0
Sex	0	0	0
Sexual Orientation	0	0	0
Welsh Language	0	0	0
Totals	0	0	0

No specific characteristics links have been identified for this reporting period

5. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period

A complainant contacted the Ombudsman on three separate occasions in relation to the LEA failing to provide a response under Stage 2 of the Corporate Complaint's Policy. The Ombudsman were issued with a copy of the response sent to the complainant and as a result, no investigation was required.

It is important to recognise that the changes currently being made to the ALN and Inclusion Service are due to the implementation of the new curriculum for Wales and the ALN Act which has led to a lot of confusion and frustration of some of our stakeholders, especially parents. The LA will continue to listen and adapt its processes in line with feedback.

For further information, please contact

Liam Miles

01443 864833

milesl@caerphilly.gov.uk

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Corporate Services

1. Number of complaints by Stage Type, Service, and Targets Met

Table showing summary of complaints by stage type reference.

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	13	12	92.30%
Stage 2	5	4	80%
Escalated Stage 1 to 2	2	2	100%
Totals	20	18	

Table showing how the complaints were received.

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Telephone	2	0	0
Email	7	4	2
Letter	0	0	0
On-line	3	0	0
Contact Centre	0	0	0
Other	1	1	0
Totals	13	5	2

Tables showing summary of complaints by service, for each stage type.

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Customer Services	4	3	75%
Corporate Finance	8	7	87.50%
Other – Combined	1	1	100%
Totals	13	11	

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Legal Services	3	3	100%
Corporate Finance	1	1	100%
Other – Combined	1	0	
Totals	5	4	

Service	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Corporate Finance	1	1	100%
Other - Combined	1	1	100%
Totals	2	2	

Corporate Services complaints which are not Corporate Finance comprises of 3 for Legal Services which all dealt with as stage 2, and 4 complaints for Customer Services which 3 were dealt with as stage 1 and 1 stage 2.

The target was met on all complaints for Legal Services and Customer Services
In relation to Corporate Finance one target date was not met for a stage 1 due to a combination of cost of Living payments taking priority, other urgent service delivery pressures and staff taking annual leave. There was also 1 stage 2 target date missed due to the number of responses being collated and other work pressures which led to an overall delay in all responses being received on time.

2. Key complaints - Identified by Type or Theme

List of key specific types, or themes, of repetitive, or pertinent complaints received during this reporting period.

There have been no trends identified within corporate services and the complaints cover a range of issues including the following:-

Customer Services – Switchboard not answering the telephone for a long period, Officers not being available to speak to staff at main reception, Officers not answering their phones or returning calls when messages have been left, The criteria for qualifying for blue badges and also vehicles parked in the disabled bays and not displaying blue badge in council car park.

Legal Services – Disability discrimination complaint dealt with on behalf of the Economy and Environment Directorate where correspondence had not been sent as requested in a specific format, Dissatisfaction about FOI appeal and delay in responding to respond to the complaint, alleged Misinterpretation of Legal deeds resulting in grant being delayed.

There were no particular themes, of repetitive or pertinent complaints received in relation to Corporate Finance. For this period, the Council Tax Section received the most complaints x 10, Housing Benefits x 1, Accountancy x 1 and Other - Combined x 1.

3. Number by of Complaints by Category

Table showing complaints by Commissioner Case Type, for prescribed Categories.

Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1 Collaborative Working	0
2 Decision Making	4
3 Delay in Service Provision	6
4 Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	0
5a Following Council Policies	
5b Following relevant Legislation	3
6 Accessibility of Services	2
7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	3
8 Quality of Work	1
9 Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	0
10 Compliance with Complaints procedure	0
11 Combination of categories	1
Totals	20

4. Number of Complaints by Outcome and Lessons Learned

Table showing number of complaints Upheld and Not Upheld

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
Customer Services	1	3
Corporate Finance	7	6
Legal services	1	2
Totals	9	11

The following table shows examples of lessons learned, with comments on key findings, resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that may help curtail, prevent, or impede future repeats.

Nature of Complaint	Lessons Learned	Category
Stage 1: Council Tax – Complaint re communications received from CCBC resulting in a Court Summons being issued against the complainant, causing distress, impacting their credit rating and reputational damage. In addition experienced poor service in trying to contact the Council due to phone line issues and calls being dropped.	Despite staff being given written instructions by a Team Leader about the recovery action being taken during September which included court summonses being issued on 26/09/22, this council tax payer was wrongly advised they had until the end of September to pay their overdue monthly instalments to avoid further action and have their account reset to bill stage and their future monthly instalment plan reinstated. The Team Leader has reminded staff of the importance of digesting and understanding all instructions issued about work deadlines that may impact our customers. In mitigation, the Team has been dealing with Cost-of-Living Support payments to over 66,000 households alongside their full-time roles this year.	7 Clarity/ Accuracy/ Timeliness of information
Stage 1: Accountancy - Complainant being issued with a cheque on 2 separate occasions with the surname excluded. Was not able to pay cheque into her bank account because of this and had previously advised the Authority of this exclusion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of software updates to ensure that they have been applied correctly. 2. Ensure staff review the cheques produced to ensure they are correct prior to issue. 	8 Quality of work
Stage 1: Combined (Customer Services/CTax) – Complainant sent cheque for April’s CT payment and there was a delay in processing this. This happened before and 2 months cheques went through together. No one appears to be answering his calls when querying these issues and all he	<p>There were no lessons to be learned on the CTAX issues raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone lines were very busy at the time. We apologised and to avoid holding the line, we suggested he call back later in the day when we tend to receive fewer calls. • If he were to continue to post us cheque payments, we asked him to send future payments on or before the due date which is the 15th of each month to allow more time for his cheques to be processed before our reminder 	7 Clarity/ Accuracy/ Timeliness of information

<p>gets is a text messages saying he has not paid. Complainant angry with the whole service and sick of excuses why his calls are not answered.</p>	<p>letters are issued just over 2 weeks later. As an alternative to overcome the problem of him receiving his pension towards the end of each month we suggested a DD on the 25th of each month which was subsequently set up and is ongoing at this time.</p>	
<p>Stage 1: Council Tax – Complaint re incorrect advice given and Court Summons being issued incorrectly regarding non payment of council tax</p>	<p>Despite staff being given written instructions by a Team Leader about the recovery action being taken during September which included court summonses being issued on 26/09/22, this council tax payer was wrongly advised they had until the end of September to pay their overdue monthly instalments to avoid further action and have their account reset to bill stage and their future monthly instalment plan reinstated. The Team Leader has reminded staff of the importance of digesting and understanding all instructions issued about work deadlines that may impact our customers. In mitigation, the Team has been dealing with Cost-of-Living Support payments to over 66,000 households alongside their full-time roles this year.</p>	<p>7 Clarity/ Accuracy/ Timeliness of information</p>
<p>Stage 1 & escalated to Stage 2: Council Tax - CTax refund not given After many conversations between complainant and section the refund was never mentioned until 'by chance'. Complainant asked why we never refunded this (over 10 months ago). The section never contacted or refunded her. Complainant feels this appears to be somewhat fraudulent as we have always had contact details, we should have at least posted a cheque.</p> <p>Never received any communication at address in question from section regarding how to claim the refund, would have acted on it immediately and claimed it straight away. In addition, colleague also advised on phone that we did not have her details so no attempt was made to contact her and credit was just 'sat' on account. Complainant feels this is completely contradictory</p>	<p>Complaint upheld but compensation not justifiable as Adjustment Notice was issued in Feb 2022 advising tax payer how to claim a refund.</p>	<p>3 Delay in Service Provision</p>

to the explanation given by the Finance Manager.		
Stage 1: Council Tax - Complaint made due to the time they have had to wait to be granted a decision on the section 13a application that was made on the 31st of October 2022.	No lessons learned. As explained in the Stage 1 response, the delay in reaching a determination was caused partly by the need to exhaust all other ways of reducing the amount of council tax payable, and more importantly, by officers having to prioritise the WG Cost of Living Support and Winter Fuel Payment Schemes which involved tens of thousands of households with the Council's area against the backdrop of ever increasing workloads caused by various WG and UK Government initiatives and the cost of living crisis in general.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Stage 1: Customer Services – Complaint was concerning Main Switchboard not answering the telephone for a long period.	A Thorough investigation and testing was undertaken both internally and with telephony supplier but were not able to identify, what happened, it appears this was an isolated incident caused by a blip on the system. Our queues are also constantly monitored by managers to ensure calls are being dealt with efficiently.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Stage 2: Legal Services – Complaint about the correspondence being dealt with as a FOI appeal rather than a formal complaint	To improve on the checks and balances already in place to support the process and compliance with timeframes.	2 Decision Making

5. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Table showing a count and list of findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that specifically relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics.

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Age	0
Disability	1
Gender Reassignment	0
Marriage and Civil Partnership	0
Pregnancy and Maternity	0
Race	0
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	0
Sex	0
Sexual Orientation	0
Welsh Language	0
Totals	1

6. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period

Service Area	Date received	Decision
Benefits	06/04/22 went into junk emails received then on 31/05/22	Early Resolution – Apologise and confirm junk emails will be monitored in future.
Council Tax	14/10/22	Not Investigating
Council Tax	01/02/23	Early Resolution – The Council will write to the complainant within 30 working days, and provide a detailed summary of the current outstanding Council Tax balance, and the amounts going forward
Council Tax	10/02/23	Not Investigating
Legal Services	17/2/23	Early Resolution – To apologise within 4 weeks for failing to advise that it has no powers to investigate the concerns about elected members and for failing to promptly signpost Complainant to the Ombudsman

For further information, please contact

Andrea Jones

Telephone 01443 864221

Jonesa23@caerphilly.gov.uk

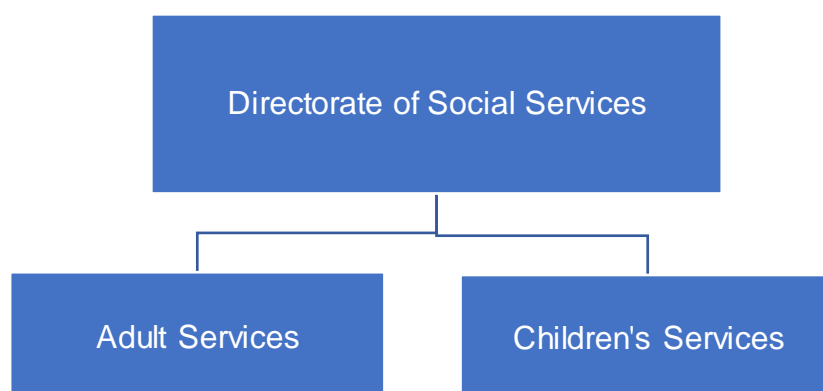
Leigh Brook

Telephone 01443 86301

brookl@caerphilly.gov.uk

Directorate and Services

1. Diagram of Directorate and Service Framework.



2. Brief description of Directorate and Service Framework

There are 2 key services, these being Adult Services and Children's Services.

Adult Services provide a wide range of specialist services to members of the community over eighteen years of age, who experience difficulties on a day to day basis due to problems ranging from mental health, physical or sensory disability to drug and alcohol misuse.

Children's Services provide a range of services to children, young people, and their families, in partnership with many other agencies and voluntary organisations. The overall aim is to support children and young people to remain living with their own families wherever this is safe to do so.

3. Number of Complaints by Stage Type, Service, and Targets Met

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	59	56	95%
Stage 2	0	0	0%
Escalated Stage 1 to 2	7	5	71%
Totals	66	61	92%

Of the 7 that escalated from Stage 1 to 2, 5 were completed within timescale, 1 was completed 3 days over timescale and the other 5 days over timescale. The Reason for the one being 5 days over timescale was to staff leave and their views were required in order to provide a full response to the complainant.

Table showing how the complaints were received.

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Telephone	12	0	3
Email	37	0	3
Letter	7	0	1
On-line	3	0	0
Contact Centre	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Totals	59	0	7

Tables showing summary of complaints by service, for each stage type

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Adult Services	39	38	97%
Children's Services	20	18	90%
Totals	59	56	95%

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Adult Services	0	0	0%
Children's Services	0	0	0%
Totals	0	0	0%

The table above totals 0 as no complaints progressed straight to Stage 2.

Service	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Adult Services	4	2	50%
Children's Services	3	3	100%
Totals	7	5	71%

4. Key Complaints - Identified by Type or Theme

List of key specific types, or themes, of repetitive, or pertinent complaints received during this reporting period.

Allegations made despite being cleared by the Police
 Refused a Disabled Persons Parking Place
 How case is being dealt with and conflict of interest
 Child's name taken off Child Protection Register
 Care call for medication missed
 Making too many phone calls
 Parking outside resident's property
 Length of time waiting for a care package
 Assistance not provided without consent
 Requested a change of arrangements as paying for services that are not being received
 Delay in completing financial assessment
 Care called missed
 Care Homes fees
 Assessment only focusses on negative issues
 Refusal to provide support
 Care not starting following hospital discharge
 Withdrawal of care not communicated to family
 Withdrawal of care at short notice
 Connected/kinship carer issues
 Care provided
 Unhealthy obsession with case
 Incorrect recording in Court paperwork
 Incorrect information in report

Judgement made
 Lack of support for family carers.
 Timing of care calls/unsuitable times offered
 Request change of Social Worker as no confidence in current worker
 Staff attitude inappropriate/unprofessional/rudeness
 Neighbour having Issues with young people who are supported by Social Services
 Misinformed about long term care financial charge
 Request Safeguarding Investigation be reopened
 Removal of Looked After Child
 Incorrect information being given in respect of care call
 Breach of Confidentiality as did not give consent to release information
 Delayed care costs
 Increased day services community sessions not happened
 Day services community sessions be changed from afternoon to morning sessions
 Closure of day centres and the lack of services available to clients since Covid-19
 Lack of support
 Information sharing
 Day Services consultation
 Not made aware of charge for service from certain date
 Contents of Child's Safety Plan
 Procedures not being followed

The type or themes identified above, have been extracted from the following table which shows the incoming number of complaints by specific service sectors or teams during this reporting period.

Service Group or Team	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Adult Services	43
Children's Services	23
Totals	66

5. Number of Complaints by Category

Table showing complaints by category.

	Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1.	Collaborative Working	0
2.	Decision Making	29
3.	Delay in Service Provision	4
4.	Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	8
5a.	Following Council Policies	3
5b.	Following relevant Legislation	0
6.	Accessibility of Services	2
7.	Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	5
8.	Quality of Work	7
9.	Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	3
10.	Compliance with Complaints procedure	2
11.	Combination of Categories (Non-Specific)	3
	Totals	66

6. Number of Complaints by Outcome and Lessons Learned

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
Adult Services	4	39
Children's Services	1	22
Totals	5	61

List of lessons learned. Comments on key findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that may help curtail, prevent, or impede future repeats.

The lessons learnt below relate to the 5 complaints referred to in table 5 above that were upheld.

Nature of Complaint	Lessons Learnt	Category
Staff from the day centre opposite complainant's home are parking outside complainant's home when she needs access 24/7 to her home as she is disabled.	Apology provided to complainant for any disruption caused. Staff reminded to be considerate towards residents in the street and park in the day centre car park and not outside residents' homes. The day centre has since closed.	4. Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)
Complainant unhappy with the amount of time it has taken for her grandmother to have carers put in place.	Delayed due to demand on service and staff vacancies. The assessment service commenced shortly after the complaint was made.	3. Delay in Service Provision
Complainant unhappy with the level of care provided to grandfather by private provider. Has made many complaints to the provider but nothing has been done.	Matters had not been previously raised with provider or Social Services. In respect of current matter regarding bed sheets not being changed. Apology provided to service user and family for this oversight and that service user did not receive the standard of service that we would have expected him to receive from a commissioned service. Carers reminded to change bed sheets.	8. Quality of Work
Complainant who is a newly registered foster carer never offered training despite requesting this. Not received a lockable storage box for confidential documents. Also general lack of information and not been visited 4-6 weekly/3monthly.	Not offered induction training for kinship carers until 2022 when it could be facilitated face to face. This course was not being offered during the pandemic as it was felt that it was better to be delivered face to face and not virtually. Advised of future induction training dates. A storage box was provided. Also advised to speak to Social Worker about issues. Due to restrictions and lock downs during the COVID-19 Pandemic, face to face home visits had to be stopped for significant periods of time. During this period monitoring of Children Looked After was being carried out via phone and video calls.	8. Quality of Work
Complainant unhappy that Council not accepting any fault in	Number of a number of issues with providing complainant with an accurate summary of the care costs due. Communication timeframes in responding	3. Delay in Service Provision

relation to the delayed care costs for late father and the Council should contribute towards the care costs as acknowledgment of the oversight	have been excessive and errors identified. Sincere Apologies offered to complainant for the distress and inconvenience experienced with the delayed handling the account. As a gesture of good will a discretionary reduction was applied the final account.	
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The Directorate is committed to learning from complaints received in order to influence positive change. Information from complaints is an invaluable source of user feedback. The Directorate makes the best use of this information about complaints and uses the results to inform policy and ensure that practice is changed in response to highlighted areas of concern, this is done in discussion with Senior Management to agree an action plan to address the issues.

6. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Table showing a count and list of findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that specifically relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics.

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Age	0
Disability	0
Gender Reassignment	0
Marriage and Civil Partnership	0
Pregnancy and Maternity	0
Race	0
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	0
Sex	0
Sexual Orientation	0
Welsh Language	0
Totals	0

7. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period

Identify how many referrals to the Ombudsman and list and append any relevant supplementary information here, namely, points to note, or an example data set.

1 referral was made to the Ombudsman relating to Corporate/Social Services complaints. Of the Corporate/Social Services complaints in the table below the decision was made not to investigate matters in this case.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Details of Early Resolution/recommendations</u>
OMB04	Not Investigating	No Further Action

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**EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
12TH SEPTEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED UNDER THE
SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS POLICY 1ST APRIL 2022 TO 31ST
MARCH 2023**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Scrutiny Committee with information and analysis on the operation of the Social Services Directorate's Representations and Complaints procedure from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. The report will also include a summary of the compliments received in the same period.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Representations and complaints relating to Social Services are dealt with by the Directorate's Complaints and Information Team, who also record compliments received.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 For Scrutiny Committee to note the content of the report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To monitor the complaints process to ensure effective delivery of Social Services.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 This report provides details of representations, complaints and compliments for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. The report describes the activity carried out during the period and is contained within section 5 of the report.

REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.2 A representation is a request for information or a referral for a service made by a third party (including Elected Members) on behalf of another person.

- 5.3 During the period 2022/23, the Complaints and Information Team have made every effort to ensure compliance with the Protocol that governs the sharing of information with Councillors (Cllr)/Member of Parliament (MP)/Member of Senedd (MS), ensuring that relevant consent is obtained where necessary. A flowchart has been produced and shared to provide additional guidance around representations.

COMPLAINTS

- 5.4 In 2014, Welsh Government undertook a review of the “*Listening & Learning*” complaints guidance which resulted in the introduction in August 2015 of the “*guide to handling complaints and representations by local authority social services*” (the guidance). The revised complaints process adopts a three-stage approach to complaints:

Stage 1 (Local Resolution) - The majority of complaints are dealt with in this way and most are concluded without the need for a formal investigation. Staff are required to observe established procedures, timescales and best practice at all times.

Stage 2 (Formal Investigation) - Investigations at this stage are undertaken by an externally commissioned Investigating Officer and there are statutory time limits for completion of the investigation. The complainant receives a full response from the Corporate Director, Social Services, detailing findings, conclusions and recommendations. The guidance allows for complainants to progress their concerns directly to the formal Stage 2 investigation without Stage 1 consideration if they so wish.

Ombudsman - If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 2 investigation, they can request that the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) considers their complaint.

ACTIVITY

AWARENESS RAISING

- 5.5 To ensure that all staff are acting in line with legislation, the Complaints and Information Team delivers mandatory annual awareness raising sessions to all Social Services teams, which covers the complaints process and Data Protection, with emphasis on the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). During the period 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023, 38 online sessions were delivered, reaching 371 members of staff (201 for Adults Services, 170 for Children’s Services). This is a slight decrease from the previous year, where 49 sessions were delivered to 409 members of staff.

During 2022/23 more staff have been returning to the office and we have re-introduced face to face delivery of the awareness raising sessions. During the period 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023, 11 face to face sessions were delivered, reaching 94 members of staff (36 for Adults Services, 58 for Children’s Services).

Therefore overall, the training attendance has increased on last year’s figures as this year we have provided 49 sessions, reaching 465 members of staff.

COMPLAINT REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.6 During 2022/23, 35 representations were received, of these, 25 (71%) related to Adult Services and 10 (29%) to Children’s Services. This is a large decrease on the previous year where 98 representations were received, this may be due to the additional guidance that has been produced and a reduction in the queries regarding Day Centres. As in previous years the breakdown between Adults/Children’s Services remains the same.
- 5.7 Whilst the number of representations has decreased many of them were still regarding access

to Day Services and questions around the future of Day Service provision. Other representations were received on behalf of families regarding the need for additional play/holiday schemes for children with disabilities and concerns for families that were involved in the child protection arena.

5.8 The Complaints and Information Team receive representations from a number of sources and these are detailed below for 2022/23:

- Members of the Senedd, Members of Parliament (20)
- Elected Members/Councillors (9)
- Advocates (5)
- Family Member (1)

5.9 Representations have been made through the following routes:

- Email (34)
- Letter (1)

This continues the pattern of previous years whereby email is the predominant form of communication for representations, there have been no representations made via the telephone as there have been in previous years.

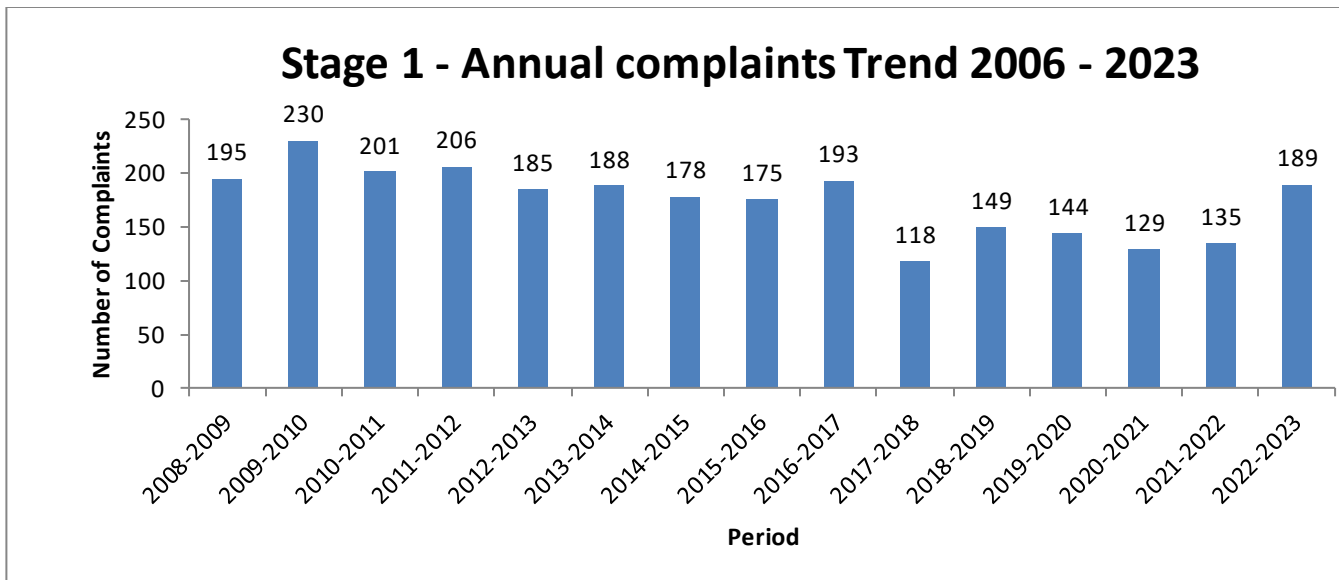
COMPLAINTS – STAGE 1

5.10 During 2022/23 the Directorate received 189 complaints, of these 11 were progressed to a stage 2 complaint investigation. The majority of the complaints continue to be resolved to the customer's satisfaction at Stage 1 and this is due to the efforts that are placed on resolution at Stage 1 of the process.

5.11 Of the 189 complaints received at Stage 1, 49 (26%) related to Adult Services, 78 (41%) to Children's Services and 62 (33%) to Corporate matters. This year's figures are higher than those for 2021/22 when we received 135 Stage 1 complaints. There has been an increase in the number of adult services and corporate complaints and we believe this to be linked to the ongoing pressures facing the Adult Social Care sector.

5.12 During 2022/23 the Complaints and Information Team have recorded the number of potential complaints which were able to be resolved prior to being logged as a formal Stage 1 complaint. Examples of which are, explaining the pressures of a national shortage of carers, asking the person to consider discussing issues directly with the allocated team prior to making a complaint and providing details on how to make a referral. This area of potential complaints has seen a continued rise from 38 in 2020/21 to 131 in 2021/22 and 155 in 2022/23.

5.13 The graph below illustrates the number of Stage 1 complaints received and responded to by the Directorate since the implementation of the statutory Welsh Government complaints guidance in April 2006, with this year showing figures rise significantly, in line with numbers seen in 2016/2017.



5.14 The Complaints and Information Team receives complaints through a number of mediums and these are detailed below for 2022/23:

- Telephone (63)
- Letter (13)
- Email (98)
- Website online form (13)
- In person (2)

5.15 The above information demonstrates the Directorate’s continued commitment to ensuring that customers have access to the complaints process in their chosen format. It also confirms the public’s continued preference for direct contact with an officer with email and telephone contact continuing to be the preferred method of contact.

5.16 The Complaints and Information Team record whether complaints are upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. This enables the Directorate to note themes and trends from the findings of complaints, to improve future practice.

5.17 Of the 189 complaints received at Stage 1 in 2022/23, the following outcomes were recorded:

- 147 complaints were not upheld
- 8 complaints were partially upheld
- 13 complaints were upheld
- 15 complaints were closed due to concurrent investigations
- 3 complaints were closed due to no contact or withdrawn by the complainant
- 2 complaints were signposted to other agencies
- 1 complaint cannot be outcomed as was ongoing at the year end

5.18 Of the 13 complaints that were upheld:

- 5 related to Adult Social Services
- 3 related to Children’s Social Services
- 5 related to the corporate complaint procedure (4 relating to concerns for the care being provided to adult relatives including staffing and care packages and 1 relating to support and training offered to a Foster Carer).

5.19 A breakdown is provided below in relation to the complaints which have been categorised as upheld along with the recommendations made to improve future practice:

- Upheld complaint Adult Services (1) – An assessment for a child with disabilities to attend a holiday playscheme was not offered, this oversight occurred due to staff shortages. The assessment to look at all areas of support was carried out following the complaint and apologies were provided.
- Upheld complaint Adult Services (2) - A service user's carers were providing teatime support and they made the decision to inform night time carers not to attend. The complainant had to call the emergency duty team to instruct the twilight staff to attend. It was acknowledged that this was an error and apologies were given.
- Upheld complaint Adult Services (3) – A service user's wheelchair had been lost at Brooklands day centre. Staff looked for the wheelchair however without success. Apologies were given to the family and a gesture of goodwill payment was made.
- Upheld complaint Adult Services (4) - Concerns were raised about how a carer treated a service user particularly her dignity not being respected. The team stressed these concerns would be treated seriously and investigated under the HR process, reassurances were given that this particular carer would not support the family again.
- Upheld complaint Adult Services (5) -. A service user who was unhappy in a residential placement has via an advocate requested for a joined up approach between Health, CHC and social services. The team agreed to allocate the social worker that the service user requested to offer this support.
- Upheld complaint Children's Services (1) – A complainant was unhappy with the social workers attitude and believed them to be negative and to have lied. Whilst the social worker explained the service user was difficult to work with, they apologised if their manner caused any upset. It was felt best to change the social worker to improve relationships going forward.
- Upheld complaint Children's Services (2) - A complainant was unhappy with the delay in completing the eligibility for care and support assessment. The assessment was not completed within the 42 day timescale, the response stated the assessment was in fact completed in timescale however it was not shared with the complainant. This complaint later progressed to a stage two complaint that was subsequently withdrawn by the complainant.
- Upheld complaint Children's Services (3) - A complainant was unhappy that sensitive documents were left with a colleague at his workplace, also the care and support plan minutes were not factual. A meeting was held with the team manager, the case was reviewed, and apologies were given for the documents being left, the complainant was given reassurances that this was not standard practice.
- Upheld complaint Corporate Services (1) – A complaint was received from a resident that lives near an adult day centre, staff and users of the centre were continually parking outside the resident's home causing her difficulties to park. The centre has since stopped operating as a day centre so should alleviate the problem, however apologies were also given.
- Upheld complaint Corporate Services (2) – Complaint received from a granddaughter who was dissatisfied with the time taken for a package of care to be put in place for her grandmother. The team explained the assessment service process and agreed that the time was unreasonable. Staff vacancies and a full waiting list contributed to the delays however the assessment service commenced shortly after the complaint.
- Upheld complaint Corporate Services (3) - Complaint from a newly registered foster carer who was unhappy with the lack of training offered, not being provided with a lockable storage box or reporting logs and a general lack of information about the role. The team agreed that there was not as much face to face interaction as would have been given previously, due to COVID restrictions. Details were given of upcoming induction sessions, the complainant was provided

with a storage box and was encouraged to discuss these types of issues directly with the social worker.

- Upheld complaint Corporate Services (4) – A family member complained regarding the care provided to her grandfather from a CCBC commissioned service. The case was investigated, and it was acknowledged that bed sheets and clean clothes had not been provided. It was felt this was a one off instance however not an acceptable standard of service, sincere apologies were given to the family.
- Upheld complaint Corporate Services (5) - There were considerable delays in processing invoices and statements for a complainant's late father's care fees. The case was fully reviewed, and a number of errors were identified. It was agreed to offer a discretionary reduction to the amount payable as a gesture of goodwill.

5.20 To ensure the appropriate identification of risk to vulnerable adults, the Complaints and Information Team and Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) Team continue to operate their joint working protocol, which is regularly reviewed.

5.21 During this year, 2 complaints have been referred to POVA, 1 has subsequently been closed with no further investigation from the safeguarding team and the complaint now closed. 1 of these complaints remains ongoing for a safeguarding investigation and is on hold until complete.

COMPLAINTS – STAGE 2

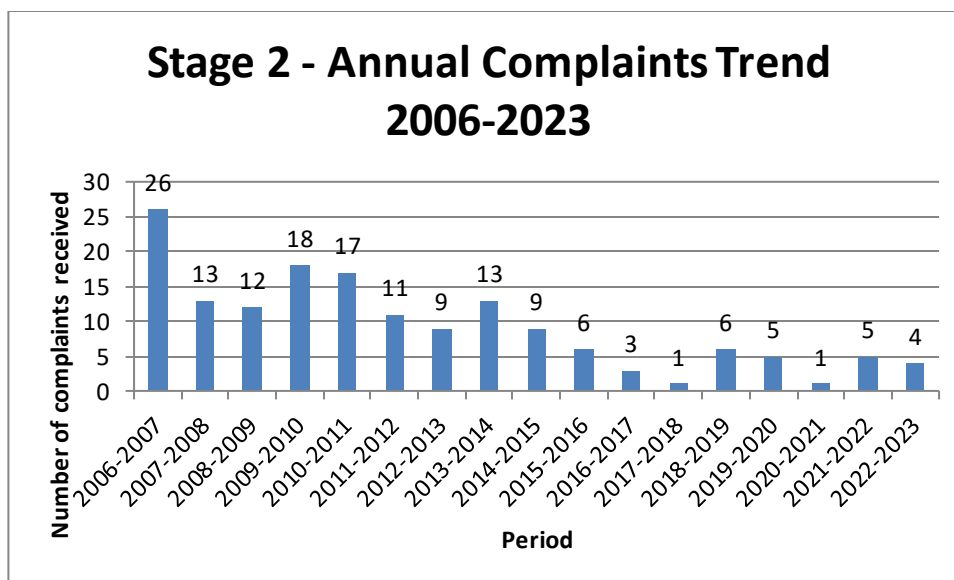
5.22 During 2022/23 the Directorate agreed to progress 11 requests to a Stage 2 investigation. Of these requests 7 have been completed under the corporate Stage 2 complaint procedure and 4 proceeded with an independent formal Stage 2 investigation under the Social Services complaints procedure.

During 2021/22 there was 5 independent Stage 2 investigations carried out under the Social Services complaints procedure.

5.23 Of the 11 requests for a Stage 2 investigation:

- 4 were relating to the corporate process for Adult's Services
- 3 were relating to the corporate process for Children's Services
- 1 relating to Adult Services was completed under the Social Services Stage 2 process following the Ombudsman directions in 2021/22.
- 3 Social Services Stage 2 investigations relating to Children's Services are ongoing at the time of this report.

5.24 The following graph shows the number of complaints progressing to the formal Social Services Stage 2 process for independent investigation since the implementation of the statutory complaint's guidance in April 2006.



OMBUDSMAN'S INVESTIGATIONS

5.25 There were 9 contacts by our customers during this year to The Ombudsman, this is less than the previous year of 14 contacts.

The outcomes of the 9 contacts as follows:

- In 5 cases, initial enquiries undertaken by The Ombudsman confirmed that CCBC had followed due processes and their investigations were therefore closed down.
- 1 case was withdrawn after day services were re-instated and the complainant was satisfied with CCBC's response.
- 2 cases were referred back to CCBC as no stage 1 had been conducted.
- In 1 case, the Ombudsman stated that CCBC should conduct a Stage 2 investigation. This was completed and included in the Stage 2 figures in point 5.23 of this report.

5.26 The Complaints and Information Team continue to have a positive relationship with the Ombudsman and attends regular training events. The team have an open and transparent dialogue with the Ombudsman and continues to discuss persistent complainants and provide consistent advice.

5.27 The high standard of evidence available to the Complaints and Information Team in the form of case recordings, copies of correspondence and assessments has supported the quality of the responses to The Ombudsman Office, and this has resulted in positive outcomes.

5.28 The Directorate appreciates the importance of learning from complaints and it is recognised that equal emphasis needs to be placed on learning from positive outcomes.

Compliments

5.29 Praise is received by teams in the form of thank you cards, letters and emails and these are sent to the Complaints and Information Team for them to record. During the year 233 compliments have been logged during the year, 166 (71%) relate to Adult's Services and 67 (29%) relate to Children's Services. This has increased on the number of compliments received compared to the previous year (126) and we have improved the process for acknowledging and recording these.

5.30 Many of the letters and cards received from service users and their families include examples of the positive impact that staff can have on a person's life. Some of these comments are included in Appendix 1, attached to the report.

5.31 During the year, 10 surveys were sent out, 1 of these were for Adult Services (10%) and 9 (90%) for Children's Services. At the time of this report all 10 surveys are ongoing.

5.32 In relation to Children's Services, a survey was completed in 2022 with prospective Foster Carers which sought their feedback on their experience of the Caerphilly Foster Panel. A total of 10 questionnaires were completed. Some comments included:

- Was very comfortable, was listened to by everyone involved.
- Completed via teams.
- Meeting was held on time, everyone introduced themselves and explained what they do. I did not feel uncomfortable with any part of the procedure.
- It was a professional and safe environment. I felt we were asked relevant questions with regards to becoming foster carers and we were given supportive feedback.
- Would have preferred to meet face to face.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made in this report.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 This report is for information, so the completion of an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 All responses from consultees have been incorporated within the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- Welsh Assembly Government's "A Guide to Handling Complaints 2014"
- Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014
- Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018

Author: Nicola Evans, Complaints and Information Team Manager
E-mail: evansn9@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Social Services Senior Management Team
Councillor Elaine Forehead, Cabinet Member for Social Services
Councillor Donna Cushing, Chair of Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Marina Chacon-Dawson, Vice Chair of Scrutiny Committee
Carl Evans, Corporate Information Governance Manager

Appendices:
Appendix 1

Comments from service users and their families

Adults:

- **Feedback from a Social Worker supporting a resident move into Brodawel Care Home**

“I visited X last week and was overcome with how calm, settled, happy and well adjusted she presented. She had settled into her own surroundings, was not displaying any of the behaviours previously and I was able to observe her interacting with the other residents and staff. She was having a laugh, making jokes and generally looked so well in herself. This is such a transformation from how she presented in her flat. It is lovely to see X like this and I know the family are so grateful to Brodawel for their help and support. They have also helped X to sleep in her bed which she hadn't done for years when in her flat. So, in conclusion, I just want to say what an amazing team you have working in Brodawel”.

- **Compliments to a Social Worker in the North Older People's Team**

“You're a diamond, on behalf of me and the family you have been invaluable and I'm sure if my dad could understand he would thank you also, you have not only looked after my dad but us as a family”.

- **Compliments to a Social Worker in the South Older People's Team**

“From my first introduction to X, over the phone, he has been really easy to deal with. I have found him to very approachable, very clear about the processes to follow and has been exceptionally professional in his dealings with our family. In our meeting the current challenges within the social care sector were explained to us and how this has an impact on what options we had and continue to have for mum. The immediate support required was respite care and X has been really helpful in supporting mums needs and ensuring that the transition for her into the care home environment was very smooth and stress free for mum and the family”.

- **Compliments to a Social Worker in the East Older People's Team**

“My mother is 94 and it became increasingly obvious that she could no longer live independently, it was then that X was assigned to her. I had no idea where to go for help nor what to do. X talked us gently through our options and was an incredible support and an absolute mine of useful information. She was always compassionate when talking to my mother and put her welfare at the heart of everything she did. We both felt we had a friend on our side who could help us find our way through a complex system. Always polite and friendly she was a true professional and we would both like to thank her for making a very difficult time so much easier”.

- **Compliments to a Worker in the Drug & Alcohol Team**

An email was received from a Social Worker in a Children's locality team to “recognise X's outstanding work with one of the most difficult cases worked to date. X has been supporting a mother of the children open to me with her substance issue and mental health, however she has done much more than this in reality. X has kept in constant communication with me, particularly as we have navigated managing risk for not only the children, but their mother as well as their grandmother. I have to say that I have been lucky to have been working alongside X, despite our roles being different, her professionalism, compassion and communication has been second to none”.

- **A Facebook post from an entertainer at Ty Clyd Residential Care Home**

“What an incredible hour, up there with the best gigs I have ever, laughs, tears, a biscuit machine, a staff dance, singing and dancing. The staff are truly a credit”.

Childrens:

- **Email received from a Foster Carer**

"We'd like them to know how thankful we are for all the help and support we get off you day in day out...but especially this past year. I would like to take this opportunity to let you know how amazing X has been whilst we have gone through the adoption process with our Son. Her professionalism and knowledge emanates, she constantly put us at ease which wasn't an easy task, as I had lots of questions at times. She kept us informed and updated and supported us through everything, she always replies in a very timely and efficient manner. She is a credit to her profession and an asset to your department. We would also like to say a massive thank you to the Family Placement Team...you have supported us throughout the whole process and have been so understanding and patient with our needs. It's a privilege to work with you all. A heartfelt thanks to her, FPT and Ccbc you have made our dreams come true and our family complete...he was the missing piece we didn't know was missing".

- **Risca Childrens Services Team**

Chocolates, flowers and a thank you card received from a young person who's case was about to close "Its mad to see that I'm 18, It feels weird but without everyone's help I dunno if I could've made it this far. Thank you isn't enough for what you've done".

- **Feedback to Caerphilly East Childrens Services Team**

Feedback from a judge who wanted to "compliment the Local Authority on making the application to the Court" and "felt reassured by the child-focussed approach taken".

- **Bargoed Childrens Services Team**

A thank you card received "Cant believe we're saying goodbye! Thank you for everything you've done for us. You'll never know how much you've restored my faith in Social Services. You're a real person and the service really does need more like you in it".

- **Feedback from Childrens Guardian regarding Social Worker in Rhymney Childrens Services Team**

"I would like to take this opportunity to commend the social worker, who has worked this case tirelessly. It is my opinion that she has gone above and beyond of what is expected to ensure that the children have been appropriately supported and safeguarded despite the challenges she has encountered".

- **Youth Offending Service**

Text received from a parent "Thank you so much, we are so grateful for all the help we have received from you. We're all getting along so much better now and X is back in school and is like a new person. We truly are so grateful for all the help we have received and for getting to know you both."

- **Feedback to Intensive Support Team**

Text received from a parent, "just wanna say a Massive thank you for when you worked with me throughout my pregnancy. The work we done helped me so much to become a new mum again."

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CABINET - 15TH NOVEMBER 2023

**SUBJECT: REVISED TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT MODEL –
UPDATE REPORT**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT



1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the pilot of the Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings which were originally approved for a 12-month trial; and
- 1.2 To recommend to Cabinet to adopt this new Town Centre Management Model on a permanent basis and formally disband the old Town Centre Management Groups. The revised format has been proposed to encourage greater stakeholder participation and communication, especially that of businesses.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The existing Town Centre Management Groups (TCMGs) were introduced from 1996. Their original purpose, to focus on practical issues, still remains, but over the past few years it has been recognised that there has not been an appropriate level of business representation and engagement via the TCMGs, and the timing of these meetings were not conducive to attracting business involvement. Town centres are evolving, and the way in which local authorities manage them therefore needs to become more effective to fulfil town centre regeneration / support objectives.
- 2.2 Having regard to available resources and the need to support post-Covid economic recovery across our town centres, Cabinet approved a proposal to trial an alternative model of the TCMGs on 10th November 2021. This recommendation was also unanimously agreed by Scrutiny before the commencement in January 2022.
- 2.3 This trial was originally approved for a period of 12 months to November 2022, but in view of staffing changes within the Town Centre Management Team and the time needed to implement the new model and assess its effectiveness in view of post-Covid retail recovery, the trial was extended under delegated powers for a further 12 months.
- 2.4 Three rounds of Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings (two in Caerphilly) under the new format have been held over the last 18 months. Meetings are now held at

venues within each town centre to make attendance more convenient and at a time more desirable for businesses. Often the venues are private businesses not only to support town centre businesses but to encourage the business community to come together and support one another.

- 2.5 The new model of meetings has been positively received by town centre stakeholders and there has been a noticeable increase in business attendance and engagement at these meetings since the pilot was implemented.
- 2.6 The Stakeholder Meetings form part of the new Town Centre Management Model, which incorporates a Town Centre Audit, an audit report (quarterly) and communication with stakeholders, Officers and Elected Members.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet are requested to consider the reported outcome of the trial and as a consequence:
 - 3.1.1 Approve the adoption of the new Town Centre Stakeholder meetings as part of the new Town Centre Management Model.
 - 3.1.2 Agree to formally disband the old Town Centre Management Groups.
 - 3.1.3 Approve the new Terms of Reference for the Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings as set out in **Appendix 1** of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The new format of Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings will encourage greater attendance and engagement of businesses and other town centre stakeholders.
- 4.2 The new format has made stakeholder engagement more efficient, transparent, and effective.

5. THE REPORT

Background

- 5.1 Following local government reorganisation in 1996, the Council resolved to establish a Caerphilly TCMG. This was quickly followed by similar groups in Bargoed, Blackwood, Ystrad Mynach and Risca. The full background relating to the formation of these groups is included in the report submitted to Cabinet on 10th November 2021.
- 5.2 Originally, it was agreed that the TCMGs would act as a consultative forum for proposals affecting the town centre, with a particular focus on practical issues. In the early 2000s, the primary purpose of the TCMGs was redefined as a consultative forum for all stakeholders with an interest in the economic, physical, and social well-being of the town centres.
- 5.3 The engagement of retail businesses and other stakeholders within the TCMGs has been mixed. Chambers of Trade in our principal town centres are currently inactive,

and in their prior format, only constituted groups were invited to attend and participate. This led to a noticeable lack of business representation at these meetings.

Proposed new Business Engagement Model

- 5.4 Given the success of business events held with other partners as a suitable forum for information-sharing and consultation with business, it was considered that this format should be replicated for business partners and other stakeholders in our town centres as an alternative to the Town Centre Management Groups model. A report was presented to Cabinet on 10th November 2021 (which was approved), for an alternative operating model of town centre engagement to be trialled and for the TCMG meetings to be suspended during the trial/pilot period. Terms of Reference for the pilot were also approved by Cabinet, including a more informal meeting structure to encourage participation from businesses in wide group discussions or via conversations in the post-meeting networking. Speakers and other organisations would be invited to engage in the meeting and respond to queries.
- 5.5 This trial was originally approved for a period of 12 months to November 2022, but in view of staffing changes within the Town Centre Management Team and the time needed to implement the new model and assess its effectiveness in view of post-Covid retail recovery, the trial was extended under delegated powers for a further 12 months.

Town Centre Support

- 5.6 The Principal Officer for Town Centres and Business Support left post in January 2022, and their replacement was appointed in late Summer 2022. Two Town Centre Support Officers were also appointed at the end of the calendar year 2022.
- 5.7 The new Town Centre Team recognise business and stakeholder engagement as a priority and have worked extensively with town centre businesses to obtain up-to-date contact. A tremendous amount of engagement has been carried out, including face to face visits, telephone calls and follow up emails. A new town centre database, a working document that is constantly updated by having the presence and support of the town centre team, now gives us the ability to effectively communicate, and keep abreast of what is happening in our Principal Towns,
- 5.8 In line with the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns the Regeneration Service is developing a series of Place Making plans for a number of our town centres, based on the Approved and Emerging Master Plans to regenerate these town centres. Place-making is the process used to shape our public spaces and buildings to improve a community's cultural, economic, social and environmental situation with community-based participation a critical part of the process. The Town Centre Support team therefore has a key role in the development of Place Making Plans by utilising the new town centre management model proposed to engage with the business and local community to aid the place making plan process.

New Town Centre Management Model

- 5.9 As part of the alternative operating model of town centre engagement agreed by Cabinet, a new Town Centre Management Model was implemented in late 2022. A flowchart detailing the process is set out at **Appendix 2** of this report.

- 5.10 The new process aims to encourage greater participation of businesses and other stakeholders, to improve dialogue, to create more of a collaborative way of working, to assist in the development of the towns and to feedback ideas and suggestions that could be implemented. A Town Centre Audit is undertaken in each principal town centre twice a year and monthly meetings are held with Officers and the Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change to progress actions against the audit items. The audit is a working document whereby anything reported either via email or face to face is updated and discussed in the monthly meeting enabling the entire process to be more efficient and reactive as well as proactive.

Briefing notes summarising the progress made against the town centre audits are also circulated to Elected Members and town/community councillors on a quarterly basis.

- 5.11 A survey on the new Town Centre Management Model process was conducted in July 2023. Responses were received from Elected Members, town/community councillors and CCBC Officers and a summary of the responses is set out at **Appendix 3** of this report.
- 5.12 In conjunction with the town centre audit process, a series of business networking/stakeholder meetings were arranged, which commenced in early 2022. A summary of the meetings and the feedback received to date are set out in the following sections.

Business Networking Events – Spring/Summer 2022 – Round 1

- 5.13 Invitations for the first round of meetings (initially referred to as Business Networking Events) were sent to existing members of the TCMGs as well as the wider town centre business community (within the relevant town centre boundary as identified in the Local Development Plan). All town centre businesses were invited wherever contact details were held, although it should be recognised due to the Covid-19 pandemic and business movement during that time, many of the contacts had become outdated. The meetings were also advertised on the Council's website and social media channels. Administrative support for these meetings was provided by the wider Business Enterprise Renewal Team (BERT) due to the vacancies within the Town Centre Management Team at that time.
- 5.14 The initial round of meetings were held in Spring/Summer 2022 and comprised a mixture of morning and evening evenings. It should be noted that attendance for these meetings was low (Appendix 4).

Business Networking Events – Autumn 2022 – Round 2

- 5.15 The second round of meetings was arranged for Autumn 2022 (Appendix 4). Invitations were again sent to existing members of the TCMGs as well as the wider town centre business community (wherever contact details were held). The meetings were also advertised on the Council's website and social media channels.
- 5.16 The meeting agenda followed the same format across all five town centres. Attendees received a presentation from Adrian Emmett (a community-minded local entrepreneur based in Treorchy) who outlined the collaborative work undertaken to make Treorchy a thriving town centre, culminating in them winning "High Street of the Year" in 2020, with an emphasis on business and community engagement and a sense of ownership across the town, and how this model of good practice could be

applied to Caerphilly County Borough’s principal town centres. Attendees also received updates from the BERT team and were introduced to the new Town Centre Management Team.

- 5.17 Attendance at the round two events was much better. There was an average of around twenty participants per meeting, which allowed productive discussions to take place. It was recognised at these fora that business attendance levels could be improved further, and it was anticipated that with the introduction of the Town Centre Team, this would be naturally progressed.

Survey - Business Networking Events - 2022

- 5.18 A survey covering both the Spring/Summer and Autumn 2022 Business Networking events was sent out to attendees in January 2023. Unfortunately, the response rate was low on this occasion, with only twenty surveys completed across the 5 towns, despite the best efforts of Officers to obtain further responses. A summary of the responses received is included at Appendix 4 of this report.

- 5.19 The responses varied across each town centre and were largely dependent on the discussions held at each individual meeting.

Question

- *“The purpose of the event was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres. To what extent do you feel the event achieved its purpose?”*

Table 1 – Responses to Question on Engagement

Town	Fully	Partially	Not at all
Bargoed	-	83%	17%
Blackwood	40%	40%	20%
Ystrad Mynach	-	50%	50%
Caerphilly	25%	75%	-
Risca	100%	-	-

It was evident from the responses that further work needed to be done in this area.

- 5.20 Many respondents referenced the low attendance levels at the event and expressed a need to improve awareness of these events amongst local businesses. The full Town Centre Team were not in post until December 22 and therefore did not have the opportunity to maximise business engagement. The responses around the purpose and content of the event were generally positive, with the guest speaker from Treorchy being particularly well-received. Several responses referenced the overall tone of the meeting, with some businesses feeling that there was too much negativity expressed and there was a lack of constructive ideas and solutions during the ensuing discussions.

One comment made was *‘enjoyed the meeting in regards to VZTA, not to get caught up in Caerphilly politics and be super focused on moving forward’.*(Caerphilly)

Another comment from a Town Cllr was *‘less input from Cllrs and more input from*

businesses'(Blackwood)

Officers recognise this feedback and are working on meeting formats that will reduce negativity and encourage greater business participation.

- 5.21 The feedback was generally positive regarding the engagement activity carried out to date and was appreciative of the expertise of the BERT team whilst also recognising the collective experience of businesses, traders and residents and the need to work collaboratively.

Survey – Future Meetings and Events – February 2023

- 5.22 After reflecting upon the feedback results of the meetings in 2022, a follow-up survey was sent to businesses and other stakeholders in February 2023 to gauge what topics would be of interest for future meetings, what days and times would be preferred and questions on town centre events.
- 5.23 46 responses were received, with the main topics of interest being town centre developments, town centre events, funding/grants, and community safety. There was a high level of interest in digital development, training opportunities, business-to-business networking, and advertisement/promotion.
- 5.24 There was no discernible preference on which day would be most suited for stakeholder meetings. The majority of respondents favoured a meeting time after 6pm (31%), although 25% did state between 3pm-6pm as a preference.

Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings – Spring 2023 – Round 3

- 5.25 With the above feedback in mind, a third round of meetings was arranged for Spring 2023 (Appendix 5). The meetings were re-named “Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings”, to better reflect the collaborative nature of these meetings.
- 5.26 Invitations including the agenda were sent to all businesses and other stakeholders where contact details were held. Reminder emails were sent closer to the time, and the Town Centre team also visited retailers to remind them of the meetings and to encourage attendance.
- 5.27 The meeting agenda followed the same format across all five town centres. Attendees received a presentation from a guest speaker, updates from the CCBC Business Team, Regeneration Team, Community Safety Team, and an update on town centre events. The Caerphilly and Bargoed stakeholder meetings also heard from two local business owners who spoke passionately about the need for all stakeholders to work collaboratively, to take ownership and to have pride in their towns and encouraged the formation of Business Community Groups.
- 5.28 There was a noticeable increase in attendance at some of the 2023 meetings as illustrated in the table below:

Table 2 - Comparison of Business Attendance at Meetings:

Town	Spring/Summer 2022	Autumn 2022	Spring 2023
Bargoed	4	1*	12
Blackwood	7	5	6
Ystrad Mynach	6	4	8
Caerphilly	n/a	5	14
Risca	1	2	2

*1 town centre business but 6 stakeholders from the wider business community also in attendance.

Survey – Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings – Spring 2023

- 5.29 A survey was sent out to attendees following the Spring 2023 stakeholder meetings. The survey response rate was more favourable on this occasion, with forty-four surveys completed across the 5 towns. A summary of the responses received is included at Appendix 5 of this report.
- 5.30 Business attendance continued to be a key theme; respondents expressed a need to improve awareness of these events to maximise participation from local businesses. Overall, respondents welcomed the presentation from the guest speaker, although some attendees felt they did not have the opportunity to discuss other agenda items in detail or raise town centre issues which they felt to be important, due to time constraints. Some suggested that workshop or focus group sessions would be beneficial to future meetings.
- 5.31 Responses around the purpose and content of the event were generally positive. Some participants expressed a view that the negative comments were not conducive to the meeting and became political in nature. Respondents commented upon the benefits of bringing businesses together in this new meeting format.
- 5.32 The results of this survey suggest that the increased level of engagement with businesses is beginning to have a positive impact on these meetings, a main indicator being in response to the question:
- *“The purpose of the meeting was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres on matters of interest to them. To what extent do you feel the meeting achieved its purpose?”*
- 5.33 The majority of respondents selected “Fully” or “Partially, compared to the majority selecting “Partially” or “Not at all” in 2022. See table below.

Table 3 - Feedback on Meeting Achieving its Purpose

2022 Meetings

Town	Fully	Partially	Not at all
Bargoed	-	83%	17%
Blackwood	40%	40%	20%
Ystrad Mynach	-	50%	50%
Caerphilly	25%	75%	-
Risca	100%	-	-

2023 Meetings

Town	Fully	Partially	Not at all
Bargoed	79%	21%	-
Blackwood	73%	27%	-
Ystrad Mynach	50%	50%	-
Caerphilly	71%	29%	-
Risca	50%	50%	-

- 5.34 The responses regarding the meeting arrangements were also noticeably more positive compared to the 2022 survey. The majority of respondents now appear to be very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the meeting overall:

Table 4 – Overall Satisfaction Levels with Meetings

2022 Meetings

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Bargoed	-	66%	17%	17%	-
Blackwood	40%	20%	20%	20%	-
Ystrad Mynach	-	33%	17%	17%	33%
Caerphilly	25%	75%	-	-	-
Risca	-	100%	-	-	-

2023 Meetings

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Bargoed	50%	43%	-	-	7%
Blackwood	45%	45%	-	10%	-
Ystrad Mynach	40%	40%	10%	10%	-
Caerphilly	71%	29%	-	-	-
Risca	100%	-	-	-	-

It is clear that the way in which we have adapted our approach has seen rising satisfaction levels within the business community. (Table 4)

- 5.35 In response to the question “*How did you hear about the meeting?*”, a high percentage of respondents referenced the Town Centre Team by name, suggesting they were made aware of these meetings through face-to-face engagement which demonstrates the positive impact the town centre team is having.

Conclusion

- 5.36 The business community is at the heart of our town centres and the proposed Town Centre Model facilitates more business involvement and collaboration between all Officers and stakeholders.

- 5.37 From the engagement with stakeholders and the survey responses, the revised format is encouraging greater business and stakeholder involvement, compared to the old style of Town Centre Management Groups.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 It is assumed based on the evidence to date that the new Town Centre Management Model encourages greater participation of all stakeholders and improves dialogue and service demand. This creates a more collaborative way of working which will improve the sustainability of town centres.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The proposed changes to the format of the TCMG meetings will have a neutral impact on protected characteristics and people who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

The proposals will contribute to the existing delivery of the well-being objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Corporate Plan. The recommendations in this report will assist the Authority in its duties as a public body under the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 to contribute to the following well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and,
- A Wales of cohesive communities.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out the sustainable development principles against which all public bodies in Wales should assess their decision-making. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the well-being of future generations through maximising the contribution public bodies make towards the well-being goals. The principle is also known as the five ways of working and the following are relevant in relation to this report:

- Long Term – Developing long-term aspirations and improvements to our town centres requires effective engagement with the town centre community.
- Prevention – Business and community concerns with town centre problems or issues can be raised quickly and effectively to prevent escalation and long-term implications.
- Integration – Private and public sector partnership is more effective through active engagement, which can be achieved through effective forums such as the Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings.
- Collaboration – The Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings are inherently collaborative groups when operating effectively.
- Involvement – The Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings aim to involve all interested parties in consultation and engagement. The new format, location and timing of the meetings is anticipated to lead to better attendance and

engagement with businesses and other key stakeholders.

Link to full Integrated Impact Assessment

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The cost of hiring appropriate venues and any other requirements for the stakeholder meetings will be met through the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team's core Town Centre Management budget.
- 8.2 The town centre team comprises of three officers, a Principal Town Centre Officer and two town centre support officers, these posts are funded from the core budget. The town centre Principal Officer has been in post for 12 months and the two support officers have been in post for approximately 10 months. It has been recognised, from various stakeholders and staff, that there has been an increase in productivity, communication and collaboration that has already seen benefits within our town centres. The new management model will be managed by the existing team so there will be no management costs associated with the new model.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The organisation and running of the meetings will be incorporated into the Business Enterprise and Renewal Team's work programme. Officers from other departments may be required to attend stakeholder and town centre audit meetings, but this is an ongoing commitment from the established and long-term operation of the TCMGs.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The report has been circulated to the consultees listed below and all comments incorporated into this version of the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000. This is a Cabinet function.

Author: Joanne Hillier-Raikes, Principal Officer – Town Centres and Business Support, raikej@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Cllr. Jamie Pritchard, Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change
Councillor G. Johnston, Chair of Corporate Services and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Councillor A. McConnell, Vice Chair of Corporate Services and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning
Allan Dallimore, Regeneration Services Manager
Paul Hudson, Business Enterprise Renewal Team Leader
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer

Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer - Equalities and Welsh Language
 Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
 Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
 Councillor Tudor Davies, Aberbargoed and Bargoed Ward Member
 Councillor Dawn Ingram-Jones, Aberbargoed and Bargoed Ward Member
 Councillor Dianne Price, Aberbargoed and Bargoed Ward Member
 Councillor Carol Andrews – Gilfach Ward
 Councillor Nigel Dix, Blackwood Ward Member
 Councillor Kevin Etheridge, Blackwood Ward Member
 Councillor Andrew Farina-Childs, Blackwood Ward Member
 Councillor Marina Chacon-Dawson - Cefn Fforest and Pengam Ward
 Councillor Teresa Heron - Cefn Fforest and Pengam Ward
 Councillor Shane Williams - Cefn Fforest and Pengam Ward
 Councillor Anne Broughton-Pettit, Morgan Jones Ward Member
 Councillor Shayne Cook, Morgan Jones Ward Member
 Councillor Colin Elsbury, St Martins Ward Member
 Councillor James Fussell, St Martins Ward Member
 Councillor Steve Kent, St Martins Ward Member
 Councillor Christine Forehead - Van Ward
 Councillor Elaine Forehead - Van Ward
 Councillor Nigel George, Risca East Ward Member
 Councillor Arianna Leonard, Risca East Ward Member
 Councillor Philippa Leonard, Risca East Ward Member
 Councillor Bob Owen, Risca West Ward Member
 Councillor Ceri Wright, Risca West Ward Member
 Councillor Alan Angel, Ystrad Mynach Ward Member
 Councillor Martyn James, Ystrad Mynach Ward Member
 Councillor Donna Cushing - Hengoed Ward
 Councillor Teresa Parry - Hengoed Ward
 Bargoed Town Council
 Blackwood Town Council
 Caerphilly Town Council
 Gelligaer Community Council
 Risca Town Council

Background Papers:

[Cabinet Report – Town Centre Management Groups – 10th November 2021](#)

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings – Terms of Reference
- Appendix 2 Flowchart – New Town Centre Management Model Pilot
- Appendix 3 Summary of survey responses - Town Centre Management Model Pilot
- Appendix 4 Summary of survey responses - Business Networking Meetings - 2022
- Appendix 5 Summary of survey responses - Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings - Spring 2023
- Appendix 6 Summary of responses - Consultees

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Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings Terms of Reference

Primary Purpose

Town Centre Stakeholder Groups will operate in Bargoed, Blackwood, Caerphilly, Risca and Ystrad Mynach, as consultative and engagement forums for all stakeholders with an interest in the economic, physical and social well-being of the Principal Town Centres. Each Town Centre Stakeholder Group will:

- Maintain a dialogue between Council representatives and key stakeholders in the Town Centre;
- Act as the link between the services provided by the Council and the Town Centre business community;
- Influence and monitor the future development and diversification of the Town Centre;
- Assist in the development of regeneration initiatives which may impact upon the Town Centre;
- Contribute to the preparation of Placemaking Plans and Masterplans for the Town Centre;
- Consider operational issues that may affect the day-to-day running of the Town Centre.

Meeting Structure

The meeting structure will be informal in nature and encourage participation from attendees in wide group discussions or via conversations in the post-meeting networking. The networking opportunity will form part of the agenda to encourage participants to engage in this element of the meeting. Speakers and other organisations will be present to engage and answer questions or queries. Examples of subject matter that will be the focus of the breakfast/evening meetings are:

- Consultation on strategic documents that impact upon the town centre.
- Partner organisation initiatives, such as those to reduce or combat retail crime.
- Major developments, such as housing or employment sites.
- Regeneration projects/initiatives.
- Training/development opportunities.
- Cyber security and technology support for businesses.
- Presentations from organisations offering various support mechanisms for businesses.
- Updates on town centre events and encouraging business participation as a whole-town approach.

This format will be more beneficial to all town centre stakeholders for a variety of reasons, including:

- The meetings will be held in a local venue at a time outside of business hours to enable business attendance.
- Stakeholders can be represented even if they are not part of a formal organisation (such as a Chamber of Trade).
- Expert speakers will be able to attend and offer advice and support on a wide range of aspects that are pertinent to town centres.
- Attendees can network and facilitate business to business contact.
- Workshop sessions to encourage the sharing of stakeholder views/ideas.

Membership

- Chamber of Trade or similar town centre organisations;
- Representatives of town centre businesses (located within the town centre boundary);
- Community/Town Councils;
- Shopping Centre Managers (where they exist);
- Civic Society (where they exist);
- Police;
- CCBC Community Safety;
- Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change and Local Ward Members).

Administrative Support

Business Enterprise & Renewal Team – Caerphilly County Borough Council.

Frequency

Stakeholder Meetings will take place twice a year.

**Town Centre Stakeholder Groups
Appendix**

Wards Eligible To Attend Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings

Bargoed TCSM- Aberbargoed and Bargoed Ward, Gilfach Ward

Blackwood TCSM– Blackwood Ward, Cefn Fforest and Pengam Ward

Caerphilly TCSM- Morgan Jones Ward, St. Martins Ward, Van Ward

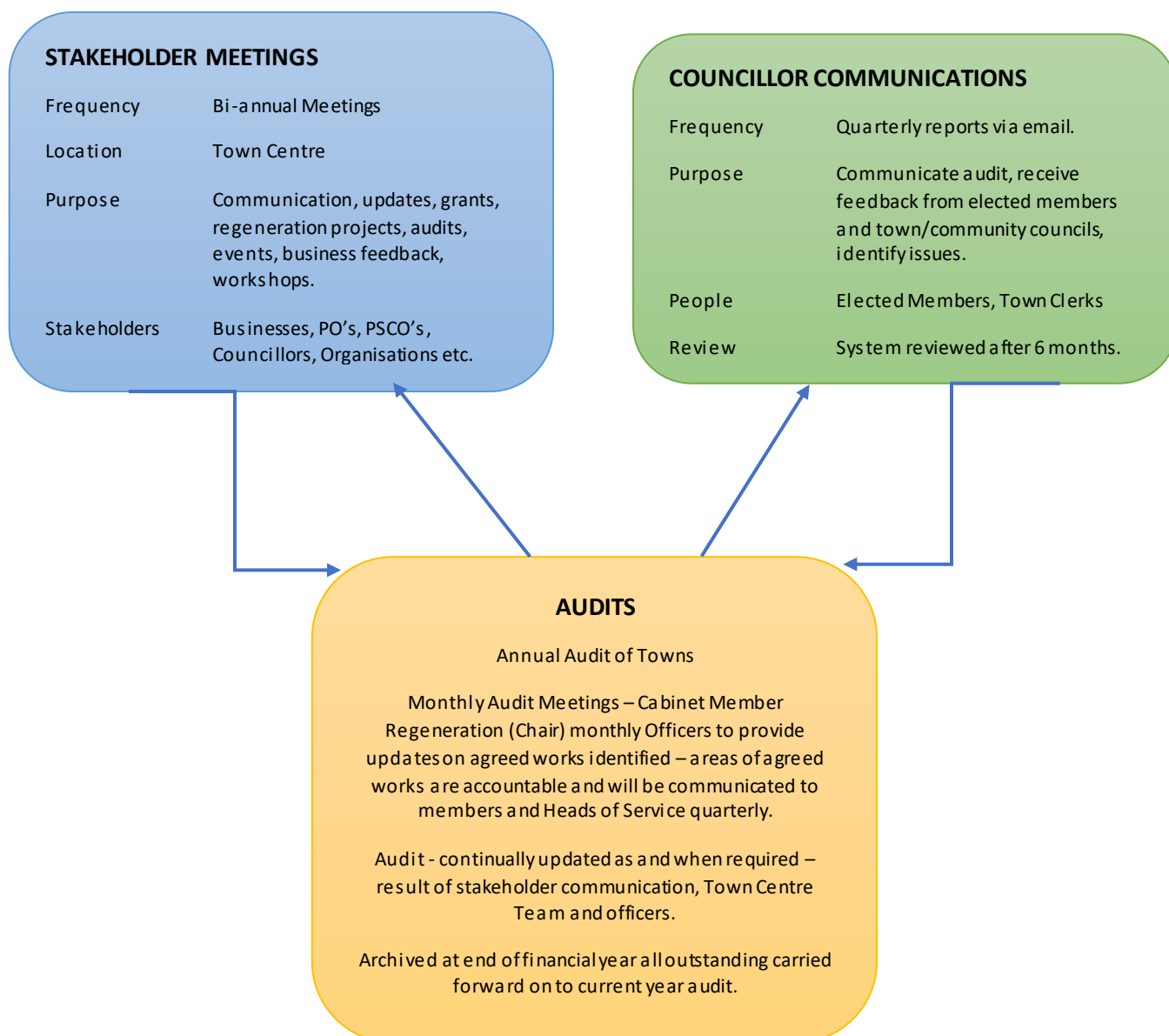
Risca TCSM- Risca East Ward, Risca West Ward

Ystrad Mynach TCSM– Hengoed Ward, Ystrad Mynach Ward

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Flowchart – New Town Centre Management Model Pilot

Town Centre – Pilot Model – 2023 (extended)



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Summary of survey responses – Town Centre Management Model Pilot**Are you a:**

Elected Member	5 (38%)
Town/ Community Council Representative	4 (31%)
CCBC Officer	4 (31%)

Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree
The new Town Centre Management model is effective and is achieving its overall aims.	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	0
Communication with the Town Centre Team is clear, efficient and practical.	9 (69%)	4 (31%)	0
The Town Centre Audit process is timely, productive and beneficial to the town centres.	10 (77%)	3 (23%)	0
The Town Centre Audit Briefing Notes that are circulated are useful and informative.	11 (85%)	2 (15%)	0

Summary of comments received regarding the Town Centre Management Model Pilot

One Elected Member welcomed the pilot and was complimentary of the work carried out in their ward to improve the overall look of the town centre.

Another Elected Member praised the efficiency of the new Town Centre team and whilst the Member was of the view that the previous model had been an excellent forum for dealing with town centre-related matters, they did express a need to fully support the new Town Centre Management Model.

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Summary of survey responses - Business Networking Meetings - Spring/Summer and Autumn 2022

The following meetings were arranged:

Spring/Summer 2022

TOWN	DATE	VENUE	TIME
Risca	Tuesday 22nd February 2022	Microsoft Teams	8.30 am
Caerphilly	Tuesday 5th April 2022 (meeting cancelled due to low response)	Microsoft Teams	n/a
Ystrad Mynach	Wednesday 15th June 2022	Llancaiach Fawr	8.00 am
Blackwood	Wednesday 13th July 2022	Blackwood Miners' Institute	5.30 pm
Bargoed	Friday 29th July 2022	Bargoed Library	5.00 pm

Autumn 2022

TOWN	DATE	VENUE	TIME
Risca	Wednesday 3 rd August 2022	Risca RFC	5.30pm
Caerphilly	Wednesday 7 th September 2022	Gatehouse	8.00am
Bargoed	Wednesday 12 th October 2022	Bargoed Library	5.00pm
Ystrad Mynach	Wednesday 16 th November 2022	Centre of Sporting Excellence	5.00pm
Blackwood	Wednesday 7 th December 2022	Blackwood Miners' Institute	8.00am

Bargoed

Attendance

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>	<u>Town/Community Councillors</u>	<u>Other Stakeholders</u>	<u>Support Officers</u>
29/07/23	4	3	1	2	5
12/10/23	1	2	1	6	8

Survey Response Rate

6/20	30%
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Event arrangements

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Event overall	0	4 (66%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	0
Content of event	2 (33%)	3 (50%)	1 (17%)	0	0
Location of event	2 (33%)	4 (67%)	0	0	0
Event venue	1 (17%)	5 (83%)	0	0	0
Duration of event	3 (50%)	2 (33%)	0	1 (17%)	0
Time of day for event	3 (50%)	2 (33%)	0	1 (17%)	0

How did you hear about the event?

Letter	1 (17%)
CCBC email/social media	3 (50%)
Former member of the Bargoed TCMG	1 (17%)
Not sure	1 (16%)

The purpose of the event was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres. To what extent do you feel the event achieved its purpose?

Fully	0
Partially	5 (83%)
Not at all	1 (17%)

How likely are you to attend future events?

Very likely	3 (50%)
Somewhat likely	3 (50%)
Somewhat unlikely	0
Very unlikely	0

Summary of comments received

A number of respondents referenced the low attendance levels at the event and expressed the need to promote awareness of these events to maximise attendance and contributions from local businesses. Attendees suggested setting the dates in advance as far as possible for the year ahead to give local businesses sufficient notice to attend, and also suggested varying the timings (e.g. one afternoon and one evening session) to maximise stakeholder attendance.

In terms of the responses around the purpose and content of the event, one business welcomed the achievements highlighted by the speaker from Treorchy and suggested that this success could be replicated in Bargoed, such as setting up a business committee to take ownership of local projects. Another attendee felt that the guest presentation could have been shorter, and therefore felt disengaged from the event, as they had been hoping to hear more from CCBC Officers and fellow Bargoed businesses (rather than a speaker from outside the area).

One respondent expressed the need to have a set agenda to make the discussions as focused and as relevant as possible, whilst several attendees highlighted the need for these meetings to concentrate on positive outcomes and with a focus on constructive comments. One respondent hoped there would be more opportunity to engage with fellow businesses at the next event.

The feedback was generally supportive of the engagement activity carried out to date and was appreciative of the expertise of the BERT team whilst also recognising the collective experience of businesses, traders and residents and the need to work together collaboratively. It was felt that the momentum around these events needs to be maintained and that these activities have the potential to make a difference across the town centre, provided there is sufficient engagement and discussion with the people of Bargoed.

Blackwood

Attendance

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>	<u>Town/Community Councillors</u>	<u>Other Stakeholders</u>	<u>Support Officers</u>
13/07/22	7	3	4	4	4
07/12/22	5	2	1	5	8

Survey Response Rate

5/29	17%
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Event arrangements

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Event overall	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	0
Content of event	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	0	1 (20%)	0
Location of event	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	0	0	0
Event venue	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	0	0	0
Duration of event	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	0	0
Time of day for event	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	0	0

How did you hear about the event?

CCBC email/online/social media	4 (80%)
Through the Town Centre Management Team	1 (20%)

The purpose of the event was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres. To what extent do you feel the event achieved its purpose?

Fully	2 (40%)
Partially	2 (40%)
Not at all	1 (20%)

How likely are you to attend future events?

Very likely	3 (60%)
Somewhat likely	1 (20%)
Somewhat unlikely	1 (20%)
Very unlikely	0

Summary of comments received

Some respondents expressed the need for greater engagement with local businesses in order to improve attendance and maximise the purpose of the event.

In terms of the responses around the purpose and content of the event, one business felt that the guest speaker should be limited to 15 minutes in order to maximise the remaining time for local businesses to engage. Another business felt that some of the approaches undertaken in Treorchy that were outlined at the meeting would not be suited to Blackwood town centre. One respondent stated that there had been little opportunity for networking and that the meeting placed more of a focus on the Council's plans for the town centre.

The feedback cited a need to network with other businesses across the county borough as a whole, and one respondent expressed the need for positive and constructive discussions at these meetings. One business also verbally provided their views following the meeting and indicated that it had been a worthwhile and positive experience and that they looked forward to attending future meetings.

Ystrad Mynach

Attendance

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>	<u>Town/Community Council</u>	<u>Other Stakeholders</u>	<u>Support Officers</u>
15/06/22	6	2	1	0	5
16/11/22	4	4	0	1	6

Survey Response Rate

6/14	43%
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Event arrangements

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Event overall	0	2 (33%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	2 (33%)
Content of event	0	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)
Location of event	3 (50%)	2 (33%)	1 (17%)	0	0
Event venue	3 (50%)	2 (33%)	1 (17%)	0	0
Duration of event	1 (17%)	3 (50%)	2 (33%)	0	0
Time of day for event	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	0

How did you hear about the event?

CCBC email	3 (50%)
Third-party email	1 (17%)
Word of mouth	1 (17%)
Through the Town Centre Management Team	1 (16%)

The purpose of the event was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres. To what extent do you feel the event achieved its purpose?

Fully	0
Partially	3 (50%)
Not at all	3 (50%)

How likely are you to attend future events?

Very likely	3 (50%)
Somewhat likely	1 (17%)
Somewhat unlikely	1 (17%)
Very unlikely	1 (16%)

Summary of comments received.

Respondents highlighted the lack of businesses in attendance when compared to the number of CCBC Officers and Elected Members who were present and felt that business engagement is vital in making these events a success and in order for the meetings to be of benefit to attendees. One respondent felt that the event time needed to be changed to outside of the working day to allow greater opportunity for local businesses to attend.

In terms of the responses around the purpose and content of the event, the guest speaker from Treorchy was positively received and the presentation was felt to be informative and inspirational. However, some respondents felt that there was a lack of constructive ideas and solutions during the ensuing discussion, together with a lack of positive comments and no real outcome achieved.

It was also felt that the presentation from the guest speaker took up the majority of the meeting time, with one respondent disappointed that although the UKSP Fund had been listed on the agenda, there was little discussion around this topic during the meeting. Another respondent had also believed that the draft Local Development Plan proposals and the impact on Ystrad Mynach town centre would be discussed at the meeting, and so they would be unlikely to attend again as the event was not as they had expected. One business also stated that they would have appreciated more of an opportunity to network with the other businesses and local councillors at the meeting.

Caerphilly

Attendance

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>	<u>Town/Community Councillors</u>	<u>Other Stakeholders</u>	<u>Support Officers</u>
05/04/22 - CANCELLED	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
07/09/22	5	2	3	6	7

Survey Response Rate

4/16	25%
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Event arrangements

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Event overall	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	0	0	0
Content of event	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	0	0	0
Location of event	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	0	0	0
Event venue	1 (25%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	0	0
Duration of event	0	4 (100%)	0	0	0
Time of day for event	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	0	0	0

How did you hear about the event?

CCBC email	3 (75%)
BERT member visit	1 (25%)

The purpose of the event was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres. To what extent do you feel the event achieved its purpose?

Fully	1 (25%)
Partially	3 (75%)
Not at all	0

How likely are you to attend future events?

Very likely	3 (75%)
Somewhat likely	1 (25%)
Somewhat unlikely	0
Very unlikely	0

Summary of comments received

The respondents were positive in their feedback from the network meetings. With regards to the event achieving its purpose, all respondents highlighted the desire to get more businesses as possible from the town centre to attend. One respondent felt the event was not long enough due to the amount of development that is planned for Caerphilly town centre up until 2035 but also praised the Council for recognising Caerphilly's potential as a popular tourist and investor destination.

Several respondents commented that business to business networking could be improved upon at these events. One suggestion was to give business attendants the opportunity to introduce themselves to others or for attendants to be given a list of attendees before arrival. Another suggestion was for local event organisers to be invited so that they can pitch their ideas and requests to the local business community.

Whilst the opinion of a lack of positive comments from Councillors in attendance was conveyed, the overall response from attendees was positive. Regular, face-to-face meetings where business opinions are taken into consideration, are highly valued.

Risca

Attendance

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>	<u>Town/Community Councillors</u>	<u>Other Stakeholders</u>	<u>Support Officers</u>
22/02/22	1	0	1	0	3
03/08/22	2	2	0	0	5

Survey Response Rate

2/6	33%
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Event arrangements

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Event overall	0	1 (100%)	0	0	0
Content of event	1 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Location of event	1 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Event venue	0	1 (100%)	0	0	0
Duration of event	1 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Time of day for event	1 (100%)	0	0	0	0

How did you hear about the event?

CCBC email	1 (100%)
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The purpose of the event was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres. To what extent do you feel the event achieved its purpose?

Fully	1 (100%)
Partially	0
Not at all	0

How likely are you to attend future events?

Very likely	1 (100%)
Somewhat likely	0
Somewhat unlikely	0
Very unlikely	0

Summary of comments received

Overall, the response to the Risca network meeting was very positive. The respondent verbally responded to the Town Centre Support Officer that, whilst he was disappointed that more businesses had not attended the meeting, he was very much in favour of them continuing and engagement with businesses in Risca should continue for the benefit of the economy and the town.

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Summary of survey responses - Town Centre Stakeholder Meetings – Spring 2023

The following meetings were arranged:

TOWN	DATE	VENUE	TIME
Caerphilly	Wednesday 22nd March 2023	Caerphilly Municipal Club	6.00pm
Blackwood	Thursday 20th April 2023	Blackwood Miners' Institute	5.30pm
Ystrad Mynach	Wednesday 3rd May 2023	Centre of Sporting Excellence	6.00pm
Bargoed	Wednesday 10th May 2023	Murray's Pub	6.00pm
Risca	Wednesday 24th May 2023	Risca Rugby Club	6.00pm

Bargoed Town Centre Stakeholder Meeting
Wednesday 10th May 2023 – 6.00pm – Murray’s Pub

Attendees

<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>	<u>Town/Community Council</u>	<u>Support Officers</u>	<u>Survey response rate</u>
12	4	3	7	14/19 (74%)

Meeting arrangements

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Meeting overall	7 (50%)	6 (43%)	0	0	1 (7%)
Content of meeting	6 (43%)	6 (43%)	1 (7%)	0	1 (7%)
Location of meeting	9 (65%)	3 (21%)	1 (7%)	0	1 (7%)
Meeting venue	9 (65%)	3 (21%)	1 (7%)	0	1 (7%)
Duration of meeting	6 (43%)	7 (50%)	0	0	1 (7%)
Time of day for meeting	7 (50%)	5 (36%)	1 (7%)	0	1 (7%)

The purpose of the meeting was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres on matters of interest to them. To what extent do you feel the meeting achieved its purpose?

Fully	11 (79%)
Partially	3 (21%)
Not at all	0

How likely are you to attend future meetings?

Very likely	12 (86%)
Somewhat likely	1 (7%)
Somewhat unlikely	0
Very unlikely	1 (7%)

How did you hear about the meeting?

CCBC email	7 (50%)
Through the Town Centre Management team	6 (43%)
Through Bargoed Town Council	1 (7%)

Summary of comments received

The majority of the comments focused on meeting content. One business felt that no time was allocated to cover what stakeholders feel are matters of importance to the town centre (such as toilet provision, banking and parking facilities and town centre events). Another business suggested that a focus group would be beneficial in order for town centre improvement ideas from stakeholders to be forwarded to the Council, or alternatively, allowing ideas for change to be discussed as part of the meeting agenda. A third respondent stated that information on business grants or loans would be welcomed at the meeting.

In terms of stakeholder engagement, one respondent acknowledged the extent of the work carried out by the Town Centre Team in reaching out to local businesses to raise awareness of the stakeholder meeting and emphasised the need for this to continue in the future.

Blackwood Town Centre Stakeholder Meeting
Thursday 20th April 2023 – 5.30pm – Blackwood Miners’ Institute

Attendees

<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>	<u>Town/Community Council</u>	<u>Other Stakeholders</u>	<u>Support Officers</u>	<u>Survey response rate</u>
6	4	3	1	8	11/14 (79%)

Meeting arrangements

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Meeting overall	5 (45%)	5 (45%)	0	1 (10%)	0
Content of meeting	4 (36%)	6 (55%)	0	1 (9%)	0
Location of meeting	9 (82%)	1 (9%)	0	0	1 (9%)
Meeting venue	8 (73%)	2 (18%)	0	0	1 (9%)
Duration of meeting	5 (46%)	4 (36%)	1 (9%)	1 (9%)	0
Time of day for meeting	7 (64%)	3 (27%)	0	1 (9%)	0

The purpose of the meeting was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres on matters of interest to them. To what extent do you feel the meeting achieved its purpose?

Fully	8 (73%)
Partially	3 (27%)
Not at all	0

How likely are you to attend future meetings?

Very likely	7 (64%)
Somewhat likely	3 (27%)
Somewhat unlikely	1 (9%)
Very unlikely	0

How did you hear about the meeting?

CCBC email	8 (73%)
Through the Town Centre Management team	3 (27%)

Summary of comments received

The meeting was well received amongst several respondents, who felt that the content from the guest speaker and CCBC was excellent and engaging. Three respondents highlighted a need for the meeting to have more contributions from businesses and third sector organisations, and with less input from local councillors.

One business highlighted that although the presentation from the guest speaker was interesting and informative, it took up the majority of the meeting and therefore other agenda items were not covered in detail, whilst another business felt that attendees did not have sufficient opportunity to discuss issues which they felt to be important and relevant to town centres (such as parking). Another respondent suggested that the meetings could benefit from the inclusion of workshop sessions.

In terms of stakeholder engagement, several respondents suggested a number of other businesses /stakeholders that might be interested in attending these meetings. It should be noted that all the suggested businesses were invited to the meeting, and although several of these gave apologies for the meeting owing to prior commitments, others did not attend.

Ystrad Mynach Town Centre Stakeholder Meeting
Thursday 4th May 2023 – 6.00pm – Centre of Sporting Excellence

Attendees

<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>	<u>Town/ Community Council</u>	<u>Support Officers</u>	<u>Survey response rate</u>
8	2	1	7	10/11 (91%)

Meeting arrangements

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Meeting overall	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	0
Content of meeting	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	0	0
Location of meeting	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0	0	0
Meeting venue	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0	0	0
Duration of meeting	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	0	0	0
Time of day for meeting	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	0	0	0

The purpose of the meeting was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres on matters of interest to them. To what extent do you feel the meeting achieved its purpose?

Fully	5 (50%)
Partially	5 (50%)
Not at all	0

How likely are you to attend future meetings?

Very likely	7 (70%)
Somewhat likely	3 (30%)
Somewhat unlikely	0
Very unlikely	0

How did you hear about the meeting?

CCBC email	4 (50%)
Through the Town Centre Management Team	5 (50%)
Word of mouth	1 (10%)

Summary of comments received

The majority of the comments focused on stakeholder engagement and expressed a need for more town centre businesses to attend the meetings in order to make these a success. Suggestions included targeted visits to businesses in order to raise awareness of the purpose of these meetings and to encourage attendance. One respondent suggested a leaflet drop to local businesses in order to get more businesses on board. It should however be noted that emails were sent to all businesses within the town centre boundary to invite them to the meeting, with reminders and an agenda sent nearer the time, and invitations were also hand-delivered to a number of premises.

Three businesses also expressed a need for greater business engagement/contributions at these meetings and less political debate, in order to maximise the benefits of these meetings. One business emphasised the need to stick to the agenda and highlighted that that the discussion had strayed into non-agenda items such as parking, pointing out that the purpose of the meeting was not to discuss this particular matter.

Caerphilly Town Centre Stakeholder Meeting
Wednesday 22nd March 2023 - 6.00pm – Caerphilly Municipal Club

Attendees

<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>	<u>Town/Community Council</u>	<u>Other Stakeholders</u>	<u>Support Officers</u>	<u>Survey response rate</u>
14	3	3	1	8	7/21 (33%)

Meeting arrangements

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Meeting overall	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	0	0	0
Content of meeting	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	0	0	0
Location of meeting	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	0	0	0
Meeting venue	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	0	0	0
Duration of meeting	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	0	0	0
Time of day for meeting	4 (57%)	3 (43%)	0	0	0

The purpose of the meeting was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres on matters of interest to them. To what extent do you feel the meeting achieved its purpose?

Fully	5 (71%)
Partially	2 (29%)
Not at all	0

How likely are you to attend future meetings?

Very likely	6 (86%)
Somewhat likely	1 (14%)
Somewhat unlikely	0
Very unlikely	0

How did you hear about the meeting?

CCBC email	7 (100%)
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Summary of comments received

The respondents were positive in their feedback to Caerphilly's Town Centre Stakeholder meeting, with 71% of respondents very satisfied with the meeting overall. Several respondents commented upon how beneficial it was for business owners to be able to come together in this format and valued the presentation from the guest speaker, whilst the suggestion to create a town centre business group was received with positivity.

With regards to future meetings, one respondent suggested business networking or a forum to discuss trading topics may be worth considering in the future. Another respondent thought future agendas should focus on town centre cleanliness and refuse facilities as the appearance of the high street is paramount to attracting visitors. It was noted that some attendees diverted from the original agenda, which, some felt was not beneficial to meeting attendees as it risked becoming political.

Risca Town Centre Stakeholder Meeting
Wednesday 24th May 2023 - 6.00pm – Risca Rugby Club

Attendees

<u>Businesses</u>	<u>Elected Members</u>	<u>Town/ Community Council</u>	<u>Support Officers</u>	<u>Survey response rate</u>
2	3	3	6	2/8 (25%)

Meeting arrangements

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Meeting overall	2 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Content of meeting	2 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Location of meeting	2 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Meeting venue	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0	0	0
Duration of meeting	2 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Time of day for meeting	2 (100%)	0	0	0	0

The purpose of the meeting was to engage with local businesses in our Town Centres on matters of interest to them. To what extent do you feel the meeting achieved its purpose?

Fully	1 (50%)
Partially	1 (50%)
Not at all	0

How likely are you to attend future meetings?

Very likely	1 (50%)
Somewhat likely	0
Somewhat unlikely	0
Very unlikely	1 (50%)

How did you hear about the meeting?

CCBC email	2 (100%)
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Summary of comments received

Overall, the response to Risca's Town Centre Stakeholder meeting was very positive, although there was a decrease in the number of attendees compared to previous meetings. Respondents were disappointed to see how few business owners attended the meeting but did not see this as a criticism of the organisers or the content of the meeting.

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Summary of responses - Consultees - Sept 2023**Cllr James Pritchard – 8/9**

- Its clear the new way of working has generated greater business interest. The rising satisfaction levels among attendees again demonstrates the strength of the new format.
- Holding the events in town centre locations has helped.
- The town centre team have done really well in contacting key businesses in each of the towns.
- I would support the abolishment of the TCMG as its clear we're now attracting more businesses, with less input from certain domineering councillors.

Cllr Teresa Parry – 11/9

I am happy with the new model of working, and see much more engagement from yourselves, taking a genuine interest in helping Ystrad Mynach town centre and the businesses, please keep up the good work it is still early days but I can see progress is being made.

Cllr Carol Andrews – 12/9

I am fully supportive of this model. I have only participated in the Bargoed events but they engage with businesses far more than the previous one where meetings were held at times that were not conducive for businesses but only elected members. Hopefully this model will strengthen our town centres and follow in Treorchy's footsteps!

Response from Helen Williams – Bargoed Town Council 26/9

At a meeting of Bargoed Town Council last week, I was instructed to provide the following feedback on the new town centre management model:

Members are supportive of the change in format for the town centre management model because they feel it brings the management of the town centre closer to the actual

traders: it encourages greater involvement and collaboration from local stakeholders.

I was also asked by the mayor to pass on his thanks for all your hard work to date.

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CABINET – 15TH NOVEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: CORPORATE PLAN (INCLUDING WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES) 2023-2028

REPORT BY: THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Cabinet with the Council's Draft Corporate Plan following its review by Joint Scrutiny on 26 October 2023. The Plan details the new Well-being Objectives for the next five year period from 2023 to 2028.
- 1.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 requires all public bodies to set Well-being Objectives that improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area.
- 1.3 Our objectives are designed to maximise our contribution to the National Well-being Goals for Wales.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 requires all public bodies to set Well-being Objectives to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of their area.
- 2.2 The Council's draft Well-being objectives have been developed using the Sustainable Development Principle which is described as the 5 ways of working.
- 2.3 This report presents the Council's five year draft Corporate Plan (2023-2028) at Appendix 1.
- 2.4 The Plan is based on 5 Well-being Objectives with each Objective underpinned by several outcomes, chosen priority measures and a range of steps.
- 2.5 The Plan also explains why these specific objectives, outcomes, measures and steps were selected.
- 2.6 The Council's Joint Scrutiny Committee discussed and reviewed the draft Corporate Plan at length on the 26th October and have agreed to recommend the Corporate Plan to Cabinet, prior to its onwards consideration at full Council.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Cabinet:

1. Approve the Draft Corporate Plan (2023-2028) and recommend it for onward consideration by Council.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Well-being of Future Generations Act places a statutory duty on public bodies to set and publish Well-being Objectives that maximise contribution to the well-being goals for Wales.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 This report introduces the Draft Council Corporate Plan (including Well-being Objectives) 2023 – 2028 at Appendix 1. Paragraphs 5.2 to 5.11 explains the main steps that have been followed through the process of setting the Well-being Objectives.
- 5.2 The Well-being Objectives have been set within the 5 ways of working which makes up the 'Sustainable Development principle. These are:
 - Long Term - the importance of balancing short term need, whilst looking and addressing the needs of citizen's long term
 - Prevention - Acting to preventing problems occurring or getting worse
 - Involvement - Involving people with an interest in achieving the objectives
 - Collaboration - working with others to help meet long term challenges, maximising collective impact
 - Integration - how public bodies objectives impact on each other or support other goals, taking an integrated approach.
- 5.3 The process began with an analysis of the research that emerged from the Well-being Assessment carried out by Policy colleagues in support of the Gwent Public Service Board's Well-being Plan (GPSB).
- 5.4 An extensive consultation process was carried out for the GPSB regional plan to identify what mattered to citizens across Gwent with research and data gathering also then carried out in 5 specific community areas in Caerphilly.
- 5.5 The Council's own Well-being Plan considered all of the information that emerged from this extensive involvement exercise to ensure we did not duplicate and could focus on what 'additionality' we could provide.
- 5.6 The political commitments set out by the administration for the next 5 years were explored in detail during several Cabinet workshops which helped confirm the long term vision in more detail.
- 5.7 Officers then held consultations called 'the Caerphilly Conversation' to ask residents 'what mattered to them' in during the Autumn of 2022. This was both an online and face to face consultation, held in libraires and community places across the borough.

- 5.8 Those initial ‘What Matters’ conversations were then followed up with further consultation with residents that took place as part of the Council’s budget setting process.
- 5.9 Workshops were held with the Council’s Leadership Team and Management Network.
- 5.10 Individual workshops were then held for each draft Well-being Objective with a range of officers from a wide range of services through which actions, resources and potential ways of measuring success were identified.
- 5.11 A broad range of performance data from across the Council was reviewed, validated and analysed.
- 5.12 The emerging Plan was then presented to our partners through the Local Development Group for the Public Service Board, to see how our draft objectives may impact their goals and to gain their feedback.
- 5.13 The Regional Gwent Public Services Board has agreed to become a ‘Marmot Region’. Based on a report ‘Building a Fairer Gwent, the Institute of Health Equity details the social determinants of health and 8 principles to address those inequalities. The Gwent PSB formally recognised that inequality and inequity exists in our communities (for example in healthy life expectancy) and committed to take steps to address them at a collaborative level.
- 5.14 As the Council’s draft Corporate Plan dovetails into the wider PSB plan, the 8 Marmot principles needed to be reviewed at a Council level to underpin our own developing objectives. Workshops with the Marmot team were held to ensure alignment.
- 5.15 At a local level the Council also reviewed its Directorate Performance Assessments as well as the wide range of complaints and compliments to identify any emerging themes.
- 5.16 The Council’s draft Well-being Objectives for 2023-2028 are set out below. These set out what the Council hopes to achieve on behalf of its communities:

WBO1	Enabling our Children to Succeed in Education
WBO2	Enabling our Residents to Thrive
WBO3	Enabling our Communities to Thrive
WBO4	Enabling our Economy to Grow
WBO5	Enabling our Environment to be Greener

- 5.17 Each Wellbeing Objective is underpinned by a range of supporting Outcome statements that are written as if being reviewed in 2028. These are set out below:

WBO1 Enabling our Children to Succeed in Education.

- We will have built effective leadership to maintain our aspiration for all learners to achieve high standards and make strong progress on their educational journey.
- We will have safe and inclusive provision that will support the progress of vulnerable and disadvantaged learners
- We will have improved literacy (English and Welsh), numeracy, digital, physical and wider skills to provide our learners with better life chances

- Learners will have received effective support to ensure that post-16 destinations are appropriate and sustainable
- We will have built new and refurbished schools and settings so that we have created learning environments that engage and inspire

WBO2 Enabling our Residents to Thrive

- We will have responded to our aging demographic including creating age friendly communities
- We will have met the needs of our most vulnerable children and adults
- We will have enabled the Community and Voluntary Sector to support our residents
- We will have supported residents through the cost-of-living crisis
- We will have built new Council houses, provided more affordable homes, brought empty properties back into use and worked towards the prevention of homelessness

WBO3 Enabling our Communities to Thrive

- Our physical infrastructure and digital connectivity will have improved to help people access towns, communities and services
- We will have worked with partners to improve access to public and other alternative modes of transport to keep towns connected and enhanced active travel opportunities between communities
- We will work with partners from across the Public Service Board towards improving the well-being and healthy life expectancy of our communities
- We will have created conditions that enable our communities to be healthier and more active
- We will have attractive open spaces that enhance quality of life

WBO4 Enabling our Economy to Grow

- We will have worked towards ensuring we have the necessary infrastructure in place to enable our economy and communities to grow
- We will have worked in partnership to support businesses with a range of interventions aimed at stimulating the local economy
- We will have a stronger relationship with our Business Community through town centre regeneration
- We will continue to work with the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) to increase the availability of quality employment opportunities in the area and enhance our economy
- Our local workforce will have the skills that employers need locally and regionally

WBO5 Enabling our Environment to be Greener

- We will have worked with our residents to meet our statutory targets in relation to waste reduction, reuse and recycling
- We will have reduced our operational carbon emissions to become a net zero carbon local authority by 2030
- We will have helped our communities transition to low carbon transport
- We will have promoted and explored green energy opportunities for the council, communities and businesses

- We will have protected and enhanced our natural environment to improve biodiversity and make us more resilient to climate changes
- We will have set climate standards for new build Council Homes and worked to improve the green energy credentials and energy efficiency of our housing stock

5.18 Each Objective and the supporting outcomes are designed to be integrated with each other. For example, creating conditions for healthier and active lifestyles as an outcome in Well-being Objective 3 will help to children to succeed, as health and well-being is a building block for learning in Well-being Objective 1.

5.19 The draft Corporate Plan was presented to the Council Joint Scrutiny Committee on 26 October 2023. Joint Scrutiny agreed to recommend the Plan to Cabinet prior to its ongoing consideration by full Council.

5.20 Aside from the Corporate Plan, the Council has many priorities and strategies that support the full breadth of its work. These are not referenced specifically within the Corporate Plan as our outcomes, steps and measures intended to deliver the Well-being objectives focus primarily on ‘additionality’ and are therefore high level and strategic activities.

5.21 **Conclusion**

The Council’s Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives have been developed to be as aspirational as possible in improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our area in partnership with other public services and other local authorities.

The significant financial challenges facing public services as a whole at present, however, will mean that the success of the Council’s Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme will be fundamental to the successful delivery of the Corporate Plan.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 Unless a specific Well-being Objective is judged as delivered in its entirety, or assessment of data and public consultation responses change direction significantly, it is assumed the Well-being Objectives will continue throughout the course of the remaining year of the Corporate Plan.

6.2 Resources to deliver the Well-being Objectives remain unchanged and if this changes outcomes or steps may need to change accordingly.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 No Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed for this report although individual assessments may have been made to support activity within the Well-being Objectives. Delivery of the Well-being Objectives maximises our contribution to all the national well-being goals as noted in Appendix A

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Each Well-being Objective within the Corporate Plan has a specific section on

resources that set out how the Council intends to support the delivery of each of the Well-being Objectives.

- 8.2 The financial situation across the Public sector is particularly challenging at present and the outlook over future years is no less bleak. The successful delivery of this Corporate Plan will, therefore, be intrinsically linked to the relative success of the Councils Transformation Programme and the two must be viewed collectively.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personal implications arising from this Report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The following consultations have informed the Councils' draft Corporate Plan:

10.1.1 The priorities set out within the Caerphilly Conversation
Link to Caerphilly Conversation

10.1.2 The consultations referenced between paragraphs 5.1 to 5.12.

10.1.3 The Council's Joint Scrutiny Meeting of the 26th October 2023 considered the plan and the following responses were captured against each Wellbeing Objective:

WBO1 Enabling our Children to Succeed in Education

A Member asked about the vocational options available to 14 year-olds. The Chief Education Officer advised Members that a work experience pilot had recently commenced which five schools had signed-up towards. The Strategic Lead for School Improvement also highlighted the national review of vocational qualifications in Wales and information available on the Caerphilly Learning Pathways website. Members also heard about the work of the Inspire Team which had been financed through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Member raised an apprenticeship scheme that Cardiff Council was running in partnership with a college of further education in the city. The Chief Education Officer advised Committee that a meeting had been scheduled with Coleg y Cymoedd to discuss similar opportunities.

One Member enquired how the leadership structure proposed differed from the current model. Committee heard about the robust leadership programme which was run in collaboration with EAS and involved all levels of staff and governing bodies. The Member also asked about the refurbishment plans for schools. The Head of Education Planning and Strategy gave details on the £1.5M capital programme and grants from the Welsh Government.

A Committee Member highlighted the role of voluntary organisations who helped develop literacy skills in schools and enquired if this function was being promoted. The Chief Education Officer outlined how this was a decision for schools based on their culture. The Member also asked about promoting the learning of Welsh and other European languages. Officers outlined the benefits of new Welsh medium education facilities and advised that a review of teaching languages was currently taking place and would be the focus for a future report.

One Member asked about the help for pupils whose education was impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown regulations. Members heard about some of the work being done on the well-being of pupils post-lockdown measures and were also advised that the latest attendance figures for Primary Schools was up 1% on the previous year at 93.1%.

A Member highlighted Community focussed schools and asked how they would improve NEET figures, and also if mental health support was included. Officers highlighted some of the innovative ways this project was being run and also stressed the work being done by the Inspire Team. The meeting was also told that additional support in the Education Psychology Service had been increased.

WBO2 Enabling our Residents to Thrive

One Member of the Joint Committee enquired how the community and voluntary sector were enabled to support residents. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that cost-of-living budgets and funding via the Regional Partnership Board had supported the voluntary sector within the County Borough over the last two years.

A Member highlighted the homeless figures following the 2020/21 census. The Member questioned if the 1,303 figure had now changed and also wanted to know what proportion were children. If children were included in the figure, the Member wanted to know how they were faring in school. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that this information would be provided outside of the meeting.

One Member enquired about plans for repurposing empty properties. The Deputy Chief Executive gave information on work as part of the Caerphilly Keys initiative and the progress being made alongside the internal legal team. The Cabinet Member for Housing further advised that there were 954 empty properties in the County Borough and last year 100 were brought back into use due to the work of the empty property team.

WBO3 Enabling our Communities to Thrive

A Member suggested that key data from a UK perspective was missing from this report. The Corporate Policy Manager advised that UK data was now available, and the points highlighted by the Member would be updated. The Chief Executive also provided assurances that the wider data set was being considered before a final report goes to Full Council.

One Member asked about improved access to public and other alternative modes of transport. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment provided information on partnership working with Transport for Wales and the Welsh Government. It was also highlighted that bus passenger levels had not returned to pre-COVID levels.

WBO4 Enabling our Economy to Grow

A Member requested a definition of what is meant by economic inactivity. The Head of Regeneration and Planning provided details on this matter and outlined how it applied those who were eligible for work but are not working. It differed from those who were not in work but were seeking employment.

One Member raised the issue of using the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for rural communities. The Head of Regeneration and Planning gave details on a plethora of initiatives across the County Borough which were funded by £28M over a 3-year period. Objectives of the Rural Development Plan were also highlighted to Members.

A Member asked about help for businesses, especially in the north of the County Borough. The Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration & Climate Change outlined assistance available via the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund. It was emphasised that this funding was helping businesses across the County Borough. The Head of Regeneration and Planning also highlighted the work of the Business Support Team within the regeneration service. The Council Leader gave Committee additional information on the role of Cardiff Capital Region and the jobs and prosperity created as a result. In the most recent report, the region had experienced the largest economic growth in the UK outside of London. Members also heard about the work being done under the Northern Valleys Initiative.

One Member enquired about support available for the economically inactive. The challenges around transport to attend Job Fayres in the five principal towns was raised by the Member. The Head of Regeneration and Planning gave details on the work of the Employability Team who provided advice and support on a one-to-one basis across the County Borough.

A Member asked about helping those seeking employment on a flexible-hours basis. The Head of Regeneration and Planning provided information on the work the employment team did with recruiters to facilitate this need.

WBO5 Enabling our Environment to be Greener

One Member made an overarching observation on measuring performance. It was the Member's view that targets should be set and then eventually measured against performance indicators. This facility was missing in the report according to the Member. The Member also believed that some of the objectives in the Plan might not be reached in the future due to the financial challenges faced. The Chief Executive assured Members that they would be receiving updates on the Corporate Plan before 2028. Members heard how there was a suite of performance measures which would be reported on annually.

A Member enquired if the "Nature isn't Neat" initiative was going to be reviewed. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment advised that a Members' Seminar on Grass-Cutting Regimes would be taking place next month to discuss lessons learnt and forward delivery.

Having noted the content of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations are supported and should be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting that there were 37 for, 0 against and 1 abstention) this was agreed by the majority present.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and associated statutory guidance

Author(s): Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager roberr@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Sean Morgan, Leader of the Council
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
All Cabinet Members
Joint Scrutiny Committee Members
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Dave Street, Corporate Director for Social Services
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning
Nick Taylor-Williams, Housing Services Manager
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director - Head of Children's Services
Jo Williams, Assistant Director - Head of Adult Services
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Paul Cooke, Senior Policy Officer
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer - Equalities and Welsh Language

Background Papers:

[Corporate Plan 2018-2023](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Draft Corporate Plan (including Well-being Objectives) 2023 - 2028

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Caerphilly County Borough Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives 2023-2028

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Foreword from the Leader

This Corporate Plan sets out our direction, priorities and objectives for the next five years. The new well-being objectives help us shape services, target our resources and prioritise our efforts as we continue to deliver the services our communities need.

Since our last Corporate Plan in 2018 we have faced unprecedented challenges including a global pandemic, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and significant and far-reaching reductions in budgets.

These issues have stretched our resources, tested our resilience and led to changes in the organisation itself. I would like to take this opportunity to commend our teams for the incredible 'can do' attitude they have shown.

In common with other public service organisations across Wales, we continue to face significant financial challenges, but we remain committed to delivering sustainable services that meet the present and future needs of our communities.

We know we must adapt to meet the challenges we face, focusing on flexibility and finding different ways to deliver what our communities need, when they need it. To do this we must engage with our communities to understand the needs of our residents and provide the right support to meet those needs as simply as possible.

Through this Corporate Plan we can take positive and progressive steps to achieve this. My Cabinet and our senior teams are committed to working together to deliver this plan, and through it, the services our communities need.

By working together, we can create a better future for all our residents.



S Morgan
Cllr Sean Morgan
Leader of the Council

2. Introduction by the Chief Executive

Our new Corporate Plan has been developed against the backdrop of some of the most significant societal, economic, environmental and financial challenges we have ever faced.

If we are to successfully deliver the key objectives set out within this document, whilst operating within this challenging landscape, it is clear we need to rethink and reshape what we do and how we do it.

We will achieve this through the delivery of the biggest change programme this Council has ever faced. A challenging, complex but really exciting transformation programme called 'Mobilising Team Caerphilly' and this innovative approach is now gathering pace across the organisation as we begin to see positive progress being made.

But this is just the beginning and, as we move towards delivering our Corporate Plan, even more effort will be required to make it a success.

We know we must adapt to meet the challenges ahead, but this isn't simply about cutting services; it's about flexibility and finding different ways to deliver what our communities need, when they need it.

This includes using fewer buildings, being more business-minded, and making our services more accessible. We will also listen carefully to feedback from our residents to ensure they have the chance to shape their services moving forward.

This isn't going to be easy, but this is absolutely the right thing to do as our communities deserve nothing less.

We have learnt that when we work together as Team Caerphilly, we can make a long-lasting positive impact and this Corporate Plan will provide the blueprint for this success.



Christina HARRY
Chief Executive



3. About us

Our Place

The Caerphilly county borough covers an area stretching from the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north, to Cardiff and Newport in the south. It is bordered to the north by Merthyr Tydfil, the west by Rhondda Cynon Taf, and to the east by Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen local authorities.

The area lies at the heart of both the South Wales Valleys and the Cardiff Capital Region. Caerphilly county borough occupies some 108 square miles (28,000 hectares) of the Valleys area of South East Wales. It is a little over 18.6 miles long and nearly 11 miles wide and is formed by the valleys of three rivers: the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw. Three quarters of the county borough is used for agriculture and forestry. We have an expanding economy and an attractive environment that benefits from excellent transport links with good access to public transport and the South Wales Metro. Active travel and accessibility are important for the county borough. The south has good links to the M4 motorway, and the north connects to the A465 and its links to the Midlands and West Wales/Ireland.

Our county borough is made up of five principal town centres: Caerphilly, Blackwood, Risca, Bargoed and Ystrad Mynach. We also have four local centres: Newbridge, Rhymney, Nelson and Bedwas. Each town centre has their own characteristics and attractions that make them great places to shop, work, live and enjoy.

Our People

We provide services to approximately 176,000 residents living across a mixture of urban and rural communities, living in 76,000 households. The 2021 Census showed 40.9% of our population is aged over 50 years; we know that this figure will increase proportionately as life expectancy increases. In relation to protected characteristics we have growing diversity in terms of ethnicity and national identity, and more people are more open to stating their gender identity and sexual orientation. Below is data that gives some context to our place and people, compared where possible to the Gwent region, the rest of Wales and the UK.

Our Demography

	Caerphilly	Gwent	Wales	UK ***
Life Expectancy at Birth (Females) 2018-2020	81.1	81.7	82.1	82.9
Life Expectancy at Birth (Males) 2018-2020	77.4	78.1	78.3	79.0
Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth (Females) 2018-2020	57.0	58.9	62.4	63.6
Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth (Males) 2018-2020	56.7	60.1	61.5	62.8
Percentage of Children Aged 4-5 with Obesity 2021-2022	13.0	12.9	Not verified*	No UK data**
Percentage of Adults with a BMI of 30+ (Obese) 2021-22 & 2022-23	31.7	28.9	25.3	No UK data**

	Caerphilly	Gwent	Wales	UK ***
Percentage Economically Active (16-64) Jan-Dec 2022	74.3	76.2	75.6	78.3
Percentage Economically Inactive (16-64) Jan-Dec 2022	25.7	23.8	24.4	21.7
Percentage Unemployed (16-64) Jan-Dec 2022	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.6
Number of People Homeless (From 2022/2023 Performance Indicator data not census data)	1303 cases			
Number of People on the Common Housing Register as at April 2023	6,500			
Percentage Social Rented Accommodation 2021	18.8	20.0	16.5	17.1*
Percentage Private Rented Accommodation 2021	13.3	14.2	17.0	20.3*
Reliance on Public Transport (no cars or vans in household) 2021	20.3	19.7	1 9.4	23.3*
Percentage of Children living in Poverty (after housing costs) 2021-2022	27.7	25.6	27.9	29.2
Percentage of people with no qualifications 2021	24.1	22.3	19.9	18.2*
Percentage of people with level 4 qualifications or above 2021	25.3	28.8	31.5	33.8*
Percentage of people working mainly from home 2021	23.9	24.5	25.6	31.2*
Percentage of residents travelling to work by car or van 2021	65.2	64.3	61.3	49.0*

* Data only verified in ABUHB and Swansea Bay

** Data collected separately at England and Wales level

*** UK data is from a different source and may have been produced in a slightly different way, organisations in Wales such as Welsh Government and Public Health Wales produce data using their own methods for Wales, and similar organisations in the rest of the UK do this for their own areas, therefore comparisons should be used with caution as they may not be directly comparable.

Our Organisation

The Council is the 5th largest local authority area in Wales and the Council is the largest employer in the area. The Council employs just over 8,000 staff with 73% of employees living in the county borough. Staff are employed into a variety of different roles within service areas which make up the following Directorates:

- Corporate Services and Education
- Social Services and Housing
- Economy and Environment

The Directorates are headed by Corporate Directors who together with the Chief Executive, and Deputy Chief Executive, make up the Corporate Management Team who oversee the delivery of the Council's business, including delivery of this plan.

The Council operates a cabinet style of local government with a Leader, who is supported by 9 Cabinet Members. We have 69 elected Councillors with a variety of roles including agreeing the Council's policy framework, council tax and budget.

Our Responsibilities

The Council delivers over 600 services to the county borough to ensure our people and place are thriving and resilient. From early years support to social care, schools to care homes, environmental protection and infrastructure, provision of social housing, planning, public protection, economic regeneration, and transport planning etc. Our breadth of responsibilities is wide ranging and increasing.

We face significant challenges, the financial outlook for the Council is of serious concern, and the projections for government financial support are worsening year on year. To ensure we remain effective and efficient as a Council during these challenging times, we must reshape and repurpose our organisation and services to ensure we can meet the challenges head on and continue to support the needs of our people and place.

In delivering our Well-being Objectives and our transformation work we have a set of values that were created with our employees and guide us on this journey. They are:

- **Innovative** - We will empower staff to develop innovative and creative responses to challenges faced within a safe culture of mutual respect.
- **United and Connected** - We share a vision that serves the common good; we will actively collaborate and engage in healthy internal communication.
- **Trusted** - We will act credibly, reliably, and will foster, support and maintain positive relationships.
- **Resilient** - We will build teams that are able to rise to the challenges we face and adapt to any adverse conditions.
- **Open and Transparent** - We will communicate openly, share information, listen and appreciate other perspectives, give prompt feedback and learn from our mistakes.

4. How we developed our Well-being Objectives

In Wales we have a law called the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that is designed to help public bodies work together to improve our environment, our economy, our society and our culture.

The law asks us to apply sustainable thinking to our decision-making and to develop our Well-being Objectives to improve the lives of our residents and the environment they live in.

The Sustainable Development Principle is based on **five ways of working**:

- **Long Term** – looking at long term solutions without compromising the well-being of future generations
- **Integrated** – helping other public bodies to meet their goals for the overall good of residents
- **Involvement** – Involving those who have an interest in the well-being of the area and the delivery of our objectives
- **Collaboration** – working with a range of people, and sharing ideas and resources, to help deliver the outcomes
- **Prevention** – understanding the root causes of issues so we can put the right solutions in place to prevent problems arising or getting worse

Using the above principles is the beginning of the process to develop our Well-being Objectives.

We gathered a range of data and asked our communities what they thought by:

- Researching the local assessment of well-being and that was recently conducted on behalf of the Gwent Public Services Board (PSB). Our teams conducted a thorough assessment of five community areas across the county borough through the use of data, population statistics, consultation, and engagement. Caerphilly County Borough Council led on the development of the regional Well-being Plan for the PSB, and you can read more about the assessment in this link [Local Assessment of Well-being](#).
- Reviewing the Labour Party Manifesto, as this details the political commitment of the elected administration for the next five years and held workshops with the Cabinet to confirm the vision.
- Consulting with our communities as part of the ongoing ‘Caerphilly Conversation’ to ask people ‘what matters to them.’ We aimed to reach as many people as possible and paid particular attention to hearing the voices of seldom heard groups. This was both an online and face to face consultation, held in libraries and community places across the county borough. You can read more about our consultation work and methods here: [What Matters Conversation 2023-2024](#).
- Recognising that inequality exists in our communities, as identified in the Well-being Assessment, the Gwent Public Services board agreed to become a Marmot Region, and as such we will undertake actions to reduce inequalities within the county borough as our contribution to the Public Services Board Well-being Plan. There are 8 Marmot Principles, and we have reviewed our objectives and steps, to see how they contribute towards those principles. You can see the connections in section 6 page 40.

- Holding workshops with our management networks to establish what outcomes services could deliver to meet the draft Well-being Objectives.
- Asking our employees what they thought and promoted an online consultation.
- Reviewing other consultations that took place in 2022.
- Asking the Caerphilly Local Delivery Group of Public Services Board partners to consider our objectives.
- Looking at data in our performance reports to consider what areas we want to improve upon.
- Once formed, we took the draft Well-being Objectives to our elected members for their views and input.

From the activities above we have drawn out five Well-being Objectives each with five aspirational outcomes that we aim to deliver across 2023-2028.

The Act asks us to develop our objectives in a way that maximises delivery towards the National Well-being Goals that Welsh Government has set for Wales. The table below demonstrates how our local Well-being Objectives contribute to the National Goals.

How our Well-being Objectives link to National Well-being Goals	A Prosperous Wales*	A Resilient Wales	A Healthier Wales	A More Equal Wales	Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language	Globally Responsive
Well-being Objective 1 Enabling Our Children to Succeed in Education	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Well-being Objective 2 Enabling Our Residents to Thrive	•	•	•	•	•		
Well-being Objective 3 Enabling Our Communities to Thrive	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Well-being Objective 4 Enabling Our Economy to Grow	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Well-being Objective 5 Enabling Our Environment to be Greener	•	•	•	•	•		•

*We note that the National Goal – A Prosperous Wales will change its description from secure ‘decent’ to ‘fair’ work in 2024. When we review our objectives for relevance during our annual review cycle we will consider this change at that time.

The Well-being Objectives have been developed alongside the significant financial challenges faced by the Council. Due to the extended period of austerity and increasing demand for many services, the financial position for Local Government has been challenging for a number of years. During the period 2008/09 to 2022/23 Caerphilly County Borough Council has delivered savings of more than £100m to address reductions in funding and inescapable cost pressures.

The Council has managed the financial challenges presented by the cost-of-living crisis during the 2022/23 financial year, but the position is likely to continue to be extremely challenging for both residents and the Council. The 2023/24 budget proposals, approved by Council on 23 February 2023, included total cost pressures of £55.478m. These pressures are being funded through an increase in the Welsh Government Financial Settlement of £22.152m, permanent savings of £4.972m, temporary savings of £6.862m, the one-off use of reserves totalling £15.345m, and £6.147m from a 7.9% increase in Council Tax.

Due to the unprecedented levels of inflation experienced during 2022/23 (Consumer Prices Index peaking at 11.1%), the current economic outlook, and the range of temporary budgetary measures that were approved for the 2023/24 financial year, the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has been updated based on a range of assumptions, resulting in a potential savings requirement of £48.335m for the two-year period 2024/25 to 2025/26.

Given the scale of the challenge that we collectively face, a financial strategy that seeks to continuously salami slice our services and deplete our reserves is not a sustainable or an appropriate approach, especially when the demands upon our services are far higher than ever, as our communities continue to present far greater and increasingly complex needs to us. To ensure we can meet the needs of our communities, whilst operating with reduced finances, a whole Council and a whole county borough holistic approach is needed.

The Council will require a new whole organisation approach to service delivery and this significant and complex change programme is being led by the Chief Executive, Leader, Corporate Management Team, and Cabinet. The programme is co-ordinated through two key elements - Service Transformation and Place-shaping Investment. It is vital that the required changes are developed at pace and key decisions are made early to ensure the projected savings requirement for 2024/25 and 2025/26 can be delivered.

5. Our Well-being Objectives 2023-2028

Our Well-being Objectives should be considered as an integrated suite of objectives that are complementary to one another. We have set our ambition for each outcome and the impact we intend to make at the end of the five-year period. These are 'future statements' that set out what we want to achieve and how we will measure our progress along the way.

Our Corporate Plan encompasses a wide range of delivery areas, including community regeneration, improving education, integrating health and social care, tackling environmental challenges and driving economic development. Through setting clear and measurable objectives across these areas, we can work towards improving the overall economic, social and environmental well-being of our residents, ensuring the people and places across our county borough can be the best they possibly can be.

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OBJECTIVE 1 ENABLING OUR CHILDREN TO SUCCEED IN EDUCATION	OBJECTIVE 2 ENABLING OUR RESIDENTS TO THRIVE	OBJECTIVE 3 ENABLING OUR COMMUNITIES TO THRIVE	OBJECTIVE 4 ENABLING OUR ECONOMY TO GROW	OBJECTIVE 5 ENABLING OUR ENVIRONMENT TO BE GREENER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have built effective leadership to maintain our aspiration for all learners to achieve high standards and make strong progress on their educational journey. • We will have safe and inclusive provision that will support the progress of vulnerable and disadvantaged learners • We will have improved literacy (English and Welsh), numeracy, digital, physical and wider skills to provide our learners with better life chances • Learners will have received effective support to ensure that post-16 destinations are appropriate and sustainable • We will have built new and refurbished schools and settings, creating learning environments that engage and inspire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have responded to our aging demographic including creating age friendly communities • We will have met the needs of our most vulnerable children and adults • We will have enabled the Community and Voluntary Sector to support our residents • We will have supported residents through the cost-of-living crisis • We will have built new Council houses, provided more affordable homes, brought empty properties back into use and worked towards the prevention of homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our physical infrastructure and digital connectivity will have improved to help people access towns, communities and services • We will have worked with partners to improve access to public and other alternative modes of transport to keep towns connected and enhanced active travel opportunities between communities • We will work with partners from across the Public Service Board towards improving the well-being and healthy life expectancy of our communities • We will have created conditions that enable our communities to be healthier and more active • We will have attractive open spaces that enhance quality of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have worked towards ensuring we have the necessary infrastructure in place to enable our economy and communities to grow • We will have worked in partnership to support businesses with a range of interventions aimed at stimulating the local economy • We will have a stronger relationship with our Business Community through town centre regeneration • We will continue to work with the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) to increase the availability of quality employment opportunities in the area and enhance our economy • Our local workforce will have the skills that employers need locally and regionally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have worked with our residents to meet our statutory targets in relation to waste reduction, reuse and recycling • We will have reduced our operational carbon emissions to become a net zero carbon local authority by 2030 • We will have helped our communities transition to low carbon transport • We will have promoted and explored green energy opportunities for the council, communities and businesses • We will have protected and enhanced our natural environment to improve biodiversity and make us more resilient to climate changes • We will have set climate standards for new build Council Homes and worked to improve the green energy credentials and energy efficiency of our housing stock

5.1 How we will deliver our Well-being Objectives

The whole Council, our political leaders, our Corporate Management Team, and our employees, have a responsibility to deliver the Well-being Objectives and to work towards the outcome statements on behalf of the county borough.

Our Well-being Objectives have been developed with the guidance of the political administration; they cut across the whole of the Council and their delivery is the responsibility of the Corporate Management Team.

Whilst they are defined as a set of outward facing Objectives, the delivery of them together with the mechanisms to achieve them are firmly rooted in the day-to-day delivery of Council services. Our Corporate Management Team, working with senior leaders across the Council, will ensure that progress is integrated into our corporate and departmental performance management framework. Section 7 of this plan shows how we will monitor progress and build in democratic oversight through our Joint Scrutiny arrangements.

Reshaping the Council to meet the Challenge

We embarked upon our journey to transform the Council and established our *Team Caerphilly – better together* ethos in 2020. This has provided us with a sound basis upon which to build our whole organisation transformation programme. Over the next few years, we will reshape and refocus how we operate as a council and how we deliver services, with a focus throughout upon meeting the needs of our citizens. Our immediate efforts will concentrate upon:

- Improving our customer journey
- Transforming our internal ways of working to deliver efficiencies
- Collaborating with our partners to become more effective
- Ensuring we can adapt to changes and shift our services to new ways of working quickly
- Making sure our schools, social housing, leisure and social care sites are fit for the future
- Continuing to develop our physical infrastructure to regenerate the county borough

Looking Outwards

The Objectives are designed to complement the work of the Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) and the desire of strategic leaders across the region to focus on the inequity some of our communities' face through the Marmot principles.

Gwent PSB agreed to become a Marmot Region and to adopt the eight Marmot principles to reduce health inequalities and inequity across Gwent. Gwent is the first area in Wales to become a Marmot region. The PSB performance management framework lists a set of proposed Marmot indicators, and we will also use these to help us monitor our progress against our Well-being Objectives. The majority of the data for the Marmot indicators will come from other organisations such as Welsh

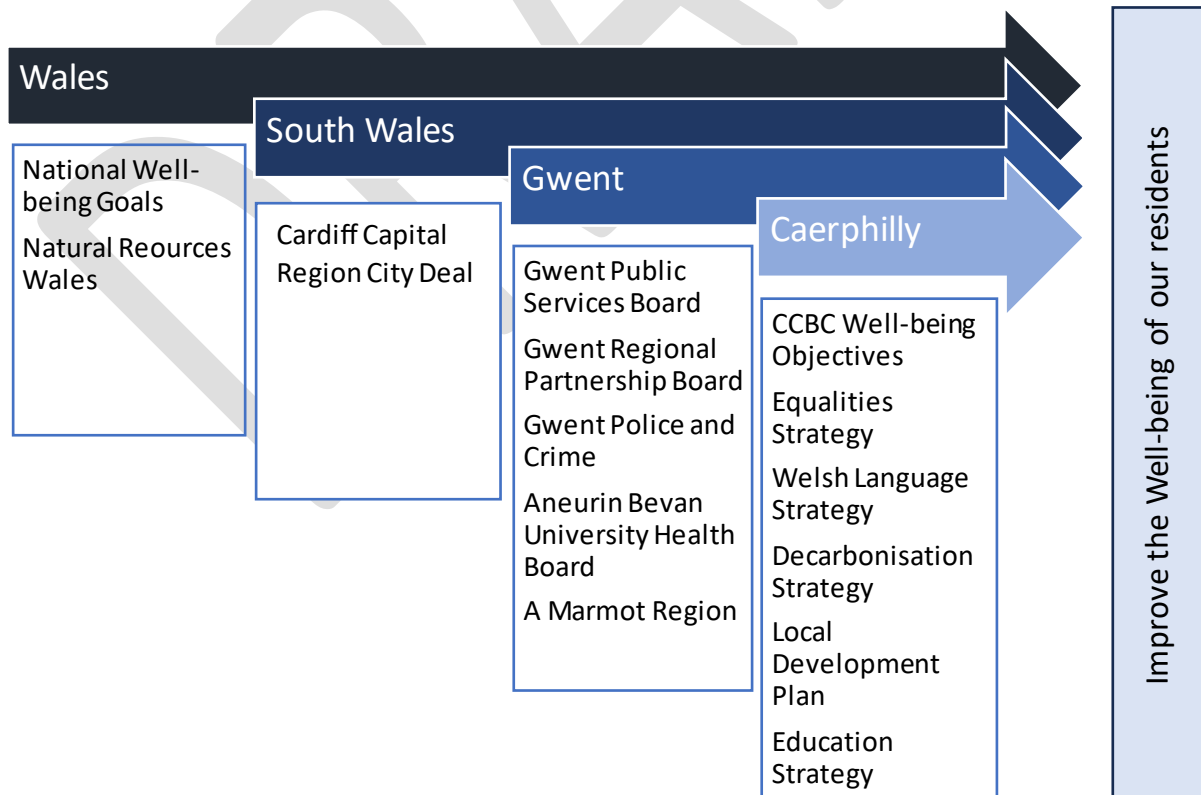
Government and Public Health Wales, but we will use them wherever they are relevant and whenever they are available. However, we may not always be able to report on some of the data as part of our annual review as it may be made available at different times during the year.

We know that some of our communities have poorer well-being and that factors such as the cost-of-living crisis impacts directly upon poor mental and physical health. We recognise that we have to work as effectively as we can to improve individual and community well-being, and this requirement is reflected within the corporate objectives.

The Council has declared a climate emergency with an overall aim to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030. This ambition will require us to embed carbon reduction into everything we do. This ambition permeates through all we do.

How our Well-being Objectives Align to Other Strategic Partnerships, Plans and National Policies

Whilst our aim is to serve the population of Caerphilly County Borough, we sit firmly within a wider partnership family. We know we can't deliver these objectives alone and working with our partners is a key requirement. It's a complex landscape and the diagram below outlines our key partnerships.



Our objectives, along with our partners objectives, are aimed at improving the well-being of our population. We each contribute and consult with each other to ensure that we have a thriving economy, a healthy population, safe and supported communities, and a biodiverse natural environment.

The table below demonstrates how our Well-being Objectives align with the objectives of our main partners. There are of course many other partners that work alongside us, working towards similar objectives, which we in turn will contribute towards.

How our Well-being Objectives link to our Partners	Gwent Public Service Board	Marmot Principles	Gwent Regional Partnership Board	Cardiff Capital Region	National Resources Wales
Well-being Objective 1 Enabling Our Children to Succeed in Education	•	•	•	•	
Well-being Objective 2 Enabling Our Residents to Thrive	•	•	•	•	•
Well-being Objective 3 Enabling Our Communities to Thrive	•	•	•	•	•
Well-being Objective 4 Enabling Our Economy to Grow	•	•		•	
Well-being Objective 5 Enabling Our Environment to be Greener	•	•		•	•

More detail on how our objectives contribute to our partners objectives can be found on page 40.

Well-being Objective 1 Enabling Our Children to Succeed in Education

1. What will this look like?

- We will have built effective leadership to maintain our aspiration for all learners to achieve high standards and make strong progress on their educational journey
- We will have safe and inclusive provision that will support the progress of vulnerable and disadvantaged learners
- We will have improved literacy (English and Welsh), numeracy, digital, physical and wider skills to provide our learners with better life chances
- Learners will have received effective support to ensure that post-16 destinations are appropriate and sustainable
- We will have built new and refurbished schools and settings thereby creating learning environments that engage and inspire

2. Why we chose this (our Well-being Statement)?

Stakeholders living and working across the Local Authority recognised the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent impact on children, learners and young people who were unable to regularly attend school. Vulnerable or disadvantaged learners, children in early years settings, learners accessing post-16 education, and learners in Welsh-medium settings may have been more disproportionately affected than others.

This is also a moment of significant transformation in education with the implementation of [Welsh Government Curriculum Reform](#), which aims to secure high standards and aspirations for all, including those affected by the impact of poverty. The purpose of every school and setting's curriculum is to support our children and young people to be:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

Throughout 2021-2022, a detailed and wide-ranging stakeholder engagement across Caerphilly identified ambitions for education across the county borough. This feedback directly shaped this corporate objective, revised education strategy and associated policies and plans and provided the following feedback:

- Pupils want an inclusive curriculum that provides creativity and autonomy. They would like a broad range of experiences delivered through high quality teaching. They would also like to take an active role in their school providing meaningful and valued feedback that informed decisions around curriculum content.

- Young people want to learn life skills that will enable them for the future. This includes learning a range of practical activities such as art, music, sport, construction and financial management. They also want to receive the best support to enable them to make the right choices at post-16.
- Parents and carers want happy, confident children in schools where all children's strengths are recognised. They want to see strong relationships and effective communication between school and families. All children should be treated equally, regardless of background and circumstances.
- Governors in schools want to ensure pupils in schools are learning in safe, inclusive environments with focus on the acquisition of reading, writing and digital skills. They also want equity for all learners.
- School leaders, teachers, learning support assistants and other school staff want to see the successful implementation of the Curriculum for Wales and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act having tangible benefits for learners. Strong peer networks across clusters and the wider school community will lead to improve transition and support.
- Further education colleges and Careers Wales want to see pupils with additional learning needs thriving in post-16 environments. They also want to see a focus on improving pupils' resilience and well-being, equipping pupils with the skills to achieve their full potential.
- Union colleagues would like to see more support for key groups of learners including the most vulnerable and more able and talented learners.
- The Scrutiny committee want to close the gap in educational attainment between groups of learners and to increase the proportion of our residents able to communicate through the medium of Welsh. All aspects of the education system should be responsive to the needs of each learner, so that everyone feels valued and supported in the learning pathway.
- Respondents were asked to identify what was most important to them in relation to education. Recurring points raised include that:
 - Education provides skills for jobs and work and that vocational education is future proof.
 - The curriculum should focus on providing practical, broad ranging, life skills and not just academic achievements.
 - School buildings and facilities need to be, modern and fit for purpose
 - Provide a safe environment.
 - Teaching should be high quality.
 - Education needs to be diverse and inclusive and accessible to all (disability, Welsh language provision).
- Adult education is also important as is access to technology for all including reliable broadband to support education.
- We need to encourage higher aspirations and raise expectations.
- Pupil attendance has declined following the Covid-19 pandemic, with particular impact on families from disadvantaged backgrounds. Similarly, vulnerable pupils have faced additional challenges which has impacted negatively on exclusions data.

- Our wider Caerphilly Conversation to Residents in November 2022 identified that 93% of respondents thought Education was more important than the last time this question was asked.
- Welsh Government have set a minimum target of 26% of pupils taught through the medium of Welsh for learners in year 1 by 2032 in order to meet the 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 target. In 2019/20 our percentage was 17.9%. The period when young people leave Welsh medium education is a crucial time, in terms of establishing patterns of language use. We want to increase the number of pupils taught through the medium of Welsh as there is a high demand across all industry roles for Welsh speakers. It is therefore crucial we seek to increase the number of young people leaving school who speak Welsh, as well as increasing the opportunities for adult learners.
- The Labour administration manifesto pledge as part of the local government 2022 election campaign was to “Build and Rebuild more 21st Century Schools, and continue commitments to improving standards and outcomes, high quality Welsh Language Education, and life-long learning through libraries and adult education”.
- The Marmot principles focus on addressing inequality and this has a weighting towards children, early years and a best start in life.

3. What steps will we take to achieve this?

The key actions and detail are represented in the implementation of our education strategy – ‘Pursuing Excellence Together’ [Education Strategy 2022-2025](#). The Education Strategy redefines the vision for all children, young people and adults accessing education across Caerphilly.

In order to achieve the outcomes, we will prioritise:

- The development of skills to have a significant impact on progress, attainment, provision, and well-being.
- The acceleration of the progress of vulnerable pupils educated outside school (EOTAS) or home educated/schooled, and those leaving school at 16 with no education, training, or employment (NEETS).
- The improvement of pupil attendance and reduction of exclusions, with particular focus on vulnerable groups as attendance was 10% down on pre Covid-19 levels. The exclusions were too high pre Covid-19 and are even higher now.
- Closing the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty.
- The provision of sufficient school places to meet demand as well as upgrading/replacing school accommodation, as appropriate, through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (Formerly known as 21st Century Schools).

4. What evidence will we use to monitor progress?

A wide range of quantitative and qualitative data will be used to monitor our progress against this objective. From this we have chosen a set of priority indicators. We will also use the Marmot indicators wherever relevant.

Priority Indicators

1. Improve attendance for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
2. Reduce or ensure the number of schools placed in a follow up category by Estyn remains low
3. Reduce the percentage of 'at risk' NEET young people at the point of leaving compulsory education
4. Reduce the number of surplus places
5. Reduce the number of permanent exclusions and the number of fixed term exclusions

Marmot Indicators

None that are applicable to Caerphilly at this time.

5. What resources will we use to deliver these outcomes helping to meet the objective?

A range of grants are applied for throughout the year for a range of work. In 2022/23 there was an estimated £39m of revenue grant funding used by the Education Directorate. Whilst grant funding brings a degree of uncertainty for future planning purposes, the Council has been successful over recent years in maintaining high levels of grant income and expect this success to continue over the medium term

Although grants and funding can change over time, the list below identifies some of the main resources we have available to deliver our objective.

- A base budget of approx. £173m to deliver our work.
- We will work with our stakeholders to ensure school improvement services are as cost effective and impactful as possible.
- We will make best use of digital grant funding. For example, in collaboration with the Welsh Government and all 22 local authorities in Wales, developing the 'sector owned, sector led' EdTech Service to ensure schools and local authorities achieve the best value for money when purchasing digital equipment, software and services.
- Within childcare we are bringing funding streams together (both capital and grants) and services like midwifery are also coming together. We are sharing buildings with wider partners and have shared pooled funding agreements, as well as aligning funding streams internally to widen the staff team we have in Early Years to support further across the County Borough.

- Our new schools' builds programme will aim to include childcare from inception.
- We are creating community focused schools so schools can be an asset for the community. The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme is a jointly funded major capital investment programme between Welsh Government and the Council. As part of the current 'Band B' programme, the Council has secured a £78million investment which is currently delivering school improvement projects such as a new replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon, an extension for Trinity Fields School, a new Centre for Vulnerable Learners in Pontllanfraith, a new build extension as part of the amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School and a new replacement Plasyfelin Primary School which will be the first Net Zero Carbon School for the Council.

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Well-being Objective 2 Enabling Our Residents to Thrive

1. What will this look like?

- We will have responded to our ageing demographic including creating age friendly communities
- We will have met the needs of our most vulnerable children and adults
- We will have enabled the Community and Voluntary Sector to support our residents
- We will have supported residents through the cost-of-living crisis
- We will have built new Council houses, provided more affordable homes, brought empty properties back into use and worked towards the prevention of homelessness

2. Why we chose this (our Well-being Statement)?

Over the next ten years (2033) 23.5% of our population will be in the 65 and over age group, an increase of 4.2% from 19.3% in 2018. Whilst our population of older adults is increasing, our birth rate is reducing. Social isolation and lack of connections can negatively impact our ageing residents. We therefore want to promote equality and interaction within communities and between generations.

We conducted a locality assessment over 5 community areas (the Gwent Well-being Assessment February 2022), and this identified that meeting the needs of our most vulnerable was a priority for both children and adults. Isolation in the wake of Covid-19, raised concern that we 'should cater for older people to remain as active and independent as possible' and 99% of respondents said looking after the vulnerable must be a priority post pandemic.

From a social care perspective, meeting the needs of our most vulnerable children and adults is core business underpinned by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. Safeguarding is everybody's business, and the Act places a legal responsibility on everyone, not just professionals, to report concerns to Social Services or the Police.

However, whilst safeguarding is at the heart of our core business, we provide services to a wide range of people who may require additional support in order to retain their independence and to remain living together as families. All assessments completed are based on the 'what matters conversation' enshrined in statutory guidance that aims to help people and families to help themselves. Services provided are based on the individual needs identified by the assessment.

We know our communities will be severely impacted by the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Our population data highlights that 34% of children are living in poverty (after housing costs). Consequently, people in the greatest need will turn to the Council for support, navigating and accessing any financial or practical support that is available.

Increasing numbers of homelessness across the county borough is also a concern as well as a lack of affordable housing. Our ongoing Caerphilly Conversation consultation in Autumn 2022, highlighted 95% of people responding felt that homelessness should stay as important once lock down restrictions ended. 86% of respondents said housing and homelessness was important, 56% of whom said it was more important than last year.

Private sector housing accommodates 80% of households in Caerphilly and the Council has a finite resource to improve this, yet the outcomes can be significant. Private sector housing investment can make an important contribution to improving housing conditions, increasing independence, preventing homelessness, tackling fuel poverty, increasing housing supply, widening choice and creating sustainable communities.

Within the borough 20% of our residents live in social housing and Caerphilly Homes (the Council's Social Housing Service) are the biggest provider in the county borough as we own and manage nearly 11,000 homes. At present we have 6,500 people on our waiting list, consisting of a combination of those who wish to move from one area to another, a larger property, a smaller property or those who need a property. A lack of supply of an adequate range of homes, combined with the popularity of the county borough, has increased house prices for rental and purchase to unaffordable levels for some people.

Our evidence, supported with Welsh Government household projections, indicates we need to increase the supply of affordable homes, especially 1-bed and 4-bed homes, as we have a disproportionate over provision of 3-bed homes. North of the county borough up to 90% of housing is pre 1914 terraced housing of poorer quality, which brings challenges for achieving modern energy standards and suitability for modern family living.

In supporting the ageing demographic, elderly people tell us they wish to stay in their own home; to assist with this desire, we recognise this will require new homes to be built as flexible and adaptive 'lifetime' homes as part of our longer-term planning.

We are already making some progress towards this and have completed just over 500 minor adaptations and 86 major adaptations, alongside a further 52 Disabled Facilities Grants over the last year, thereby helping residents to remain independent in their own homes and this positive activity will continue over the longer term.

It is also well-documented that we have experienced unprecedented rises in inflation, and fuel bills leading to a cost-of-living crisis. The Private Rented Sector makes up 12% of the housing market and rent levels nationally, regionally, and locally are increasing.

We created a service called 'Caerphilly Cares' during the pandemic to support residents. Post Covid-19 we have adapted this service to meet the needs of our most vulnerable and in need of financial and emotional support. So far, this service has:

- Received over 5,000 calls from our residents and 200 emails asking for help.
- Set up 33 authorised Welcoming Spaces across 49 venues totalling £144,000 of investment.
- Supported 46 community organisations & groups to obtain funding worth over £250,000.
- Supported over 300 individuals on a 1-2-1 basis of which 78 have been helped to access local community provision.

- Arranged 800 food parcels and 800 successful applications for discretionary housing payments.
- Provided energy advice to over 250 tenants.
- Made 350 referrals to Citizen Advice Bureau for debt and money advice.
- Supported over 1,000 residents to apply for the Welsh Government Winter Fuel Payment.
- Generated £3.2m additional income for residents during the 2021/22 financial year.
- Welsh Data shows that the annual change in rental prices has gone from 1.7% from April 2022 to 4.4% by March 2023*.
- The cost-of-living data shows that the average price to heat a home from October 2020– April 2021 was £1042 and had increased in October 2022– April 2023 to £2500 per annum*.

**Source Data Cymru*

This information shows there is still a strong need to support our residents through the cost-of-living crisis, and in the longer term we intend to build further community resilience with our voluntary sector and community partners.

There is a long-term vision for a larger range of services to work collaboratively 'under the umbrella' of Caerphilly Cares to support early intervention and prevention, to meet the needs of all residents and support the most vulnerable.

3. What steps will we take to achieve this?

In order to achieve the outcomes, we will prioritise:

- Continue to build Council Housing as well as working in partnership with local housing associations and housing developers to deliver new homes.
- Developing a new respite/short breaks service for both adults and children.
- Expanding our Flying Start areas and offering joined up support in partnership across Gwent to more families than before.
- Creating better choices across housing options, identify and bring new sites forward and bring empty homes back into beneficial use.
- Implementing a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.
- Increasing accommodation by exploring opportunities to work with the Private Rented Sector for people who are in housing need.
- Promoting and running literacy courses and other learning such as cooking and drama, which can support residents with independent living skills.
- Continue with the approach of 'What Matters' conversations to better understand the underlying needs of our individuals and our communities.
- Work in partnership with the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) to further promote and expand the voluntary sector across the county borough.

4. What evidence will we use to monitor progress?

A wide range of data, including qualitative feedback, will be used to monitor our progress against this objective. From this we have chosen a set of priority indicators. We will also use the Marmot indicators were relevant as noted below:

Priority Indicators

1. Increase the numbers of adults who are supported to live independently
2. Reduce or ensure the number of children on the Child Protection Register and Children Looked After remains stable
3. Increase the percentage of people whose care and support has helped them have a better quality of life
4. Increase the value of financial savings generated as a direct result of face-to-face support on the effects of cost-of-living crisis
5. Increase the number of cases where residents have had risk of homelessness prevented by remaining in existing accommodation
6. Increase the number of new homes built directly or in partnership

Marmot Indicators

1. Percentage of people whose care and support has helped them have a better quality of life. *Source: National Survey*
2. Percentage children living in relative low-income families. *Source: Department of Work and Pensions*
3. Percentage people living in households in material deprivation. *Source: Welsh Government*
4. Rate of households for whom homelessness was successfully prevented for at least 6 months per 10,000 households. *Source: Welsh Government*
5. Rate of households in temporary accommodation per 10,000 households. *Source: Welsh Government*

5. What resources will we use to deliver these outcomes helping to meet the objective?

Safeguarding and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable adults and children is an essential element of our core business and this is delivered with core funding to deliver an effective range of services. Welsh Government grant funding is also used to provide a wide range of early intervention and prevention services that underpin the statutory work undertaken across the Council. Any changes to this grant funding will inevitably impact upon demand for statutory intervention. We continue to engage in all regional partnerships and collaborations to share learning, to inform service development and improve service delivery.

We will fund this objective from our core budgets but we will also establish a workstream of the Affordable Homes Partnership with Registered Social Landlord partners, looking at the later living requirements and options to encourage right sizing.

We will use Housing Revenue Account funds to redevelop existing sheltered stock and new build housing for our ageing community. The Rapid Rehousing Transitional Plan Housing Revenue Account (HRA) identifies resources and use of borrowing for new builds.

The Council funds Cornerstone who work with us to provide a homeless outreach service and support in bed and breakfast. Cornerstone also lead on the Prison Pathway, delivered in partnership with National Probation Service and Local Authorities to deliver immediate response, enhancing engagement levels with prison leavers to help reduce re-offending rates.

Our reconfigured rents team will move rent collection officers into tenancy support roles to support our contract holders to sustain their tenancy and not look to evict when facing difficulties with low level arrears.

Our Adult Education and Life skills work has a programme called 'Multiply' which is an educational and learning funding stream via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Coleg Gwent Franchise also deliver essential skills for 5 authorities across the region.

ILS (Independent Living Skills) Coleg Cymorth also provides a fund to deliver independent living and community learning grant.

Supporting People is funded by the Housing Support Grant which is currently £8.5m. This is an early intervention grant programme to support activity, which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to keep accommodation. Funds are allocated for four primary objectives: People have been able to engage with housing related support services (advice, information and assistance), are better informed about the options available to them and/or know where to go for assistance, people have been able to access emergency/temporary accommodation or short-term supported accommodation and can access and sustain a suitable settled home.

Caerphilly Cares will use the Shared Prosperity Fund and enhance working relationships with housing in delivering green energy project to residents' homes. The project aims to assist with decarbonisation and cost-of-living for heating homes, and providing suitable energy saving related measures.

There are many different grants that support early years work, this is detailed in Well-being Objective 1.

We have successfully bid for funding from Welsh Government to employ an Age Friendly Community Co-ordinator for 2 years. This is to support working on the standards of age friendly communities.

Well-being Objective 3 - Enabling Our Communities to Thrive

1. What will this look like?

- Our physical infrastructure and digital connectivity will have improved to help people access towns, communities and services
- We will have worked with partners to improve access to public and other alternative modes of transport to keep towns connected and enhanced active travel opportunities between communities
- We will work with partners from across the Public Service Board towards improving the well-being and healthy life expectancy of our communities
- We will have created conditions that enable our communities to be healthier and more active
- We will have attractive open spaces that enhance quality of life

2. Why we chose this (our Well-being Statement)?

We believe developing Community Hubs across our county borough will provide a “holistic” service by providing access to a range of council services, such as libraries, council tax advice, customer services and other interactions all in one place. We know a lot of our residents rely on public transport and access services in their local communities. Data on car ownership as part of the Well-being Assessment shows that our county borough is below the national average compared with the rest of Wales. Wales national cost-of-living data tells us that fuel (petrol and diesel) have increased dramatically from December 2020 to December 2022, so bringing our services closer to our residents where possible will be vital.

The Gwent Well-being Assessment (February 2022) identified accessible transport (in cost, availability, routes to access) across the county borough and in every community area as a significant area that mattered to people. This highlights the need for creating more affordable and accessible public transport options, alternative private transport options and active travel routes. Information on this is covered under Well-being Objectives 4 and 5.

All respondents reflected in the assessment and the Caerphilly Conversation from January 2022 strongly valued their green spaces and environment and therefore, felt strongly about things like litter and dog fouling as they spoiled their environment. In the ongoing Caerphilly Conversation in Autumn 2022, 93% felt we should increase opportunities for people to be physically and mentally fit. 93% of respondents thought Green Spaces and Parks were important to be prioritised in the 2023 budget, with just over half of those saying they thought this was more important than last year.

Our complaints data shows there are frequent concerns around public spaces such as trees, general weed control, grounds maintenance, grass cutting, illicit tipping, litter and dog fouling, parking and footpath quality.

We want to create a place that supports a healthy lifestyle and helps people to become more physically active. In the National Survey for Wales (March 22) the

proportion of adults reporting good or very good general health was lower than in 2020-21. Only 36% of people are a healthy weight, while 62% are overweight or obese (including 25% obese). Our percentage of children aged 4-5 with obesity is higher than the rest of Gwent. Our Education Well-being Objective has actions that will help to address this. The Percentage of Adults with a BMI of 30+ (obese) is nearly 32% compared to Wales average of 25%.

In our own Sports and Active Recreation Strategy, we acknowledge that obesity levels have increased and there is little evidence of change in physical activity level. Overall, it is estimated that the total cost of physical inactivity to Wales is in the region of £650,000,000 per annum. Physical health and mental health are the foundations for every other activity from learning and education, to finding a job, all of which are more difficult without a good level of health. Despite these trends 'Creating an Active Wales' reports how physical activity has many mental as well as physical health and well-being benefits, for example:

- Up to 50% reduced risk of developing major chronic diseases such as heart diseases/ diabetes and some cancers.
- A 20-30% reduced risk of premature death.

In Autumn of 2022 leaders from across public sector organisations in Gwent came together for the 'Building a Fairer Gwent' launch event. There are various inequities across the region identified, in health, housing, education and employment. The health board's Director of Public Health at that time, explained that women in the most deprived areas of Gwent are living just 48 years of their life in good health, 20 years less than women in the least deprived areas.

Tackling inequities across Gwent is complex. When looking at the root causes of inequities, there is a complex system made up of institutional structures, services, organisations, policies and people. Therefore, equalities and addressing inequalities are the foundations for creating a good quality of life. The primary purpose of the Public Services Board is to focus upon these differences and develop improvement preventative interventions.

Actions and benefits delivered here also will make a difference to the delivery of Well-being Objective 2 'Enabling our Residents to Thrive'.

3. What steps will we take to achieve this?

In order to achieve the outcomes, we will prioritise:

- The development of a modernised presence in communities that makes best use of our assets in providing a wider range of services and, at the same time, opening up our spaces for use by communities and partners by developing Community Hubs to provide greater targeted services.
- Promoting Public Transport Integration, Active Travel, Connectivity and Digital Infrastructure to reduce travelling distances and promote and improve key transport hubs.

- Review of our enforcement activities with a view to developing a more coordinated and holistic approach across the county borough.
- Developing and delivering the new Active Travel Network Map and prioritised programme increasing our capacity for faster delivery of the Active Travel infrastructure programme.
- Delivering on the ambitions of our Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.
- Helping local community clubs and groups to engage people in volunteering, and in supporting people to lead independent and healthy lives.
- Seeking to improve digital connectivity and skills across our communities.

4. What evidence will we use to monitor progress?

A wide range of quantitative and qualitative data will be used to monitor our progress against this objective. From this we have chosen a set of priority indicators. We will also use the Marmot indicators were relevant as noted below:

Priority indicators

1. Increase the healthy life expectancy of Caerphilly residents
2. Increase the percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need
3. Reduce the percentage/number of people who are lonely
4. Reduce the number missed waste and recycling collections as a % of total collections undertaken (food, garden, waste, recycling).
5. Cleanliness standards within our streets to meet national standards
6. Increase the overall number of visitors to our sport facilities and country parks
Increase resident satisfaction with their local environment or community

Marmot Indicators

1. Healthy life expectancy at birth (males, females). *Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework, Public Health Wales.*
2. Inactivity rate excluding students (males, females). *Source: Annual Population Survey.*
3. % of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area and when travelling. *Source: Welsh Government.*
4. % of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need. *Source: Welsh Government.*
5. Percentage overweight or obese adults (BMI<25). *Source: Public Health Wales.*
6. % of people who are lonely (age 16+). *Source: Welsh Government.*

5. What resources will we use to deliver these outcomes helping to meet the objective?

The new Leisure and Well-being centre is estimated to cost £33.6m, £20m of which has been provided by the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund following a successful funding bid. The remainder is being funded by the Council.

Project specific grants and existing planned capital and revenue budgets, for designated programmes and projects will be used to deliver this objective.

With specific reference to housing, new build funds attached to the Housing Revenue Account and additional borrowing will be used alongside Welsh Government Social Housing Grants.

Existing staffing structures will be used in different ways to deliver all works required within this objective, with occasional, specialist staff, contractors, and partnerships appointed where necessary.

Asset rationalisation will be used so we are able to provide a full council offer in central places providing a 'one stop shop' service where customers can access multiple services and facilities from a single location. This is anticipated to save money by reducing our asset costs and add a positive contribution to our overall carbon emissions.

Our infrastructure hosts a large and diverse range of assets that requires continuous maintenance and periodic improvements, to secure and address current and future needs, such as roads, footpaths, cycleways, street lighting, signage and street furnishings, that will mainly be operated through in-house provision and some contractual partnership arrangements.

Accessibility of information will be improved through digitisation and technology and training to ensure our website and mobile usage is as accessible to those with disabilities accessing our information, to ensure there is equal access to information. and inform our citizens of council functions, news, and activities.

Well-being Objective 4 – Enabling Our Economy to Grow

1. What will this look like?

- We will have worked towards ensuring we have the necessary infrastructure in place to enable our economy and communities to grow.
- We will have worked in partnership to support businesses with a range of interventions aimed at stimulating the local economy
- We will have a stronger relationship with our Business Community through town centre regeneration
- We will continue to work with the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) to increase the availability of quality employment opportunities in the area and enhance our economy
- Our local workforce will have the skills that employers need locally and regionally

2. Why we chose this (our Well-being Statement)?

Our long-term thinking, along with the Covid-19 response, meant that we focused on planning effectively for future crises, which has required us to take a long-term view to supporting our town centres and improving our local economy. Changes in working practices and the general downturn in the economy, post the pandemic, means this is an area we should concentrate on. Our town centres are being used differently and the South Wales Metro links are starting to come to fruition.

When looking at developing this objective, the Gwent Well-being Assessment (February 2022), for every community area, identified accessible transport (in cost, availability, routes to access) across the county borough as a significant area that mattered to people.

The ongoing Caerphilly Conversation consultation on Budget Setting for 2023/24 undertaken in January 2023 echoed the results from the Caerphilly Conversation consultation that took place in January 2022, where residents were provided with a list of Council services and asked which ones we should prioritise when planning services. 84% of those who responded agreed that public transport should be a priority showing that this is an enduring concern for our residents.

When we followed up the Caerphilly Conversation in Autumn 2022, we asked residents “What matters to you?”. We asked if the priority areas previously identified in January 2022 were more important, or the same or less important. 51% of respondents felt that public transport was more important (34% felt it was the same).

One of the key themes that came out of our ongoing consultation was a lack of public transport, in general, and more specifically, a lack of integration between public transport was an issue for many residents. This was a concern particularly in enabling those who do not drive/cannot afford a car to access essential services. Demographic data shows we have over 20% of people who rely on public transport, which is higher than the All-Wales average of approximately 19%.

A critical building block of long-term planning is the Local Development Plan (LDP), which sets out the Council's policies and proposals to control the use of land within the county borough for a 15-year period. This provides the basis by which planning applications are determined and gives a clear indication of where development will be encouraged and resisted and is the basis for determining future development and conservation needs.

The LDP aims to ensure that the needs of all the county borough's residents and visitors are met and the regeneration of our towns, villages, employment centres and the surrounding countryside is delivered in a well-balanced and sustainable manner. In planning for vital new development, the work of the LDP is to balance this against the need to protect what is valuable about our environment.

The LDP was adopted in 2010 and ran up to 2021, therefore a 2nd Replacement Caerphilly County Borough LDP (2RLDP) will need to be prepared. The 2RLDP will run up to 2035, beyond the period of this Corporate Plan. Preparation is complex and there are several statutory steps that need to be followed. The 2RLDP Delivery Agreement comprises the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) which sets out who will be consulted on the RLDP and when, and the timetable for its delivery.

Consultation at the Gwent Public Service Board's community assessment planning level clearly indicated that residents wanted us to build on strengths in the community and wanted young people to have opportunities. Support was high for both young and old people to have things to do and especially for young people to have places to socialise.

Looking at our Town Centres our Caerphilly Conversation, and follow-up surveys, identified that "thriving" and "vibrant" town centres with no empty properties, and with leisure venues/restaurants to encourage people to visit the area were important.

Building on the Caerphilly Consultation results from January 2022, in Autumn 2022 we asked residents to tell us whether they still felt these things are important. 83% of respondents believed sustainable travel was *more important* or *the same* as in the previous year and 75% believe Town Centre improvements are either more important or the same.

The Welsh Government (WG) 'Valleys Taskforce 2016-21 Final Report' concluded that it is a timely opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved and what could be carried forward to support future work with Valleys Towns. Through numerous consultation channels, they identified that the communities wanted the following issues to be addressed:

- Create more quality job opportunities locally and address temporary and zero-hours work.
- Improve public services, particularly transport and affordable housing.
- Maintain and make greater use of the local natural environment and cultural heritage.

In response WG has set up its Transforming Towns Programme. Transforming Towns is committed to addressing the decline in town centres and seeks to ensure they not only survive but thrive. Transforming Towns is focussed on improved biodiversity and green infrastructure; reuse of derelict buildings; increasing the variety of services on offer in towns with an emphasis on flexible working and living space; and access to services and leisure. The priority is securing the long-term sustainability of our town centres by driving footfall and making them attractive places to spend time. In order

to access the Transforming Towns funding WG requires a Placemaking Plan to be developed by the Council and its partners to guide investment decisions.

Caerphilly town centre is an established tourism destination, has excellent connectivity to Cardiff and the wider region and is a gateway to the county borough from the south. The town is designated by Welsh Government (WG) as a town of strategic importance and in 2019 in recognition of this, we identified a need for a placemaking plan to harness and focus this investment in a coherent manner.

This placemaking plan, branded “Caerphilly Town 2035”, provides a bold vision for the town centre and identifies a series of projects/interventions that will help to achieve its goals over a 15-year period. The vision is ambitious and long term and includes a number of “corner stone” projects that have the potential to transform Caerphilly town centre and the role it performs in the Cardiff Capital Region.

Whilst there is a current Placemaking Plan in place for Caerphilly Town Centre (Caerphilly Town 2035), we are committed to refresh and update the existing 2009 Blackwood Masterplan and Regeneration Strategy with a comprehensive Placemaking Plan, to identify investment opportunities to ensure the High Street maintains its vibrancy and diversity in a post Covid-19 environment. Blackwood Town Centre is specifically highlighted as a key regeneration opportunity within the Cardiff Capital Region Metro Impact Study.

The Placemaking Plan for Blackwood Town Centre will set out a strategic vision for the future following an unprecedented period of economic instability over recent times and will look at how Blackwood can prosper without an over reliance on retail, including town centre housing need; consideration of physical interventions such as street widening, cycling and walking routes; identifying ways of improving and expanding the night-time economy offer; and exploring ways in which the town centre can contribute to achieving Net Zero Carbon commitments, such as ‘greening’ the town centre.

The Heads of the Valleys Masterplan, which includes Bargoed, emphasises the town’s role as a service centre for the north of the county borough, was adopted by the Council in November 2020 following public consultation, however it is recognised that a specific Placemaking Plan is also necessary for Bargoed Town Centre.

Bargoed Town Centre is a historic town that has a mix of Victorian buildings, 1960’s infill and contemporary commercial units. The town has experienced fluctuating fortunes over the years and currently the town centre is struggling to maintain a coherent direction for its future. Parts of the existing high street are underused and afflicted by vacant commercial premises. There is recognition that the redevelopment, re-evaluation and rehabilitation of the town centre can help to maximize the vibrancy of the night-time economy by returning liveable residential units to the area and encouraging businesses to stay open past traditional closing times. Further investment to the Town Centre is required to ensure that the town becomes more attractive, competitive, and welcoming.

The Placemaking Plans will help the Council develop programmes and policy to support the regeneration of Bargoed and Blackwood Town Centres through place-based solutions, good placemaking principles, the return of residential living to the town centre and positive public spaces.

Additional priorities from consultation activities 2023 showed that over 90% of respondents considered jobs and employment and opportunities to be *more important*,

whilst 80% considered support for businesses *more important* than in the previous year. Our population data shows that 24% of our population are made up of economically inactive people. There are a range of reasons for this, and we have actions in place to help people such as upskill, fund childcare and other barriers to employment.

In the county borough the number of active businesses per working 10,000 working age population was 435 in 2021. This made us 5th place in Wales, the Wales figure was 559. Whilst this is better than in 2020 when the figure was 410, it is less than the 459 reported in 2018.

There were 63 new active businesses (per 10,000 working age population) in 2021 making us 10th in Wales, this was lower than the Wales figure of 74. The percentage of active businesses that were new in 2021 was 14%.

The number of active business closures (per 10,000 per working age population) increased in 2021 to 52, although this is lower than the Wales figure of 64. We want to help and work with business to support them and the local economy and bring in opportunities that our survey respondents identified were important*

** Source Information from the Data Cymru Self-assessment data set*

3. What steps will we take to achieve this?

In order to achieve the outcomes, we will prioritise:

- Safeguarding appropriate land for employment purposes and releasing additional land, where appropriate, to facilitate business growth and encourage inward investment.
- Delivery of the Metro rail improvements as part of the wider Welsh Government and Cardiff Capital City Regional partnership programme.
- Using our town centre place plans, maximise opportunities to re-energise our towns, through a mix of retail, small business retention, new business start-ups, leisure and housing.
- Maximising the job opportunities for residents through the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and identify upcoming growth sectors and labour market demand across the county borough and the wider Cardiff City Region.
- Increasing private sector investment in growth-enhancing activities via targeted support for small and medium-sized businesses to undertake new-to-firm innovation, adopt productivity-enhancing, energy efficient and low carbon technologies, and techniques, and start or grow their exports.
- Jointly commissioning Further Education and Adult Learning Courses and locally procured bespoke courses to address skills gaps, address recruitment issues linked to skills gaps, and focus on growth areas in the local labour market for those in employment.
- Supporting residents with barriers to employment including Economically Inactive People, Short Term Unemployed, Long Term Unemployed and Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (aged 16-24 years old).
- Preparing and delivering a new 10-year Economic Regeneration Strategy in partnership with key stakeholders to guide decision making and investment and boost productivity and competitiveness.

- Creating social value across the county borough through the use of our third party spend.

4. What evidence will we use to monitor progress?

A wide range of quantitative and qualitative data will be used to monitor our progress against this objective. From this we have chosen a set of priority indicators. We will also use the Marmot indicators were relevant as noted below:

Priority indicators

1. Increase the number of jobs created (net impact across the region)
2. Reduce the number of economically inactive people
3. Increase the number of people supported to engage in job-searching and receiving support to gain employment
4. Improve our economic performance as defined through the UK competitiveness index
5. Increase the proportion of the working age population with an NVQ Level 4 or equivalent qualification
6. Improve the average wage across the county borough relative to Wales/UK

Marmot Indicators

1. Percentage of all employees earning below Living Wage Foundation rates. *Source: ONS*
2. Percentage unemployed (16-64 years) (females, males). *Source: Welsh Government*
3. Percentage of 0–7 year olds living in households in receipt of income-related benefits, or tax credits with income less than 60% of the Wales median *

** This indicator is currently under development*

Once adopted the objectives of the Local Development Plan will be monitored by an Annual Monitoring Report.

5. What resources will we use to deliver these outcomes to meet the objective?

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda. The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK.

Caerphilly Town 2035 has a dedicated Programme Manager and a multidisciplinary consultant team for the delivery of the plan. Council, Welsh Government (WG) Transforming Towns Grant Support, together with Cadw and Transport for Wales and the CCR City Deal resources will be used where appropriate.

We will deploy Caerphilly Enterprise Fund and Transforming Towns funding in relation to empty properties and provide appropriate grant support for visible improvements to local retail, hospitality, and leisure sector facilities throughout the county borough.

There is the Transforming Towns Acquisition Fund for Site Assembly together with Compulsory Purchase Powers and any other enforcement powers that may be required.

In addition to the Council budget, we will be collaborating with partners in the public sector, UK Government, Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, Cadw, the private sector and the third sector to deliver on a range of investment opportunities.

Bargoed Placemaking and Blackwood Placemaking Plan will be funded by Welsh Government and the Council, using Transforming Towns Grant Support and the Council's own funding. Expansion of the Community Enterprise Fund (CEF) programme through Shared Prosperity Fund Investment to town centre retail and service sector with wrap around business support for small businesses.

There is a funding programme to support start-up businesses/entrepreneurial support and we want to increase business start-up grants through the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

SPF and Communities for Work Plus plus funds will be used to deliver Employment support through the Caerphilly Employment Programme for residents with barriers to employment including Economically Inactive People, Short Term Unemployed, Long Term Unemployed and Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (aged 16–24-year-old).

The Metro Plus Road Traffic Authority Programme will see each Local Authority within Southeast Wales receive a £3million share to implement a scheme. Funding is being provided from Welsh Government (£15million) and from the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) (£15million) to implement this programme, with a further £20m being funded by Council and private investments. The specific Metro Plus proposal for Caerphilly is for the provision of a new transport interchange for Caerphilly Town, on the site of the current bus and rail stations. The interchange will include high quality passenger facilities including electronic information and EV charging for buses. Local Transport Plan publication will have Annual Progress Reports.

Well-being Objective 5 - Enabling Our Environment to be Greener

1. What will this look like?

- We will have worked with our residents to meet our statutory targets in relation to waste reduction, reuse and recycling
- We will have reduced our operational carbon emissions to become a net zero carbon local authority by 2030
- We will have helped our communities transition to low carbon transport
- We will have promoted and explored green energy opportunities for the council, communities and businesses
- We will have protected and enhanced our natural environment to improve biodiversity and make us more resilient to climate changes
- We will have set climate standards for new build Council Homes and worked to improve the green energy credentials and energy efficiency of our housing stock.

2. Why we chose this (our Well-being Statement)?

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing future generations. A landmark report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published in 2018 warned us that we had less than 12 years (now 10) to avoid climate breakdown. We need to reduce our emissions in Wales by at least 95% by 2050, but preferably sooner; progress to date has not been fast enough, which means we need to reduce our emissions dramatically in the next decade to achieve the target of 45% reduction by 2030.

Our residents agree, 85% of those who responded to the Caerphilly Conversation consultation were concerned about 'climate change', this came through stronger in the council survey than in the overall Gwent Public Services Board Well-Being Assessment consultation.

The Council has declared a climate change emergency and produced a Decarbonisation Strategy, with associated action plan and energy prospectus. Decarbonisation is more than acting on the impacts of climate change and can progress commercial opportunities, health benefits and opportunities for green jobs and skills, so improvements in this aspect support improvements in the other objectives.

Our consultation work also showed that residents thought waste collection and ability to recycle is the most important operational service and this has been a key finding over many years of engagement.

In the ongoing Caerphilly Conversation consultation on Budget Setting for 2023/24, 93% of respondents to our survey, said waste and recycling should continue to be prioritised in the budget for 2023.

We have faced some challenges in reaching the national recycling targets over the last 3 years compared to the rest of Wales, so increasing recycling but also reducing waste at source, is a critical part of this objective with a separate strategy and an associated action plan being developed to improve this.

An analysis of our complaints for 2022 highlighted concerns around refuse, recycling, green waste, missed collections and civic amenity sites. Trees, general weed control, grounds maintenance, grass cutting, illicit tipping and street cleansing also featured.

Turning to the natural environment and biodiversity, these are two different but interconnected topics. Biodiversity is about the habitat and species that live in the natural environment and so we need to protect and build on both. This is an area of significant collaboration across Gwent and is a focus of the Gwent Public Services Board's Well-being Plan 2023-2028.

The Gwent Green Grid Partnership, a Welsh Government funded Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being (ENRaW) Scheme, is a consortium of key partners (including the 5 Gwent local authorities working with National Resources Wales, Forest Research and Severn Wye Energy Agency) and stakeholders, including other interested organisations. They will deliver a consistent approach to Green Infrastructure management across Gwent and a collaborative framework that will inform the delivery of the South East Wales Area Statement, a key document for collaboration produced by Natural Resources Wales. It will act as a key delivery mechanism that enables strategic planning, ecosystem service assessment, eco-connectivity and mechanisms that create healthier citizens, stimulates business opportunities and provides community benefits (cohesion, skills development and volunteering).

Working with volunteers, partners, community projects and involving specialists in the community makes such a difference to improving our environment and biodiversity and this will form part of our new Biodiversity Action Plan. You can read more about the ground breaking projects from the partnership work here [Gwent Green Grid Partnership](#)

The Gwent Green Corridors work is establishing an Access Group to deliver practical on-the-ground improvements locally and at a regional scale by identifying missing links in the access network. This collaborative way of delivery demonstrates one of the strengths of the partnership enabling people across the Gwent region to lead active healthy lifestyles, provide economic opportunities and expand, where possible, the network available to cyclists and horse riders.

We will continue with 'Nature Isn't Neat' which is an approach that encourages us all to alter the way we manage grassland on our verges, open spaces and parks to benefit nature. Grasslands and green spaces are allowed to grow in the spring and summer to create meadow areas and space for nature.

The 'Nature isn't Neat' project is establishing joined-up green space management to create wildflower-rich pollinator habitats across Gwent local authority areas including Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen and ourselves, you can read more about this here [Nature Isn't Neat](#)

This objective supports many other goals and in particular our key partners, Natural Resource Wales whose objectives for 'Nature and People Thriving Together' (to 2030), include assisting a Wales where:

- Nature is recovering,
- Communities are resilient to climate change, and
- Pollution is minimised.

3. What steps will we take to achieve this?

In order to achieve the outcomes, we will prioritise:

- The development and implementation of a Waste Strategy that will set out how we will work with our residents to reduce, reuse and recycle household waste.
- Delivering the interventions set out within the Councils Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan.
- Exploring options to use Modern Methods of Construction to help develop at scale and pace, reduce energy consumption, mitigate the effects of climate change, and support the foundational and circular economies.
- Providing electric vehicle infrastructure across the Caerphilly county borough incorporating electric vehicles into our fleet and trial new technologies as they evolve.
- The use of various engagement and information tools to ensure housing contract holders are equipped with the knowledge to make more efficient use of energy, to reduce carbon output and energy costs within their homes
- Invest in Council homes, over the next 5 years to maintain the housing stock including the Planned Asset Maintenance Strategy (PAMS) programme, sheltered housing remodelling, large scale voids, adaptations, and one-off projects.
- Continuing our work to develop renewable energy projects that contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions such as the proposed Solar Farm and the generation and use of Hydrogen.
- A review of our local flood risk strategy to ensure we continue to respond to the needs of the areas prone to flooding.
- Developing a community benefits policy for the county borough to maximise funding to our communities that experience significant levels of development and particularly those of national significance.
- Working with partners to unlock former industrial or other brownfield sites where financially viable.

4. What evidence will we use to monitor progress?

A wide range of quantitative and qualitative data will be used to monitor our progress against this objective. From this we have chosen a set of priority indicators. We will also use the Marmot indicators were relevant as noted below:

Priority indicators

1. Increase the percentage of municipal waste collected by local authorities and prepared for reuse and/or recycled, including source segregated biowastes that are composted or treated biologically in another way
2. Increased the number of net zero homes built by Caerphilly Homes and its RSL partners
3. Increase the number of trees planted across the county borough to meet the targets set out within our Decarbonisation Strategy
4. Reduce our CO2 operational emissions

Marmot Indicators

1. Average annual micrograms of NO2 pollution exposure at residential dwelling locations.
2. Percentage (£) spent in local supply chain through contracts *

** This indicator is currently under development*

5. What resources will we use to help meet outcomes of the objective?

In addition to the base budget, there are project specific grants and existing planned capital and revenue budgets, for designated programmes and projects to deliver this objective. Existing staffing structures will be used to deliver all works required within this objective, with occasional, specialist staff, contractors, and partnerships appointed where necessary.

Asset rationalisation will be used to secure fit-for-purpose properties, and appropriate access to sites and locations, as needed for local services delivery and community accessibility, well-being benefits and improvement, for both residents and biodiversity.

Our infrastructure hosts a large and diverse range of assets that requires continuous maintenance and periodic improvements, to secure and address current and future needs. These include, for example, roads, footpaths, cycleways, street lighting, signage and street furnishings, that will be operated by ourselves with some contractual partnership arrangements. We will continue the facilitation of the Caerphilly Local Access Forum, preparation of a revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan and increased partnership working including the preparation of a Regional Access Strategy.

Asset rationalisation and improvements for public spaces are required to secure fit-for-purpose applications and appropriate access to sites and locations for all generation's needs, use and enjoyment, for example Town centres, Country

Parks, Public Parks, Sports and Play Areas. Continued external funding will be important for continued multi use development of green space through the Gwent Green Grid Partnership and important for continued support of local biodiversity projects in collaboration with the Caerphilly Nature Partnership Partners.

Public accessibility will be improved through our internet to better engage with and inform our citizens of Council functions and activities. A multitude of specialist items will be purchased through an established supplier network, giving regard to its carbon footprint (deliveries), and as required for different projects and programmes of works being delivered.

Sharing resources with partner groups means we are working with a range of sector organisations including Waste and Resources Action Programme Welsh Local Government Association Welsh Government and Local Partnerships to develop a sustainable waste management service that enables the authority to achieve the higher-level recycling targets and provide a better quality of recycling feedstock for the reprocessing industries.

Some of the other funding streams are:

- Electric Vehicle Welsh Government ULEV (Ultra Low Emission Vehicle) funding.
- UK Government – OZEV (Office for Zero Emission Vehicles) funding.
- Cardiff Capital Region EV Infrastructure Delivery Programme.
- Working with ‘Connected Kerb’ for the infrastructure delivery and operation.

6. How our Objectives contributes to other priorities - Gwent Public Services Board Objectives, National Well-being Goals and the Marmot Principles

Well-being Objective	Gwent PSB Objectives	National Well-being Goals	Marmot Principles
WBO 1 - Enabling Our Children to Succeed in Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We want to create a fairer, more equitable and inclusive Gwent for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohesive Communities Healthier More Equal Prosperous Resilient Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give every child the best start in life Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives Ensure a healthy standard of living for all Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention Tackle racism, discrimination, and their outcomes Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together
WBO 2 - Enabling Our Residents to Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We want to create a fairer, more equitable and inclusive Gwent for all We want a climate-ready Gwent, where our environment is valued and protected, benefitting our well-being now and for future generations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohesive Communities Healthier More Equal Prosperous Resilient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give every child the best start in life Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives Ensure a healthy standard of living for all Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention Tackle racism, discrimination, and their outcomes Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together

<p>WBO 3 - Enabling Our Communities to Thrive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to create a fairer, more equitable and inclusive Gwent for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesive Communities • Globally Responsible • Healthier • More Equal • Prosperous • Resilient • Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give every child the best start in life • Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities • Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives • Ensure a healthy standard of living for all • Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities • Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention • Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities • Tackle racism, discrimination, and their outcomes • Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together
<p>WBO 4 - Enabling Our Economy to Grow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to create a fairer, more equitable and inclusive Gwent for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesive Communities • Globally Responsible • Healthier • More Equal. • Prosperous • Resilient • Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create fair employment and good work for all • Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities • Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities • Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together
<p>WBO 5 - Enabling Our Environment to be Greener</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want a climate-ready Gwent, where our environment is valued and protected, benefitting our well-being now and for future generations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesive Communities • Globally Responsible • Healthier • More Equal • Prosperous • Resilient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a healthy standard of living for all • Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities • Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention • Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities • Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together

7. How we will monitor our progress

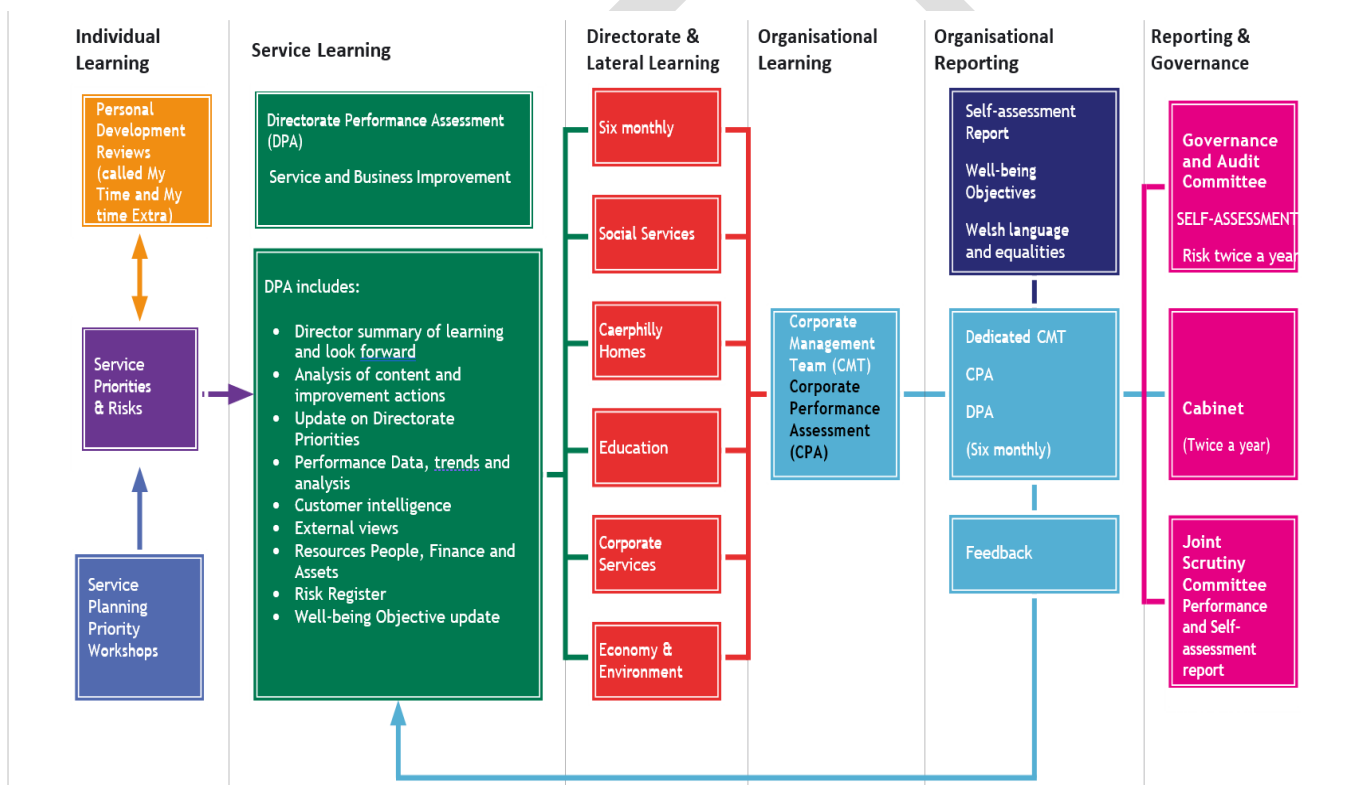
We will review our Corporate Plan every year to ensure our Well-being Objectives are still relevant and will make our updated plan available on our website:

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/my-council/strategies,-plans-and-policies/improvement-plan>

We will report our performance against the Well-being Objectives as part of our statutory annual self-assessment process which is shown below.

This process brings together the internal Council activity together with the external delivery of our Well-being Objectives as a set of organisational learning that assesses whether our external work is making a positive difference to our communities. Through this annual process our elected members have the opportunity to challenge our progress and input into future activity.

SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS



Section 8: How to Contact Us

Your views and opinions in relation to the content of our reports, plans and priorities are important to us. We welcome your active input to allow us to use meaningful information and data to inform us what services and how we deliver them to ensure that we meet the needs of our residents and our communities.

You can contact us via:

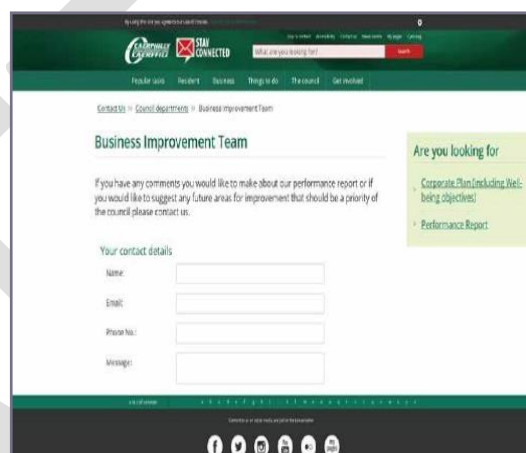
Email: BIT@caerphilly.gov.uk or via the Council Performance webpage and follow the instructions on screen.

Alternatively, please contact:

Ros Roberts
Business Improvement Manager
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Penallta House
Ystrad Mynach
Hengoed
CF82 7PG

Tel: 01443 864238

E-mail: roberr@caerphilly.gov.uk



You can also contact us via social media.



This document is also available in different languages and formats upon request.

Further information can also be found on our website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Appendix A National Well-Being Goals

The seven National Well-being goals show the kind of Wales we want to see. Together they provide a shared vision for the public bodies in the Act to work towards. The Act makes it clear the listed public bodies such as ourselves must work to achieve all of the goals.

Goal	Description of the goal
A prosperous Wales	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
A resilient Wales	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales	A globally responsible Wales. A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.



CABINET – 15TH NOVEMBER 2023

SUBJECT: MOBILISING TEAM CAERPHILLY GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet's approval on the proposed Governance arrangements for the Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In July 2023, Cabinet agreed to support the appointment of two external transformation specialists to support Council Officers to scale up its previous transformation work in view of the significant financial challenges facing the public sector.
- 2.2 The programme, entitled Mobilising Team Caerphilly, has been under development over the last few months and has now moved beyond the initial 'Discovery' phase.
- 2.3 Over 200 ideas and projects have been identified and organised into a portfolio with two programmes and programme teams and resources have also been brought into the programmes from across the organisation to begin implementation.
- 2.4 The process is built on Agile Programme Management principles, 'working in the open' and delivering results at a faster pace and scale than previously possible. This working arrangement requires a high degree of trust between decision-makers and project teams as well as a more flexible approach to governance.
- 2.5 There are two core objectives that have underpinned this work from the outset. This work must improve the customer experience while reducing the organisation cost of meeting the needs of our residents.
- 2.6 A number of key outputs from the discovery work now need to be formalised:
- An organisational narrative that sets out in plain English 'how' the Council intends to approach this programme of significant change.
 - A set of transformation principles, derived from the organisational narrative, that will guide decision-making.

- A programme structure that seeks to provide assurance as well as decision-making agility within an agreed framework.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Cabinet agree:

- 1) to adopt the organisational narrative set out in para 5.8.
- 2) to adopt the transformation principles set out in para 5.10.
- 3) to the introduction of the proposed programme management and decision-making structure proposed in para 5.11-5.18.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan indicates a projected deficit of circa £48m over the next two years. In order to transform services and significantly reduce the cost of service delivery, the Council has engaged some additional expertise and will need to design and implement change at a pace and scale that has not previously been required.

4.2 In order to achieve the goals, the governance arrangements around the Mobilising Team Caerphilly Programme will need to provide assurance as well as decision-making agility that is acceptable to Council. The provision of the narrative, the transformation principles and the programme structure set out within this report provide that foundation.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 In a report to Cabinet in July 2023 approval was given for the Council to appoint two external organisations to support Officers to scale up previous transformation work in view of the significant financial challenges facing the public sector.

5.2 The programme which has been named Mobilising Team Caerphilly has been under development since the beginning of the summer and has already been through a 'Discovery' phase which has seen over 200 ideas and projects identified and organised.

5.3 Agile Programme Management approaches have been key to driving the work so far at pace and scale. Agile Programme Management is defined as "a value-driven approach to managing work that emphasizes collaboration, speed, and efficiency and minimizes waste. Agile helps teams and organizations better meet the demands of their customers, with less risk and better business outcomes".

5.4 The approach to Agile Programme Management within Caerphilly has seen around 50 staff from right across the business come together for around twelve weeks to explore the range of opportunities at our disposal to improve the customer experience while reducing the cost of delivering services.

5.5 This Discovery work has been carried out 'in the open' within the Agile Space at Ty Penallta. There has been an open invitation to any member of staff, elected member and our trade union colleagues to come along to one of the weekly 'stand ups' and be appraised of progress and the current programme position. Indeed, Cabinet as

well as a growing number of elected members have chosen to do so as have our Trade Union colleagues. Dedicated sessions have also been held with around 500 members of staff, political groups and trade unions in addition. This has started to build a movement and a momentum to the programme which has been impressive.

- 5.6 Knowing what the is being worked on in an open and frequent format such as this has begun to change the governance and decision-making dynamic across the Council. This working arrangement requires a high degree of trust between decision-makers and project teams as well as a more flexible approach to governance and this regular immersion of officers and elected members within the programme has seen that trust become really well developed.
- 5.7 The work has also seen Cabinet, CMT, Leadership Team, Management Network, Political Groups and Trade Unions develop, share and refine an organisational narrative for the transformation work that sets out how we intend to deliver on our transformation objectives. The narrative covers a range of elements and is already at the core of much of the transformation programme communication and messaging.

5.8 Organisational Narrative for Transformation

The full organisational narrative for the transformation programme is as follows:

“We are committed to delivering sustainable services that meet the present and future needs of our communities. We know we must adapt to meet the challenges we face, but this isn’t simply about cutting services; it’s about flexibility and finding different ways to deliver what our communities need, when they need it.

This includes using fewer buildings, being more business-minded, and making our services more accessible. As we work to meet the needs of our communities more efficiently, we’ll explore other ways to deliver services when it makes sense to do so.

We must engage with our communities to understand the needs of our residents and provide the right support to meet those needs as simply as possible. Where residents need services that we don’t provide we will signpost them to the most appropriate partners to access the support they need.

We understand that some roles may need to change, and we expect there to be a reduction in staff numbers. We will look at voluntary departures options and as colleagues move on to new opportunities or retire, we will carefully assess how their roles can be managed going forward.

By working together, we can create a better future for all our residents.”

- 5.9 The essence of this organisational narrative has since been distilled down into a series of transformation principles. If the narrative describes our intent, the transformation principles below provide a framework within which decisions can be taken in relation to the transformation programme.

5.10 Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Principles

When delivering transformation, the Council will:

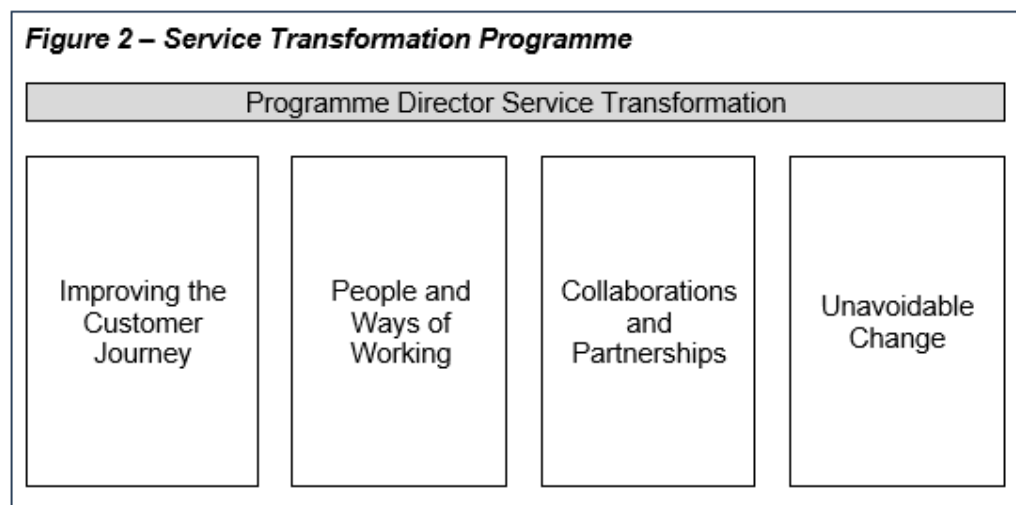
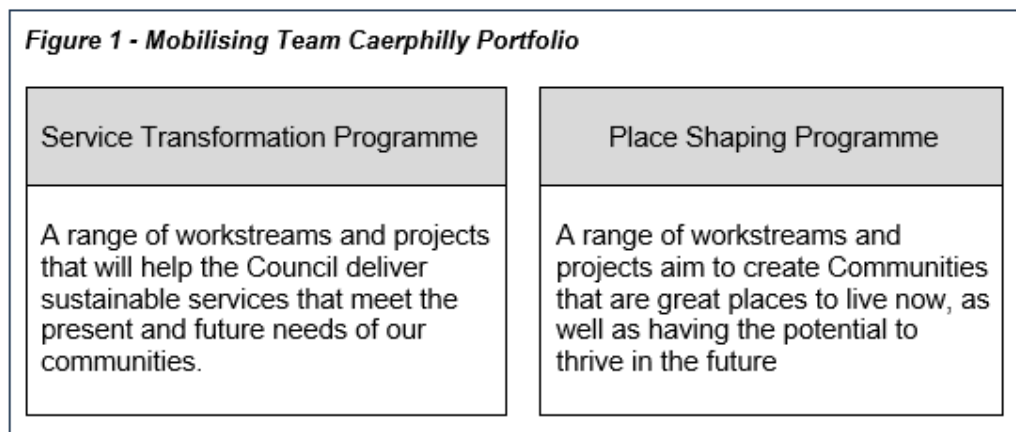
- 1) focus on flexibility and finding different ways to deliver what our communities need, when they need it.

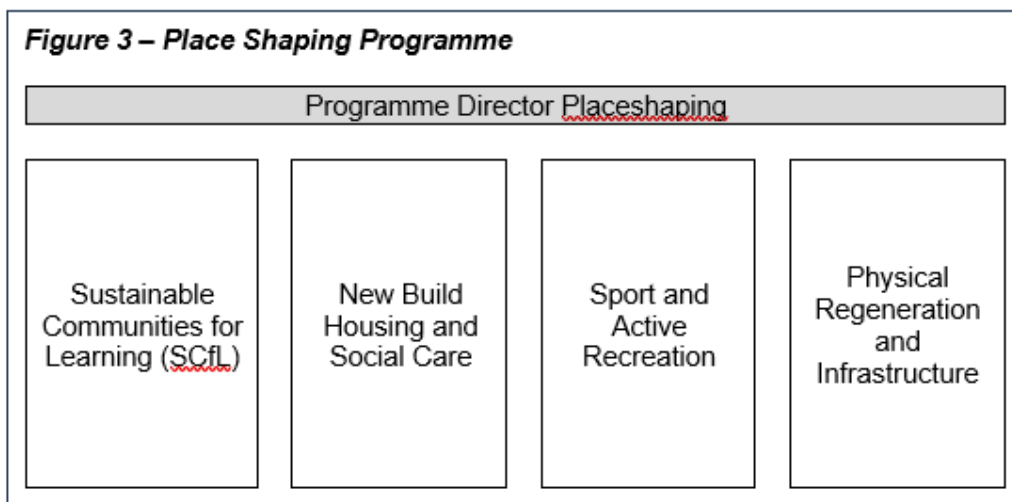
- 2) engage with our communities to understand the needs of our residents and provide the right support to meet those needs as simply as possible.
- 3) deliver channel shift across our council services moving from more expensive, face to face or telephone channels to online services where appropriate.
- 4) explore alternative delivery models when it makes sense to do so.
- 5) look at voluntary departure options and as colleagues move on to new opportunities or retire, carefully assess how roles can be managed going forward.
- 6) use our reserves to help balance the budget in the short term whilst change programmes are fully developed and implemented.
- 7) use our reserves on an invest to save basis to fund one-off costs to deliver changes where required.

5.11 Mobilising Team Caerphilly Programme Governance Arrangements

The Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation work has been organised into a Portfolio. A Portfolio is essentially a collection of Programmes, which in turn are collections of sub programmes and projects.

The diagrams below set out the proposed arrangements:





5.12 The Mobilising Team Caerphilly Portfolio will be overseen by a Portfolio Board which will meet monthly. The Portfolio Board will meet to consider, by exception, any aspects of Programme Delivery that require unblocking as well as to ensure appropriate management of programme risks, benefits and resources. Membership of the Board will be reviewed periodically by the Chief Executive.

The Portfolio Board Membership will be as follows:

- Chief Executive (Chair)
- Deputy Chief Executive (Vice Chair)
- Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services
- Corporate Director Economy and Environment
- Corporate Director Social Care & Housing
- Programme Director Service Transformation
- Programme Director Place Shaping
- Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
- Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
- Head of People Services

The Board will be supported by the following advisors:

- Leader / Deputy Leader
- Portfolio Office Lead
- Head of Communications

5.13 Programme decision-making will be in accordance with the existing decision-making arrangements set out within the Council's Constitution. Any change recommended by the Board that requires a Cabinet decision will be discussed informally at a Policy Development Meeting (PDM) then, where necessary with the relevant Scrutiny Committee prior to being submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

5.14 Transformation updates will continue to form part of Cabinet member Briefings with Corporate Directors. There will also be a scheduled monthly transformation Policy Development Meeting.

5.15 Programme 'Stand Ups' will take place in person every Wednesday morning at

9.30am in the Agile Space at Ty Penallta. Cabinet, along with all elected members, will continue to be invited to attend these stand ups. These sessions will provide real time updates on the progress across the entire Portfolio and will be open and transparent.

5.16 Hybrid and virtual stand ups will be arranged by the relevant Programme Directors as appropriate and will again be open in nature.

5.17 An update on the Transformation Programme as a whole will be submitted for consideration by Joint Scrutiny twice a year.

5.18 Members Seminars will also be scheduled as appropriate and will cover relevant and aspects of interest to Members.

5.19 **Conclusion**

Public services are facing unprecedented financial challenges and the Council is by no means immune from those pressures. Over the next two years the Council predicts that it will face a funding shortfall of around £48m. In order to drive down levels of expenditure so significantly a period of intense transformation is required.

The Council also recognises that its community leadership role requires it do all it can to continue to meet the needs of its customers while it drives down the cost of operation. The Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme is the approach that the Council is intending to use to deliver on these objectives and the arrangement set out within this report form the foundations for success.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 At present the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan indicates a £48.3m shortfall across the next 2 years. This figure is based on a number of assumptions that are subject to change.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 This report seeks to confirm a narrative for the transformation programme, some transformation principles and the introduction of some programme governance at officer level. On this basis an IIA is not required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific financial implications relating to this report as this focuses specifically on the governance arrangements associated with Mobilising Team Caerphilly.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific personnel implications to this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 Consultations have taken place with the list of consultees set out below and all views have been included in the main body of the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Author: Richard (Ed) Edmunds, Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services
edmunre@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Sean Morgan, Leader of the Council
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officers
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services

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CABINET – 15TH NOVEMBER, 2023

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

SUBJECT: WRITE-OFF DEBTS OVER £20,000 – BUSINESS RATE ARREARS FOR LTD COMPANIES

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 writing off national non-domestic rate (NNDR) debts .

PREJUDICE WHICH WOULD RESULT IF THE INFORMATION WERE DISCLOSED:

The report contains financial information relating to 2 companies that have ceased trading and been dissolved and the amounts owing to the council in NNDR.

MY VIEW ON THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST IS AS FOLLOWS:

My view on the Public Interest Test is that whilst there is public interest in the way the council writes off NNDR debt when a company is dissolved, the report contains financial details of what each company owed the council in unpaid NNDR. The council has a procedure for writing off NNDR debt that is publicly available and the total figure of debt write-off is reported to scrutiny committee twice per year.

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: 1.11.23

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

I accept the recommendation made above.



Signed:

Proper Officer

Date: 1.11.23.

Agenda Item 13

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

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