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Date: 10th January 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held in Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 17th January, 2024 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 13th December 2023. 1 - 10

To note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

- 4 Cabinet Forward Work Programme. 11 - 16

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

- 5 Audit Wales Report on The Examination of Setting Of The Well-Being Objectives And Corporate Plan 2023-2028. 17 - 82
- 6 Caerphilly Cares Support Package For Families Eligible For Free School Meals. 83 - 88
- 7 Grass Cutting Regimes. 89 - 98
- 8 Appointment of Public and Agricultural Analysts. 99 - 102
- 9 Amendments to Authorisation of Officers Within The Public Protection Division. 103 - 106
- 10 Draft Waste Strategy. 107 - 168
- 11 Purchase of a Property to Develop Supported Accommodation for Care Leavers. 169 - 172
- 12 Draft Budget Proposals for 2024/25. 173 - 196
- 13 Public Interest Test. 197 - 198
- 14 Surrender and Relet Proposal - Units 3 and 4 Bryn Brithdir, Oakdale Business Park, Blackwood. 199 - 206

Circulation:

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

And Appropriate Officers

HOW WE WILL USE YOUR INFORMATION

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of speakers will be publicly available to all via the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk. except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items.

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Agenda Item 3



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 13TH DECEMBER 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, Property and Highways), P. Leonard (Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection), C. Morgan (Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces), E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance), C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities), S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Housing) and E. Forehead (Cabinet Member for Social Care).

Together with:

D. Street (Deputy Chief Executive), R. Edmunds (Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services), M.S. Williams (Corporate Director of Economy and Environment) and G. Jenkins (Interim Director of Social Services).

Also in Attendance:

R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), L. Lane (Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), L. Allen (Principal Group Accountant – Housing), S. Issacs (Rents Manager), R. Thomas (Planning Services Manager), A. Lewis (Transformation Project Officer), P. Cooke (Transformation Manager (Lead) – Decarbonisation), S. O'Donnell (Principal Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rate Officer), A. West (Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager), F. Wilkins (Housing Services Manager), N. Taylor-Williams (Head of Housing), J. Reynolds (Landlord Services Manager), P. Thomas (Heritage and Placemaking Officer), K. Watkins (Communications and Tenant Engagement Officer) D. Lucas (Team Leader, Strategic Planning) and J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

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. Harry (Chief Executive) and R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 7 Housing Revenue Account Charges – 2024/2025

Councillor C. Andrews in that a relative for whom she has power of attorney is a Council Tenant.

Councillor N. George in that he is a Garage Tenant.

Councillor E. Stenner in that a relative is a Garage Tenant.

Councillor P. Leonard in that she is a Garage Tenant.

Councillor J. Pritchard in that a relative is a Council House Tenant.

Councillor S. Cook in that a relative is a Council House Tenant.

As these were personal interests only there was no requirement for them to leave the Chamber and they could take a full part in the debate and vote.

Councillor J. Pritchard declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 10 Listed Buildings at Risk Register and Strategy in that he is a supporter of the Ruperra Preservation Trust. As this was a personal interest only there was no requirement for him to leave the Chamber and he could take a full part in the debate and vote.

Councillor C. Morgan declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 10 Listed Buildings at Risk Register and Strategy in that he is a Trustee of Ruperra Castle Trust and left the meeting when this item was discussed.

Councillor C. Andrews declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 12 Consultation on Proposals to Implement Council Tax Premiums on Long- Term Empty Properties and Second Homes in that a relative has a house which has been empty for several years. As this was a personal interest only there was no requirement for her to leave the Chamber and she could take a full part in the debate and vote.

3. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED that Subject to an amendment to paragraph 2 at Agenda item 5 (Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre) which reads: *'Cabinet Welcomed Mr Lloyd, a local resident speaking against the closure of the Leisure Centre.'* The amendment to read *'Cabinet Welcomed Mr Lloyd, a local resident speaking against the proposal for the Leisure Centre to remain closed.'*

The minutes of Cabinet held on 15th November 2023 were 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 27th February 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. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING BAND B PROGRAMME - CONSULTATION REPORT: YSGOL Y LAWNT AND UPPER RHYMNEY PRIMARY SCHOOL PROPOSAL.

Considered by Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee on the 28th November, 2023.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update on the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B proposal in respect of the relocation of Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School and sought Cabinet approval to proceed to Statutory Notice.

Cabinet noted the proposal sought to create a sustainable school building with shared facilities, to accommodate Ysgol Y Lawnt, Upper Rhymney Primary School and Community use. The two schools will continue to provide both Welsh and English Medium Primary education and remain as separate entities, situated within the new dual purpose building.

Following queries raised by Cabinet the Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager clarified that the report went out to a public consultation which was to obtain views, before the Cabinet consider the publication of a statutory notice for a 28 day consultation. The statutory consultation is the point where people are able to formal object or support the proposal. Following the publication of the Statutory Notice an Objection report would be brought before Cabinet in April 2024 for Cabinet consideration.

Cabinet noted that the WG School Organisation Code provided a prescribed list on consultees who had all been contacted as part of the consultation process. In addition all parents at both schools were also included in the consultation process.

There were 19 responses received, 18 online and 1 via email. Only one of the responses received was done through the medium of Welsh. Which are broken down within the report.

The Officer gave Cabinet reassurance that all relevant parties would be involved in the design aspect of the school and Community facilities to ensure all needs are met.

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.

It was noted that as Councillor P. Leonard had not been present for the whole of the debate, therefore she did not take part in the vote.

RESOLVED for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. The information contained in the Consultation Report was considered.
2. To proceed to Statutory Notice in relation to the proposal for Ysgol Y Lawnt and Upper Rhymney Primary School be approved.

6. SCHOOL ORGANISATION CODE 2018 - CONSULTATION REPORT: PROPOSAL FOR THE CLOSURE OF CWM GLAS INFANT SCHOOL.

Considered by Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee on the 28th November, 2023.

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet with an update in relation to the proposed closure of Cwm Glas Infants School by July 2024 and sought Cabinet approval to proceed to Statutory Notice.

Following a query raised by Cabinet, the Officer advised that the consultation recognised there had been recurrent themes that emerged e.g. the transition processes and the impact on the pupils, however the Officer explained that the pupils at Cwm Glas Infants School would be expected to transition to Coedybrain Primary School at Key Stage 2 subject to parental preference. Therefore, the proposal is to transition at an earlier stage. Cabinet was assured that colleagues within admissions would work closely with parents, throughout the transition. The consultation also saw concerns regarding staffing implications. An assurance was made to Cabinet that HR provide all relevant support to staff throughout the process.

Cabinet sought clarification on the consultation process. The Office assured Cabinet that all the relevant parties as outlined in the WG School Organisation Code had been part of the consultation process. There had been 21 responses which are all contained within the 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:

1. The information contained in the Consultation Report was considered.
2. To proceed to Statutory Notice in relation to the proposal to close Cwm Glas Infant School by July 2024 be approved.

7. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT CHARGES - 2024/2025.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet's views on the increased Council Housing rent charges proposed within the report, prior to consideration by Cabinet. The charges predominantly focus on council house rents, but also include garages, and are intended to be effective for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2024/2025 financial year.

Cabinet noted the report had been considered at the Special Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee held on the 21st November 2023 and their comments were included in the Consultation Section 10 of the report.

Following a query raised by Cabinet, The Head of Housing advised a part of the commitment with Welsh Government the Council must adopt a recognised affordability benchmark, when setting rents year on year. Caerphilly Homes have adopted the benchmark, which is set by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, called the Living Rent Model, and is used to check affordability.

Cabinet noted that when looking at that affordability benchmark model, the vast majority of all of Caerphilly homes, even with the 6.7% increase, is still considered affordable and below that threshold and therefore, deemed affordable against that benchmark the stats within the report explain the exact the level of rent. In terms of Caerphilly's weekly rent, it is 5.2% lower than an all Wales average for local authorities.

Cabinet further noted that the Caerphilly Homes' rents are affordable and significantly lower than the private sector. Caerphilly Homes are also the third lowest rents against other Local Authorities.

Cabinet sought clarification on the support that is being given to 23% of Caerphilly Homes' customers that are not claiming housing benefit or Universal Credit. The Officer assured Cabinet that the Rents Team focus on tenancy support. There have been 2,700 tenants

which have received support and advice. There have been 712 successful applications for discretionary housing payments and 310 referrals to Citizens Advice Bureau.

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. Cabinet considered and gave their views on the recommendations included within the report.
2. The following increases from April 2024 based on the options explained in the report be approved.
 - (i) Rent be increased per property to the maximum permitted as per the WG rent policy which is 6.7%. This would increase the current average rent by £6.68 per week from £99.72 to £106.40 per week over 52 weeks.
 - (ii) The level of rent for garages from April 2024 be increased by the same level at 6.7% to £9.44 per week.

8. HOUSING OFFICES RATIONALISATION.

Consideration was given to the report which sought the both the views and approval of Cabinet on the proposals to permanently close the Housing Offices at Gilfach, Lansbury Park, Graig Yr Rhacca and Ty Sign, replacing them with a centralised housing service, based at Penallta House, as part of a proposal to modernise and improve housing services.

Cabinet noted the report was presented to the Special Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the 21st November 2023 and their comments had been included in the Consultation Section 10 of the report.

Cabinet queried if the Housing Offices could be repurposed into further housing options. The Officer confirmed that the sites will be assessed and if suitable there is a potential for them to be developed into living accommodation. Although the Officer did advise Cabinet that not all of the assets that they are looking to close are with the control of the HRA.

Clarification was sought on whether the Library Hubs will be utilised, so that residents can access housing services localities. The Officer confirmed that this will be one of many services that will be made available. There will also be digital engagement including through the introduction of a new Tenant Portal.

In response to a query raised regarding service delivery improvements and surgeries that have been held in the Community, the Housing Services Manager advised Cabinet that they have been piloted in a number of areas which include Caerphilly, Blackwood, Rhymney, Risca, Graig Rhacca and at Ty Penallta. However, these were appointment only, and a number of them were carried out during COVID restrictions Therefore, they were limited in what was being offered and levels of success varied. There has been feedback on the areas where the pilots were less successful, that there is need to have more digital engagement or for home visits. The Officer assured Cabinet that surgeries will continued to be developed and kept under review to establish levels of demand.

Cabinet noted that over 10700 letters were sent to tenant households during the consultation period. However, there were very few responses received. However over 70% of the responses were in favour of the offices being out in the community rather than in one location.

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 permanent closure of the Housing Offices at Lansbury Park, Graig Yr Rhacca and Gilfach, and the Community Housing Office at Ty Sign be approved.
2. The transition of the Landlord Service from a traditional office-based model to a community-based delivery model be approved.
3. The relocation of the Landlord Service to Penallta House where the wider Caerphilly Homes Housing Service has recently relocated be approved.

9. DRAFT GREATER BLACKWOOD MASTERPLAN.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet endorsement for the Draft Greater Blackwood Masterplan and also sought Cabinet's approval to consult the public on the Masterplan between 3 January and 14 February 2024.

Cabinet noted that this is the fifth out of five masterplans for the Borough Council.

Responding to queries raised, the Team Leader for Strategic Planning addressed the Cabinet and explained that the draft masterplan is a document which sets out a development strategy and a framework to stimulate economic, social and cultural activity in the area and coordinate regeneration initiatives to maximise the potential benefits to the County Borough.

Responding to a query raised in respect of bank closures, the Officer advised that there is recognition that the such services provided within the town centres are reducing. Therefore, although the document does not identify every proposal it does provide the framework within which proposals to address such issues can come forward.

The Corporate Director of Economy and Environment advised Cabinet that a more detailed Blackwood town place making plan is also in the early stages of preparation and will identify specific sites and development opportunities. The Officer explained that bank closures will likely affect footfall on the High Street. However, there are opportunities to work with other organisations, such as Smart Money Cymru and the Post Offices to provide banking services and any vacant buildings can provide opportunities through repurposing to other uses such as living accommodation or new retail outlets.

Responding to a query raised, Cabinet was assured that Authorities Regeneration Team that focuses on the delivery of regeneration proposals and work closely with WG. Having this document in place (and supported by the town centre placemaking plan) is fundamental and provides the basis upon which to bid for funding from a range of sources (particularly WG town centre first funding). Not having the document would mean that we would be in a far weaker position.

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

RESOLVED for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. The Draft Greater Blackwood Masterplan be endorsed.

2. The publication of Draft Greater Blackwood Masterplan be approved for comment for a six-week period between 3rd January and 14th February 2024

10. LISTED BUILDINGS AT RISK REGISTER AND STRATEGY.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval for the Authority's Buildings at Risk Register and Strategy which sets out a framework for the preservation and enhancement of listed buildings at risk over the period 2023-2028.

Responding to a query raised, the Planning Services Manager advised Cabinet that most of the listed structures in the Borough are in private ownership. Although the Council does have a range of statutory powers available the main priority is to work with owners to secure improvements and bring the buildings into beneficial use.

Cabinet also noted that there is £400,000 available from the Shared Prosperity Fund to provide grants for works to listed buildings at risk and this strategy will provide the basis upon which to prioritise expenditure.

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

RESOLVED for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. The report and the 2023 Buildings at Risk Register be noted.
2. The Buildings at Risk Strategy be endorsed and adopted.

11. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2024/25.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval of the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the 2024/25 financial year. The report provided Cabinet with details of the Council Tax base for 2024/25 for tax setting purposes and the collection percentage to be applied.

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

It was noted that as Councillor N. George had not been present for the whole of the debate, he did not take part in the vote.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. The Council Tax collection rate is maintained at 97.50% for the 2024/25 financial year be agreed.
2. The Council Tax Base for 2024/25 be 61,292.66, with the Council Tax Base for each Community Council area being as outlined in paragraph 5.6. of the report be agreed.

12. CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO IMPLEMENT COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS ON LONG-TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES AND SECOND HOMES.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval to undertake a

consultation process on the levels of council tax premiums to apply to long-term empty dwellings and second homes.

The 'Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy 2023-2028' has previously been approved by Cabinet, and this included in principle agreement to explore the introduction of an empty homes council tax premium to incentivise private sector empty property owners into action.

Cabinet noted that the final determination to introduce council tax premiums, and the level of such premiums, must be made by full Council.

Cabinet was provided with information concerning discretionary powers that the Council has to charge higher amounts of council tax (a premium) on certain dwellings provided for by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Following queries raised, the Principal Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rate Officer advised Cabinet that following a property becoming vacant, there is a statutory exemption of 6 months and after 1 year a premium can be charged.

Cabinet was assured that as part of the consultation, all council tax payers who will potentially be impacted by the introduction of premiums will be written to or emailed. There will also be engagement with Stakeholders, Elected Members, the Citizens Advice Bureau, and Social Landlords. Officers will also ensure that details of the consultation are publicised through our normal communication channels. Contact will also be made with estate agents, in order that they can advise potential buyers that empty premises could be subject to premiums should the property remain vacant for a specific length of time.

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 the reasons contained within the Officers report:

1. The details of the discretionary powers relating to council tax premiums as outlined in the report be noted.
2. A consultation exercise on the proposed levels of council tax premiums to apply to both long-term empty dwellings and second homes as set out in the report be approved.
3. A further report, including the results of the consultation exercise, be presented to Cabinet to consider and determine the level of council tax premiums that it would recommend to full Council be approved.

13. 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.

14. CWM IFOR SOLAR FARM UPDATE REPORT.

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

RESOLVED that for reasons contained within the Officers report the recommendation be approved.

The meeting closed at 14.18 p.m.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 17th January 2024.

CHAIR

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Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 9th January 2024

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
17/01/2024 13:00 p.m.	Audit Wales Output Report on Setting of well-being objectives for Caerphilly County Borough Council 22-23	To receive the Audit Wales examination report on whether the Council applied the sustainable development principle in the setting of its Well-being Objectives for 2022-23	Ros Roberts/Sue Richards Sarah-Jayne Byrne/Ian Phillips (attending remotely) (Audit Wales)	Cllr Eluned Stenner
17/01/2024	Caerphilly Cares Support Package for families eligible for free school meals	Welsh Government withdrawal of free school meals for eligible families during the school holidays.	Tina McMahon	Cllr Carol Andrews
17/01/2024	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	Appointment of Public and Agricultural Analysts	The Authority has a statutory duty to enforce the Food Safety Act 1990, which requires the authority to appoint a Public Analyst to analyse food for foreign bodies and compositional and labelling purposes. There are similar provisions in the Agriculture Act 1970 relating to the need to appoint an Agricultural Analyst. This report seeks Cabinet approval for amendment to such appointments due to changes in personnel.	Jacqui Morgan	Cllr. Philippa Leonard
17/01/2024	Amendments to Authorisation of Officers Within Public Protection	Officers within the Public Protection Division require	Jacqui Morgan	Cllr. Philippa Leonard

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 9th January 2024

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
Page 12		<p>additional authorisation under a number of Acts of Parliament in order to enforce the legislation and carry out their duties. The Environmental Protection (Single-Use Plastic Products) Wales Act 2023 bans the sale or supply of certain single-use plastic products in Wales, unless an exemption applies. The Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023 came into force on 18 November 2023 and prohibits the sale and advertising of activities abroad which involve low standards of welfare for animals.</p>		
17/01/2024	Draft Waste Strategy	To approve the draft waste strategy for public consultation.	Marcus Lloyd/Hayley Jones	Cllr Chris Morgan
17/01/2024	Development of a new Children's Home	To agree allocation of capital funding to complete the purchase of a suitable property and to confirm the intended use of that property.	Gareth Jenkins	Cllr Elaine Forehead
17/01/2024	Draft Budget Proposals for 2024/25	To present Cabinet with details of the draft budget proposals for the 2024/25 financial year to allow for a period of consultation prior to a final decision by Council on 27 February 2024.	Christina Harray/ Stephen Harris	Cllr Eluned Stenner

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 9th January 2024

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
17/01/2024	Surrender and Relet Proposal - Units 3 and 4 Bryn Brithdir, Oakdale Business Park, Blackwood - EXEMPT ITEM	Subject to Public Interest Test.	Allan Dallimore	Cllr James Pritchard
21/02/2024 13:00 p.m.	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
21/02/2024	Community Benefits Guidance - for projects and developments with the potential for significant community impact	Setting out the council's advice on how community benefits contributions from projects and developments within the county borough might be agreed and distributed.	Sue Richards/Heather Delonnette	Cllr James Pritchard/Cllr Philippa Leonard
21/02/2024	Nant Cylla watercourse, Ystrad Mynach	To provide Cabinet with an update in relation to erosion of the Nant Cylla watercourse and to request authorisation for a spend of £270k for detailed design of a stabilisation scheme and a £100k contingency fund for temporary stabilisation works should these be required whilst the full scheme is being developed and procured.	Marcus Lloyd	Cllr Nigel George
21/02/2024	Caerphilly Station footbridge review	To consider the options available regarding the future provision and alternative options of a pedestrian rail crossing at Caerphilly Railway Station.	Marcus Lloyd	Cllr Nigel George

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 9th January 2024

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
21/02/2024	Private Wire Arrangement from Bryn Group to Tredomen Campus – EXEMPT ITEM	Subject to Public Interest Test	Ben Winstanley/ Paul Cooke/ Anna Lewis	Cllr James Pritchard/ Cllr Nigel George
27/02/2024 10:00 a.m.	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
06/03/2024	Allocation Criteria for Artificial Sports Pitches and the Ystrad Mynach Centre for Sporting Excellence	To seek Cabinet approval for amendments to the criteria for the allocation of bookings at Caerphilly Council managed artificial sports pitches (3G and ATP) and the Ystrad Mynach Centre for Sporting Excellence and to approve the delegation of future amendments to the allocation criteria to the relevant Director or Head of Service in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.	Jared Lougher/ Rob Hartshorn	Cllr Chris Morgan
06/03/2024	Food Standards Agency Audit of Caerphilly Food Hygiene and Food Standards Service Planning and Delivery	For Cabinet to consider the Food Standards Agency audit findings and Action Plan and any recommendations from the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee.	Rob Hartshorn	Cllr Philippa Leonard
06/03/2024	Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028	For Cabinet to consider and approve the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028, prior to being considered at Full Council	Anwen Cullinane/Kath Peters	Cllr Eluned Stenner

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 9th January 2024

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
		(18/04/2023) for approval and publication on the Council's website.		
06/03/2024	Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2022-2023	For Cabinet to consider and approve the content of the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2022-2023, for publication on the Council's website.	Anwen Cullinane/Kath Peters	Cllr Eluned Stenner
06/03/2024	Council Self-Assessment year-end Report 2022-2023	The Council's Self-Assessment 22/23 is the Council's public position on how it has assessed and judged itself in its effectiveness of its organisational systems and processes, with any planned improvement needs. This includes the year-end performance of the last year of the 5 year set of (2018-23) Well-being Objectives.	Ros Roberts/Sue Richards	Cllr Eluned Stenner
03/04/2024 13:00 p.m.	HRA Business Plan 2024	To seek Cabinet approval of the Housing Business Plan position in advance of submitting the plan to Welsh Government	Lesley Allen	Cllr Shayne Cook
03/04/2024	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy	To seek Cabinet approval for a revised Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, which will detail the key priorities for the service and how they are proposed to be addressed.	Claire Davies/Mark Jennings/ Nick Taylor-Williams	Cllr Shayne Cook

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 9th January 2024

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
03/04/2024	Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Proposal – Ysgol Y Lawnt / Upper Rhymney Primary	For Cabinet to consider the Objection Report and approve commencement of the Planning application process and Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government	Sue Richards/ Andrea West	Cllr Carol Andrews
03/04/2024	Proposal for the closure of Cwm Glas Infants School	For Cabinet to consider the Objection Report and provide a final determination on the proposal to close Cwm Glas Infants School with effect from September 2024	Sue Richards/ Andrea West	Cllr Carol Andrews
03/04/2024	Additional Support Delegation - Education	To seek Cabinet agreement to proceed with the delegation of additional support to schools.	Keri Cole/ Sarah Ellis	Cllr Carol Andrews
03/04/2024	Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	To provide Cabinet with a statutory update to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in accordance with Welsh Government National Strategy	Mark Goodger/Marcus Lloyd	Cllr Nigel George



CABINET – 17TH JANUARY 2024

**SUBJECT: AUDIT WALES REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION OF
SETTING OF THE WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES AND
CORPORATE PLAN 2023-2028**

**REPORT BY: THE DIRECTOR FOR COPORATE SERVICES AND
EDUCATION**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Cabinet with Audit Wales examination on whether the Council set its new Well-being Objectives (Corporate Plan 2023-2028) within the sustainable development principle of the well-being duty.
- 1.2 The well-being duty under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 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 The Council has a statutory duty to use the sustainable development (SD) principle, when setting its well-being objectives.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires all public bodies to set well-being objectives to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area.
- 2.2 The Council's well-being objectives were developed using the sustainable development (SD) principle, which is described as the 5 ways of working (para 5.2).
- 2.3 Audit Wales followed the process used to set the objectives as part of a national project, and have produced the appended report, 'Setting of Well-being Objectives – Caerphilly County Borough Council'. The report is from audit year 2022-23 and was issued December 2023
- 2.4 Audit Wales overall conclusion was ***“The Council has applied the sustainable development principle throughout the process of setting its new well-being objectives but there is scope to strengthen monitoring arrangements”***

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet note the contents for the report provided by Audit Wales and make any comment on the Management Response, appended.

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. Cabinet can be assured that the well-being objectives were set within the SD principle and that any recommendations for improvement will be addressed.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 This report introduces the Audit Wales examination report, 'Setting of Well-being Objectives at Caerphilly County Borough' December 2023 – Appendix 1.
- 5.2 The Well-being Objectives have been set within the 5 ways of working which makes up the SD 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 prevent 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 Audit Wales overall conclusion (page 6, Appendix 1) judges that "The Council has applied the sustainable development principle throughout the process of setting its new well-being objectives but there is scope to strengthen monitoring arrangements"
- 5.4 The report details the main processes the Council undertook to arrive and approve the new well-being objectives.
- 5.5 The Report makes two recommendations for strengthening arrangements which are:
- R1-** The Council should ensure that its refreshed MTFs (Medium Term Financial Plan) shows how it will resource the delivery of its new WBO over the short, medium and longer term and to reflect any potential future financial risks to deliver them
- R2-** The Council should ensure its performance management arrangements provide effective monitoring, reporting and scrutiny of the progress being made on delivering its well-being objectives
- 5.6 In response to Recommendation 1, each well-being objective in the Corporate Plan has a section on how we will resource the objective. To satisfy the recommendation, as the MTFP further develops, we will have mechanisms in place to ensure there is alignment between the delivery of the WBO's and the MTFP. The Well-being

Objectives are reviewed annually, and part of that review will dovetail into the budget setting process, so that the two activities are managed collectively.

- 5.7 In response to Recommendation 2, we are developing the new Performance Reporting process for the WBO's including baselines, trend data and descriptors of the expected journey of performance data, so we can measure and evaluate progress. We have included this as an action within the Council's draft Annual Self-Assessment with a delivery date to complete by April 2024.
- 5.8 The Council's Management Response to the recommendations are at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 5.9 We are pleased that our regulators at Audit Wales worked in partnership with us by following the process over the year of development. The output recognises the work that went into setting the Well-being Objectives and agreed that this work followed the SD principle. We welcome the report and the recommendations for improvements, that we recognise will make our arrangements stronger as noted in 5.6 and 5.7.

5.10 Conclusion

The Council's Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives 2023-2028 (Appendix 3) have been developed to be aspirational in improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our area, in partnership with other public services and partners and within the SD duty. The Audit Wales examination of how we set our Well-being Objectives summarises that, "*The Council has applied the sustainable development principle throughout the process of setting its new well-being objectives but there is scope to strengthen monitoring arrangements*"

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 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.

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.
- 8.2 Recommendation 1 recognises the need to ensure our MTFP reflects the resources needed to deliver our Well-being Objectives and this is particularly important in this challenging financial climate.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications arising from this Report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 Any consultation responses have been included within this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and associated statutory guidance.

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Consultees:

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Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Paul Cooke, Senior Policy Officer
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer Equalities, Welsh Language

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Audit Wales output – Examination of ‘Setting of well-being objectives –
Caerphilly County Borough Council’
- Appendix 2 Management Response to the examination above
- Appendix 3 Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives 2023-2028

Setting of well-being objectives – Caerphilly County Borough Council

Audit year: 2022-23

Date issued: December 2023

Document reference: 3874A2023

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh. [Delete if not applicable.]

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Background: our examinations of the setting of well-being objectives

- 1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) places a ‘well-being duty’ on 48 public bodies. The duty requires those bodies to set and publish ‘well-being objectives’ that are designed to maximise their contribution to achieving each of the Act’s seven national well-being goals.¹ They must also take all reasonable steps, in exercising their functions, to meet those objectives.
- 2 The Auditor General must carry out examinations to assess the extent to which public bodies have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives.² We are carrying out a rolling programme of these examinations, up to early 2025.³
- 3 To do something in accordance with the sustainable development principle means acting ‘in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. To achieve this, a public body must take account of the five ways of working: long term, integration, involvement, collaboration, and prevention.⁴
- 4 We designed an assessment framework to enable us to assess the extent to which public bodies have applied the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives. **Appendix 1** sets out further information on our approach, including a set of ‘positive indicators’ that illustrate what good could look like.
- 5 In designing our approach, we considered what we could reasonably expect from public bodies at this point in time. Public bodies should now be familiar with the sustainable development principle and ways of working and be seeking to apply them in a meaningful way. At the same time, we appreciate that public bodies are still developing their experience in applying the sustainable development principle when setting well-being objectives. Therefore, the examinations include consideration of how public bodies are applying their learning and how they can improve in future.

¹ The seven national well-being goals are; a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and a globally responsible Wales.

² Section 15 (1) (a) Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

³ The Auditor General must carry out examinations over the period set out in the Act, which begins one year before a Senedd election and ends one year and one day before the following Senedd election.

⁴ Section 5 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Carrying out our examination at the Council

- 6 The aim of this examination was to:
 - explain how the Council applied the sustainable development principle throughout in the process of setting its well-being objectives;
 - provide assurance on the extent that the Council applied the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives; and
 - identify opportunities for the Council] to further embed the sustainable development principle when setting well-being objectives in future.
- 7 We set out to answer the overall question 'to what extent has the Council acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting its new well-being objectives'. We did this by exploring the following questions:
 - was the process the Council put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle?
 - has the Council considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle?
 - has the Council put in place arrangements to monitor progress and improve how it applies the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives?
- 8 We discussed the timing of the examination with the Council, and we tailored the delivery to reflect its specific circumstances.
- 9 We carried out the examination in 'real time', undertaking the work while the Council was in the process of setting its well-being objectives. This allowed us to observe key parts of the process, gaining valuable insight and audit evidence.
- 10 In addition to observing meetings and events, we:
 - reviewed key documents; and
 - ran a workshop with key people who were involved with setting the well-being objectives.

How and when the Council set its well-being objectives

- 11 The Council commenced work on setting new well-being objectives during 2022 then published its new objectives in November 2023. **Exhibit 1** sets out those well-being objectives.
- 12 The Council published its well-being objectives as part of its Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives 2023-2028 which included its well-being statement that is required under the Act. The Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives 2023-2028 can be [viewed on the Council's website](#).

Exhibit 1: The Council's well-being objectives 2023-2028

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

What we found

The Council has applied the sustainable development principle throughout the process of setting its new well-being objectives but there is scope to strengthen monitoring arrangements

The process for setting the well-being objectives

Evidence base

- 13 The Council has developed its new well-being objectives (WBO) based on a good understanding of current risks and opportunities and has drawn on many sources of information and a wide-ranging set of data to understand both its current and future needs, which are set out in the draft corporate plan. For example:
 - the Public Services Board's well-being assessments;
 - the results of local consultation and engagement;
 - Flood Risk Assessment Wales;
 - Welsh Government household projections;
 - its annual review of performance against its Well-being Objectives; and
 - its annual self-assessment.
- 14 There is a clear rationale in its draft corporate plan for the setting of its WBO and the steps it is taking to deliver them to improve the County Borough over the longer term. The Council is also intending to develop more intelligence to help it understand the root causes of problems. For example, the Council aims to build an

evidence base on what contributes to the root cause of rough sleeping to further its understanding to reduce the demand for Housing Related Support Provision.

Consultation and involvement

- 15 The Council has involved a wide range of stakeholders to inform the development of its WBOs. This included a series of engagement sessions with Cabinet, management networks, staff and partner organisations. It also carried out face-to-face engagement and a survey with the public in the formative and ongoing stages of developing its objectives. The Council then held a joint scrutiny session in October 2023 to seek views on the draft well-being objectives.
- 16 The Council undertook a county-wide engagement exercise, for example, through its 'Caerphilly Conversation' where it asks people 'what matters to them. Despite those efforts, the response rate to this specific exercise was not high (500 comments and 292 completed surveys) and therefore it considers its engagement intelligence cannot be fully representative of the population. The Council recognises it will be important for it to take this into account in its future engagement planning so that it can effectively reach different groups.
- 17 The Council has drawn on the results of other involvement activity to help set its WBO. It has also adopted a cross organisational approach to determine the steps and actions it will take to help deliver the WBO. This reflects the learning from its previous round of objective setting, where it identified the need to strengthen links between the directorates and adopt a collective approach to setting its WBO.

Planning to improve well-being

- 18 The Council has considered how its objectives can improve well-being and have a broad impact and has designed them to improve social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being and the national well-being goals. This is set out in the draft Corporate Plan, for example:
 - the Council worked through the Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) to gain a good understanding of how its WBOs relate to the longer-term outcomes key partners are seeking to achieve. It developed a good understanding of shared regional issues and risks, in part, through the regional PSB well-being assessment. It also reviewed the partners' plans and objectives and undertook a mapping exercise to determine how its WBOs, and the steps to deliver them best supported each of the PSB's objectives.
 - furthermore, the Council and its PSB partners have collectively adopted the 'Marmot Principles'. This set of guiding principles form a framework for reducing health inequalities.

Planning to deliver the well-being objectives

- 19 The Council has undertaken considerable work to understand some the resource implications in delivering its objectives. The Council's Corporate Plan and Well-being Objectives 2023-2028 set out what resources it will use to deliver each objective including preventative work. For example, its 'Caerphilly Cares' model⁵ will be used to support early intervention and prevention, to meet the needs of all residents and support the most vulnerable; and Supporting People's early intervention grant programme to support actions which prevents people from becoming homeless or stabilises their housing situation.
- 20 However, the Council hasn't yet fully determined resources to support delivery of its WBO over the medium term. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is being revised and updated to reflect the new well-being objectives, and wider financial challenges. Our previous reports⁶ on the Council's financial sustainability highlighted that the MTFP was underdeveloped and that it had not made its planned improvements. It will be important that the refreshed MTFP shows how it will resource the delivery of its new WBO over the short, medium and longer term and reflects any potential future financial risks to deliver them.

Monitoring the well-being objectives

- 21 The Council has clearly considered how it can develop appropriate measures and monitoring arrangements to accompany its WBOs. The Corporate Plan includes measures under each objective, and some reflect the broader impact on well-being. For example, measures around reduction in carbon emissions shows the Council's contribution to improving the environment as well as health benefits for its communities from reduced pollution exposure. The measures should enable the Council to monitor progress. However, the measures do not yet contain the direction of improvement as this work will be undertaken at a later stage. This will be important to enable the Council to determine the progress it is making in delivering its WBO and the extent in which its impacting and improving the well-being of people in its communities. Furthermore, it will be important that the Council regularly reviews the appropriateness of its measures in helping it evaluate the outcome of its activities.
- 22 The Council's current process for monitoring progress against its WBO is through a combination of its performance monitoring arrangements and through its annual reporting and self-assessment report. The Council recognises that its current reporting approach needs to be adapted to ensure appropriate focus is given to

⁵ The 'Caerphilly Cares' team offers a centralised coordination and response triage service for residents in need of support for issues such as food poverty, debt or rent arrears, isolation or loneliness.

⁶

https://www.audit.wales/sites/default/files/publications/caerphilly_council_assurance_risk_assessment_review_english.pdf

monitoring progress against its WBO and will be continuously reviewing the appropriateness of its reporting.

Recommendations

Recommendation heading

- R1 The Council should ensure that its refreshed MTFS shows how it will resource the delivery of its new WBO over the short, medium and longer term and to reflect any potential future financial risks to deliver them.

- R2 The Council should ensure its performance management arrangements provide effective monitoring, reporting and scrutiny of the progress being made on delivering its well-being objectives.

Appendix 1

Key questions and what we looked for

The table below sets out the question we sought to answer in carrying out this examination, along with some sub-questions to guide our evidence gathering. They are based on the positive indicators we have previously used in our sustainable development principle examinations, which were developed through engagement with public bodies and informed by advice and guidance from the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. This list is not a checklist, but rather an illustrative set of characteristics that describe what good could look like.

To what extent has the body acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting its new well-being objectives?

Planning: Was the process the body put in place to set its well-being objectives underpinned by the sustainable development principle?

<p>Has the body used data and other intelligence to understand need, risks and opportunities and how they might change over time?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body has a clear and balanced assessment of progress against previous well-being objectives that has been used to inform the body's understanding of the 'as is'/ short-term need. • The body has set well-being objectives based on a good understanding of current and future need, risk and opportunities, including analysis of future trends. This is likely to be drawn from a range of local and national sources, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Public Services Boards' well-being assessments – Regional Partnership Boards' population assessments – The results of local involvement/ consultation exercises – Service monitoring and complaints – Future Trends report – Natural Resources Wales' State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) for Wales and Area Based Assessments • The body has sought to understand the root causes of problems so that it can address negative cycles and intergenerational challenges through its well-being objectives.
<p>Has the body involved others in developing its well-being objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body uses the results of involvement to help select its well-being objectives. That involvement – whether primary, secondary or a combination – reflects the full diversity of the population. • Involvement reflects good practice and advice from the Future Generations Commissioner.

<p>Has the body considered how the objectives can improve well-being and have a broad impact?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The well-being objectives have been designed to improve well-being in the broadest sense and make a contribution across the seven national well-being goals. • The well-being objectives have been designed to reflect and capitalise on the connections between different areas of work. • There is a well-developed understanding of how the well-being objectives impact on/ relate to what other public bodies are trying to achieve and opportunities to work together.
<p>Has the body designed the objectives to deliver longer-term benefits, balanced with meeting short-term needs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body has set objectives that are sufficiently ambitious and have been designed to drive activity across the organisation. • The objectives are designed to meet short and longer-term need. Where objectives are set over a short to medium timeframe, they are set in the context of longer-term considerations or ambitions.
<p>Resourcing and delivery: Has the body considered how it will make sure it can deliver its well-being objectives in line with the sustainable development principle?</p>	
<p>Has the body considered how it can resource the well-being objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources have been allocated to ensure the objectives can be delivered over the short and medium-term, but the body has also considered longer-term resources, risks and/or how it can resource longer-term objectives. • The body has allocated resources to deliver preventative benefits, where these are described in its well-being objectives.

<p>Has the body considered how it can work with others to deliver their objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body is drawing on its knowledge of partners objectives/ activity, its relationships and collaborative arrangements to make sure it can deliver on cross-cutting ambitions.
<p>Monitor and review: Has the body put in place arrangements to monitor progress and improve how it applies the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives?</p>	
<p>Has the body developed appropriate measures and monitoring arrangements?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance measures are designed to reflect the sustainable development principle, e.g., by focusing on outcomes that cut across departmental/ organisational boundaries and deliver multiple (including preventative) benefits over the longer term. • There is a 'golden thread' that will allow the body to clearly and transparently report on progress to meeting the objectives.
<p>Is the body seeking to learn from and improve how it has applied the sustainable development principle to setting its well-being objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body shows self-awareness and a commitment to improving how it applies the sustainable development principle so that it can do so in a meaningful and impactful way. • The body has learnt from setting previous well-being objectives and from applying the sustainable development principle more generally and has improved the process for setting its new well-being objectives. • The body has or plans to reflect on how it has applied the sustainable development principle in this round of setting well-being objectives.



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Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

Organisational response

Report title: The Setting of Well-being Objectives

Completion date: 29th November 2023

Document reference: 3874A2023

Ref	Recommendation	Organisational response Please set out here relevant commentary on the planned actions in response to the recommendations	Completion date Please set out by when the planned actions will be complete	Responsible officer (title)
R1	The Council should ensure that its refreshed MTFS shows how it will resource the delivery of its new WBO over the short, medium and longer term and to reflect any potential future financial risks to deliver them	<p>In the plan under each objective, we have a section called “What resources will we use to deliver the outcomes to meet the objective”. This section details how we plan to fund delivery of each objective. We will review the resources as part of our monitoring arrangements and any changes in resources that may affect the delivery of the objectives will be documented when the Corporate Plan is reviewed and updated.</p> <p>The MTFP must consider the objectives on its cyclical basis.</p>	<p>Initial assessment completed.</p> <p>As per the MTFP cycle</p>	Stephen Harris
R2	The Council should ensure its performance management arrangements provide effective monitoring, reporting and scrutiny of the progress being made on delivering its well-being objectives	<p>Previously the WBO updates were collected via the Directorate Performance Assessments.</p> <p>Due the cross cutting nature of the current set of WBO’s across the directorates we will be setting up a performance framework including data and trends and developing alternative ways to capture and report progress information.</p>	March 2024	Ed Edmunds (Ros Roberts)

Caerphilly County Borough Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives 2023-2028



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1. 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.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Morgan', written over a light blue background.

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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "CHARRY".

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 Southeast 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.

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

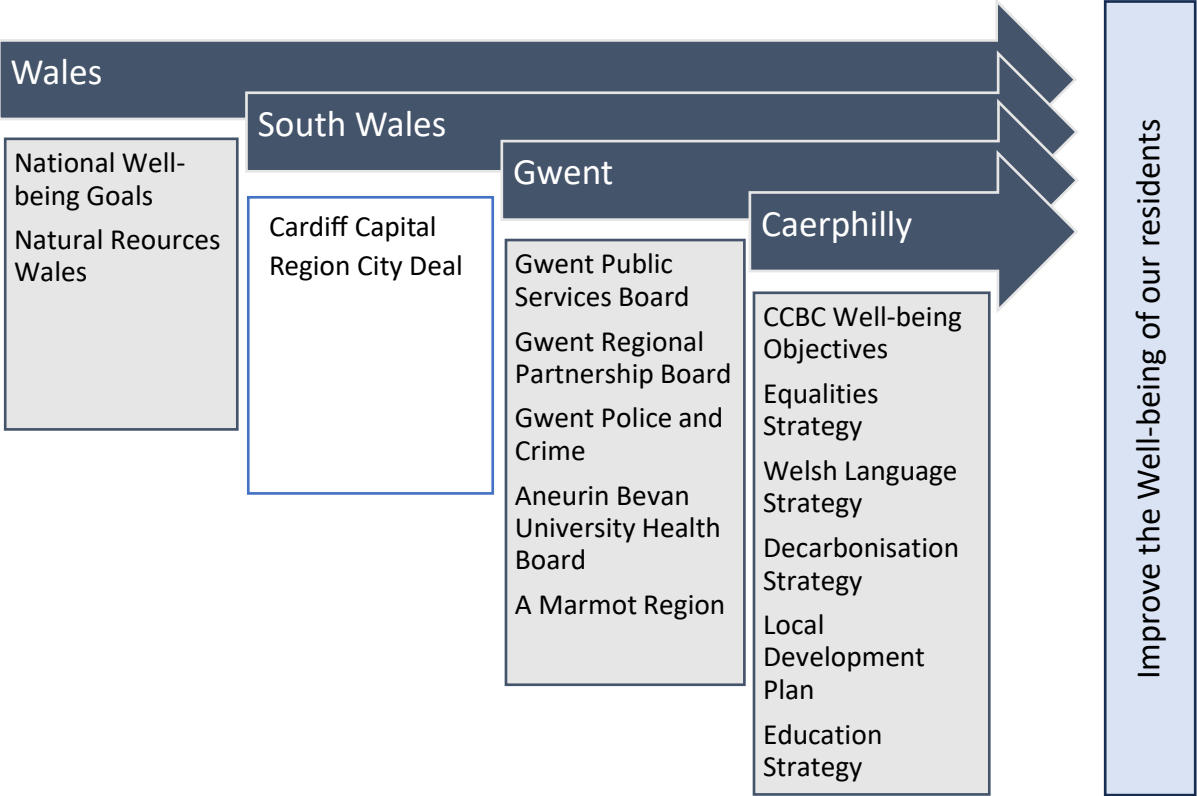
report on some of the data as part of our annual review as it may be made available at different times during the year.

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.

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
7. 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 Southeast 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 *Source: DEFRA*
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
<p>WBO 1 - Enabling Our Children to Succeed in Education</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 • 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
<p>WBO 2 - Enabling Our Residents to Thrive</p>	<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

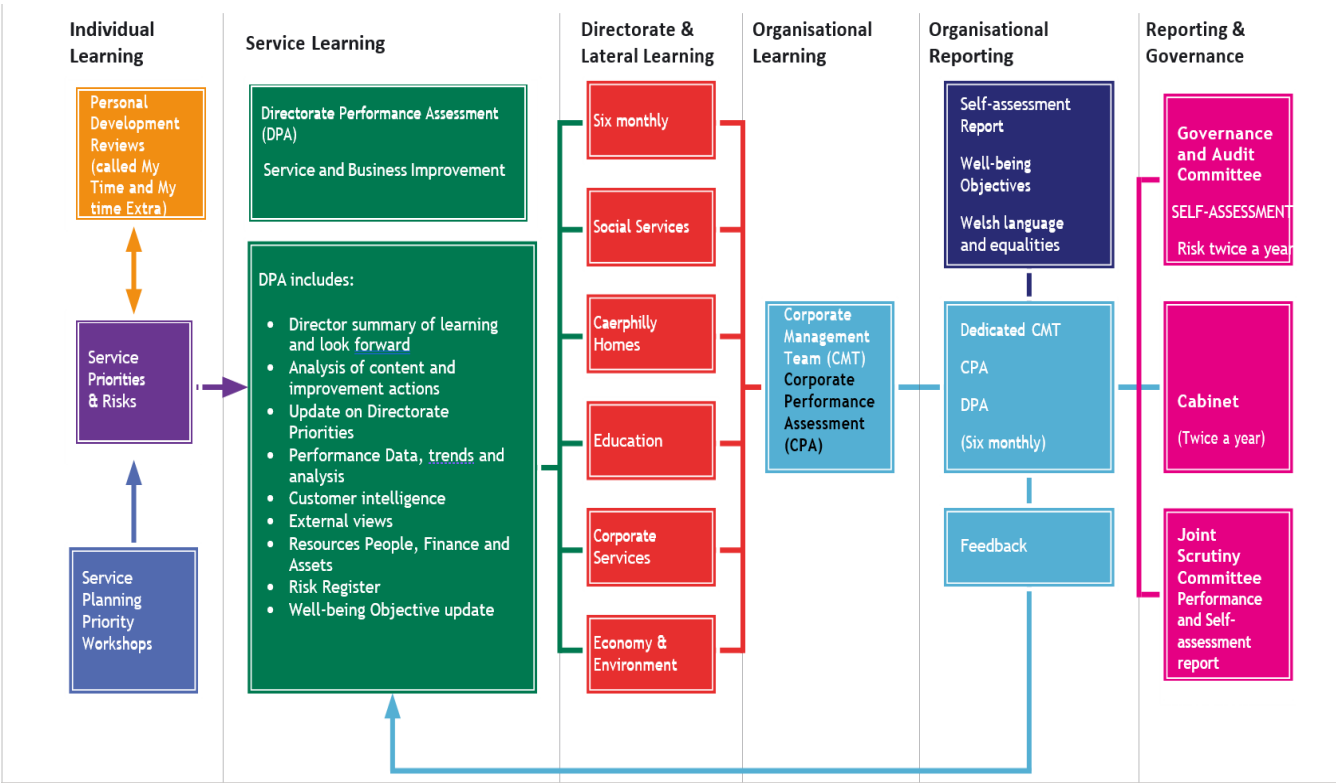
We will review our Corporate Plan every year to ensure our Well-being Objectives are still relevant and will make our updated plan available on our website:

<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



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.

Version 11, 19 October 2023

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CABINET - 17TH JANUARY 2024

SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY CARES SUPPORT PACKAGE FOR FAMILIES ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline support available for families eligible for Free School Meals from Caerphilly Cares.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 On Wednesday 28 June 2023 Welsh Government informed the Council that they would no longer be able to support the payment of Free School Meal Holiday payments, with immediate effect.
- 2.2 The announcement generated a lot of feedback from families who were relying on the payment. Consequently, on the 12th July 2023 Cabinet agreed to provide **a one-off payment** of £19.50 per week, per child, to eligible families for the school holiday period commencing Friday 21 July 2023 and ending on Thursday 31 August 2023.
- 2.3 This decision was taken to cushion the impact of late withdrawal of funding by Welsh Government and required the allocation of one-off funding of £900,000.
- 2.4 The Caerphilly Cares team (and associated partners) currently provides a wide range of support to vulnerable individuals and families as part of the Cost-of-Living support package.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to note the content of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To mitigate the impact of the withdrawal of Welsh Government funding for holiday payments to families eligible for Free School Meals.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In March 2020, the Council commenced a free school meals home delivery scheme in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020 Wales became the first UK nation to guarantee free school meals for eligible families during the school holidays. This scheme initially started with a food parcel being delivered to eligible families' homes on a weekly basis. For the next 2 years, the Council continued to deliver food parcels which were fully funded by Welsh Government.
- 5.2 Due to resource and supplier challenges to deliver food parcels, in Autumn 2022 a decision was made to change the scheme to the issuing of a Post Office Voucher to the value of £19.50 per week, per child. It was felt that using the voucher system would allow eligible families to receive cash payments directly.
- 5.3 The ever-increasing cost of living has become a significant burden on our communities, especially those from low-income backgrounds. Rising prices have placed a severe strain on households.
- 5.4 Vulnerable families have indicated that the funding of £19.50 per child, per week has been invaluable in supporting them to purchase food items during the current cost of living crisis.
- 5.5 On Wednesday 28 June 2023, the Welsh Government announced that there will be no further extension to cover the summer holiday period or beyond.

The Welsh Government stated that: "As you are aware, holiday provision for learners that are eligible for a free school meal was introduced in response to the COVID pandemic as a form of time-limited support to help families. While we have been able to support several temporary continuations of the scheme, we confirmed in March 2023 that the most recent extension would be up to the end of the May half term only. I can now confirm that this remains the case and that there will be no further extension to cover the summer holiday period or beyond.

Options for funding a further extension of the scheme have been fully explored, but due to budgetary constraints this isn't possible and I am grateful to you and your colleagues for your patience. We appreciate that the provision offered to those eligible throughout holiday periods has proven popular and understand that not extending the offer further will likely lead to additional enquiries from those families affected".

- 5.6 Feedback from families has evidenced a reliance on this payment and an expectation that it would continue.
- 5.7 The Caerphilly Cares Service currently offers access to a wide range of support initiatives for individuals and families who are vulnerable or in financial crisis and whilst this is not specifically targeted at families in receipt of Free School Meals, the service and support is open to anyone who is vulnerable or experiencing hardship.
- 5.8 Initial contact for support can be made to the Caerphilly Cares Team, which provides residents needing support with a single coordinated access point for information, advice and assistance, to ensure that residents' needs are met appropriately. This enables people to tell their story once and ensures their voice is central to the 'What matters?' conversation.

- 5.9 Referrals to Caerphilly Cares may be made via the Caerphilly Cares Gateway, via the following details:
- Tel: 01443 811490
Text: SUPPORT to 07537 414443
Email: caerphillycares@caerphilly.gov.uk
www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyCares
- 5.10 The Caerphilly Cares Gateway already provide direct support to Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) Catering in fielding calls from families who are concerned about their ability to afford school meals for their children.
- 5.11 Specific engagement work has also been carried out with schools, to promote the gateway to the families and wider communities that are connected to each school. This has included attendance at CCBC Headteacher forums and email circulars to all schools outlining services available, as well as sessions held in specific schools in relation to cost of living support. Caerphilly Cares staff are also working in partnership with the Community Focused Schools team to develop a pilot for shared working and engagement, to raise awareness of local support with school communities. This approach will be piloted in the Upper Rhymney cluster initially.
- 5.12 A summary of some of the main activities and initiatives available through CCBC, which can be accessed via referral to the Caerphilly Cares Gateway and which may offer alternative or wraparound support to families in the wake of the withdrawal of Welsh Government funding for free school meals holiday payments, is as follows:
- 5.13 Cost of Living Hardship fund - A CCBC Cost-of-living Hardship Grant has been established in response to identified need across CCBC frontline support services, for those who are in need of urgent financial support but are not eligible for or have exhausted existing grant schemes, in particular those that might be working but are experiencing in-work poverty. The grant has been operational since April 2023 and provides either direct financial assistance (up to £700 per application) or equivalent white goods (if that is the specific need). The primary eligibility factor for the grant is professional judgement (via referral from an officer providing support), to give flexibility to support those who may not have been approved for other grants based purely on traditional criteria, such as employment/benefit status etc.
- 5.14 Financial Hardship/Maximising Income – For anyone experiencing financial hardship, the Welfare Benefits and Cost of Living teams within Housing (Rents) can support residents with a wide range of issues relating to maximising their income, including support with accessing any additional benefits and grants that they might be entitled to (including potential direct financial assistance).
- 5.15 School Essentials Grant (previously PDG Access Grant) – The School Essentials Grant provides £125 (or £200 for Year 7 Pupils) for eligible pupils to buy school uniform, equipment, sports kit, and kit for activities outside of school for children. This funding is for pupils currently eligible for free school meals.
- 5.16 Fuel Vouchers – Residents struggling with the cost of topping up their pre-payment meter could be eligible for a fuel voucher, which can be used to quickly add credit to their energy supply (in partnership with Citizen’s Advice). Referrals can be made via the Caerphilly Cares Gateway and can be supported with additional advice around managing energy bills and saving energy within the home, including energy advice visits or guidance on any grants or initiatives that may be available to assist with

measures to improve energy efficiency, thus potentially resulting in savings on energy bills for residents.

- 5.17 Foodbank (and additional support for those experiencing food poverty) - The foodbank network extends across the Caerphilly County Borough and a referral can be made immediately, via the Caerphilly Cares Gateway, to support someone in urgent need of food and other household essentials. Support may be in the form of emergency food parcels or signposting to Fareshare or Food Pantry schemes to access low-cost food.
- 5.18 Mobile Phones – For families who require a phone to remain in contact with CCBC and other services, particularly where a phone is required for the provision of support, Caerphilly Cares may be able to provide a basic (call-only) phone and phone credit to help them to stay in touch. In addition, for residents in need of data to help them engage with key services, CCBC Library Service in partnership with the Good Things Foundation offer pre-loaded data SIM cards to residents who are most at need, via referral from CCBC staff.
- 5.19 Housing and Homelessness – The Supporting People team are able to provide expert support and advice for anyone experiencing difficulties with housing, including problems with their tenancy or even risk of homelessness. Support can include help with finding housing, support with form filling, debts, benefits, eviction notices and rent/mortgage arrears.
- 5.20 Employment Support - The Council has a dedicated team to support people to find work. The Employment team can help people to gain new skills, access training and improve their chances of getting a job by supporting with things such as updating their CV, job searching, interview skills etc. Staff can also complete “better off calculations” if customers have questions or concerns about how working might impact their current benefits.
- 5.21 Community Connectors - The Community Connectors team aim to promote well-being, reduce social isolation, help people feel part of their community and promote independence. The team reconnect residents (18+) with their community by helping them to find suitable groups, linking them to other people who have similar interests and encouraging them to participate within their community. The team will also make appropriate referrals for those on their caseload, for example signposting for support with maximising their income or accessing other forms of support such as those outlined within this report.
- 5.22 Warm Packs - To help support those that may be struggling to keep warm during the colder months and amongst rising fuel costs, CCBC has funded a supply of warm packs, containing warm clothing and other useful items (such as a hot water bottle). Warm packs are available for anyone that needs them, with no eligibility conditions, through professional or self-referral by contacting the Caerphilly Cares Gateway. Wherever possible, warm packs are always provided alongside the offer of additional support to assist someone with addressing the underlying issues which contribute to the difficulties in heating their home.
- 5.23 **Conclusion**

Cabinet is asked to note the content of this report.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 There are no assumptions included in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The decision to terminate the funding has been made by Welsh Government. The recommendation within this report is a measure to support families due to withdrawal of funding provided by Welsh Government.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications outside existing Caerphilly Cares Resources and the Cost of Living budget allocation of £3 million.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in this version of the report.

10.2 Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report on 28th November 2023.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 None

Author: Tina McMahon, Caerphilly Cares Manager

Consultees: Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive.
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities
Councillor Sean Morgan, Leader of the Council
Cllr Theresa Parry, Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Brenda Miles, Vice Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer
Marcia Lewis, Principal Officer Catering
Clare Rogers, Business Development Manager
Sue Richards, Head of Transformation and Education Planning and Strategy
Andrew Griffiths, Caerphilly Cares Service Delivery Manager
Sarah-Jayne Irish, Cost of Living Coordinator.

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CABINET – 17TH JANUARY 2024

SUBJECT: GRASS CUTTING REGIMES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to amend grass cutting regimes across the county borough to enhance and promote biodiversity.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council has a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The Council is also responding to the challenges of climate change and declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. Welsh Government declared a 'Nature Emergency' in Wales on the 30th of June 2021.
- 2.2 The Council has a schedule of grass cutting frequencies through the growing season across the county borough. Grass cutting was one of a range of services that was paused in the national lockdown in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic and the Council has been developing its approach to grass cutting since.
- 2.3 On 22nd March 2023 Cabinet agreed further revisions to the Council's grass cutting regime in 2023. This included an additional list of areas which were also allowed to flourish during the summer period. An all-Members Seminar was held on 14th November 2023 where feedback on the 2023 grass cutting season and an update on the proposed approach for 2024 were provided.
- 2.4 It is proposed that the grass cutting regime in 2024 moves away from the 'No Mow May' campaign previously adopted, and continues with the current adopted approach in maintaining our highway verges and by-pass routes. This demonstrates our continued commitment to the 'Nature isn't Neat' campaign as adopted by partners of the Gwent Green Grid (as set out in recommendations 3.1.ii below). The list of selected areas which will be allowed to flourish during the 2024 growing season has been reviewed and revised following feedback during 2023 and these are detailed in Appendix 1. An example of the revised approach includes more grass cutting on housing estates as this was a particular issue raised in the feedback on the 2023 cutting season.

- 2.5 Following consideration of the report at a meeting of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 12th December 2023 the recommendations were endorsed.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet consider the contents of this report and note the comments of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee detailed at 10.2.
- 3.2 That Cabinet approve:
- i. The approach adopted since the 2021/22 cutting season continue to be the adopted grass cutting standard in relation to our highway verges and by-pass routes where mowing is kept to a minimum, in accordance with Traffic Wales guidance.
 - ii. The Council continues its commitment to the Nature isn't Neat project, which is part of the Gwent Green Grid Partnership, establishing joined-up green space management to create wildflower-rich pollinator habitats across the Gwent local authority areas, which includes Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport, and Torfaen.
 - iii. Visibility splays and sight lines on highways; margins and access on footways/cycle routes; sports grounds; urban areas such as housing estates, municipal parks, older person accommodation, cemeteries; play/recreational public open spaces, will be maintained at the current cutting frequencies.
 - iv. That Cabinet endorse the list of areas as set out in Appendix 1, which are to be allowed to flourish during the summer period.
 - v. That the Authority continues to develop and enhance areas using bought in wildflower seed as set out in Paragraph 5.11 below.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To fulfil our statutory bio-diversity duty and to assist in our response to Climate change and the Climate Emergency, which this Council declared in 2019.
- 4.2 To reduce carbon emissions and to contribute to the targets within the Council's Decarbonisation Strategy.
- 4.3 To assist with the Wales 'Nature Emergency' declared by Welsh Government on the 30th of June 2021.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council has a schedule of grass cutting frequencies through the growing season across Parks, housing estates, other public open space, cemeteries, and older person sheltered accommodation. When the UK was placed into a national lockdown in 2020 in response to the global pandemic many of our services were paused and staff redeployed to focus on maintaining essential front-line services and delivering the new services created to support our communities at the height of the pandemic. One of the many services paused was grass cutting and this had an unexpected and welcome

impact on our environment as we had inadvertently created many wildlife habitats and havens for pollinators.

- 5.2 The Council has a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The Council is also responding to the challenges of climate change and declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. Welsh Government declared a 'Nature Emergency' in Wales on the 30th of June 2021. The management of green and blue spaces should be directed by the Green Infrastructure Strategy, which was formally adopted in November 2020 and such changes will enable multiple benefits such as improving mental and physical health and increasing biodiversity, which will lead to more resilient communities, more resilient habitats and ecosystems and a more resilient local economy.
- 5.3 The Council has been developing its approach to grass cutting over the last few grass growing seasons whereby cutting along our highway verges and roundabouts was kept to a minimum. Following an all-Member Seminar in October 2022 additional areas were identified to be allowed to flourish during the summer of 2023. With the endorsement of Sustainability and Environment Scrutiny Committee Cabinet agreed to continue the Council's commitment to the UK wide 'No Mow May' campaign and biodiversity with further revisions to the Council's grass cutting regime in 2023.
- 5.4 In 2023 formal grass cutting did not commence until June with the exception of designated areas including: visibility splays and sight lines on highways; margins and access on footways/cycle routes; sports grounds; urban areas such as housing estates, municipal parks, older person accommodation, cemeteries; play/recreational public open spaces, which were maintained at regular cutting frequencies. Grass cutting across the county borough still took place in order to: -
- Maintain visibility for road users;
 - Keep traffic signage and sight lines clear;
 - Maintain margins and access on footways and cycle routes;
 - Maintain parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, housing estates, play and recreational public open spaces.

An additional list of areas nominated by both relevant officers and local members within their respective wards were also allowed to flourish during the summer period.

- 5.5 A lot of feedback was received regarding grass cutting across the year, both positive and negative, and lessons have been learned from the new approach. Unfortunately the service was unable to complete the first cut of all areas as a result of staffing issues associated with some key staff leaving the organisation combined with sickness absence causing operational difficulties. However, this must be balanced against the compliments also received from residents. Our approach to grass cutting has been reviewed taking into account the range of feedback received and the need to be mindful of our statutory biodiversity duty and the need to significantly reduce our carbon footprint.
- 5.6 A number of measures are in place to improve performance in the 2024 cutting season. Upgraded cutting equipment (flails) has been purchased for use during the cutting season and all additional flails will be in place ahead of the 2024 season. Key experienced staff left the organisation ahead of the 2023 season and these posts are now filled. It is also proposed to begin cutting cycles at the beginning of March 2024 (weather permitting) to enable the service to manage demand and potential changes to our climate / growing conditions.

- 5.7 It is proposed that the grass cutting regime in 2024 moves away from the 'No Mow May' campaign previously adopted, and continues with the current adopted approach in maintaining our highway verges and by-pass routes. This demonstrates our continued commitment to the 'Nature isn't Neat' campaign as adopted by partners of the Gwent Green Grid. The list of selected areas which will be allowed to flourish during the 2024 growing season has been reviewed and revised following feedback during 2023 and these are detailed in Appendix 1. The edges of these areas will continue to be maintained to prevent any overgrowth affecting pedestrians. Where appropriate, walking routes will also be cut.
- 5.8 Wildflowers and grasses thrive in nutrient poor soil, leaving grass cuttings uncollected allows nutrients from the grass to go back into the soil, which is not good for the wildflowers we would like to encourage. Areas that are left to grow need to be cut and collected at the end of the summer. Removing the arisings deprives the soil of nutrients and thus creates the perfect environment for more species of flora and fauna to flourish, but capacity issues both in terms of staff and machinery available to undertake this task dictates the number of areas where this is achievable. As we make changes to our grass cutting regimes, we are also developing our approach to the removal of grass cuttings in order to promote a good growing environment for wild flora and fauna. The list of selected areas has been refined to indicate those areas where biodiversity will be further enhanced with the removal of grass arisings following cutting, these are set out in Appendix 1.
- 5.9 These proposals have been developed in conjunction with our participation in the Gwent Green Grid Partnership which includes the 5 Gwent local authorities, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Research, and Severn Wye Energy Agency. Officers will continue to work and engage with local members, and other stakeholders and environmental groups to develop the list of areas in Appendix 1.
- 5.10 Site specific recommendations to enhance biodiversity have been made for each of the sections of roadside verge and a series of more general measures have been produced that can be applied at verges across the county borough. The most important of these is to leave verges uncut through the spring and early summer to allow plants to flower and set seeds and to remove grass cuttings to reduce the dominance of coarse grasses.
- 5.11 Training and awareness raising sessions with frontline staff have taken place via the Nature isn't Neat campaign, this will continue via tool box talks and appropriate publications. In previous years, wildflower seeds have been made available free of charge. To manage the correct locations and successful integration of wildflower swathes within areas identified in Appendix 1, Members and Community Groups are invited to liaise with respective Area Parks Officer before the Spring to plan additional wildflower planting. Parks Operations have invested in equipment to create wildflower swathes to further enhance these identified areas of green space.
- 5.12 Members will be aware of the Council's commitment to be a net zero carbon local authority by 2030. The revised approach to grass cutting regimes contributes to this and is one of the measures set out within the Council's Decarbonisation Action Plan. Any reduction in grass cutting, either the frequency of mowing or the reduction in the sizes of the areas that are mown, reduces the use of diesel or petrol and the carbon emissions associated with them. As well as reducing emissions from mowing there are also significant emission reductions in travelling to and from individual sites. As an example an assessment of carbon reduction has been undertaken at seven of the sites at: -

- Snowdon Close, Ty Sign.
- Highfields Way / Montclair Avenue, Blackwood.
- Blackwood Road, Pontllanfraith to Plaza.
- Ael-y-Bryn, Rhymney.
- Pengam Road, Aberbargoed.
- Addison Way, Trethomas.
- Frontages of Lansbury Park and Porset Park, Caerphilly.

It is estimated that reducing the frequency of grass cutting at these sites from 6 times per year to once has achieved an annual saving of 7,740kgCO₂e. The promotion of grasses and wildflowers in this way also offers the potential for additional carbon sequestration (the storage of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in vegetation).

CONCLUSION

- 5.13 To allow specific areas across the county borough and our roadside verges to flourish will not only enhance the local environment but will assist in fulfilling our statutory biodiversity duty and assist in our response to Climate change and the Climate Emergency, which this council declared in 2019.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The CO₂ savings figures have been calculated using emissions factors from the Welsh Government Net Carbon Zero Reporting Tool, and estimated fuel savings based on the size and location of the sites.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has identified a number of both positive and negative impacts; however, the recommendation is to proceed with the proposal. The proposal would have a positive impact in that it would enhance our local environment and create habitat for wildlife and areas where wildflowers could flourish. It will also assist with residents' physical and mental well-being regardless of protected characteristics and support the council's Biodiversity Duty and Decarbonisation Strategy but also assist with the Climate Emergency which the Council declared in 2019.
- 7.2 However, areas left to flourish may give an untidy and unmanaged appearance, which could result in complaints from residents. This potential negative reaction will be mitigated by the installation of a sign or stencil on the ground where areas are being managed in an alternative manner to advise residents and to highlight the benefits.

Link to IIA

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 A saving of £59,000 was identified as a result of implementing the amended grass cutting regime in 2023 and this sum featured as a permanent saving in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) budget savings report for 2023/24, which was presented to Cabinet on 18th January 2023.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report. Staff are already engaged in the revised approach to grass-cutting and this will develop further as it is progressed in additional areas.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The views of the listed consultees have been reflected within this report.
- 10.2 A report on the amended grass cutting regime proposals was considered at a meeting of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 12th December 2023. The Committee highlighted that Scandinavian Design is no longer at Aberbargoed and Britannia as mentioned in the report at Appendix 1, the new name is Wild Water. Officers noted the change.

Members stated their support for the proposals, a Member asked that consideration is given to wildflower areas on council owned housing estates and suggested better signage to explain why grassed areas are not mown. The scrutiny committee members were advised that there is an open invitation to propose areas in their wards where wild areas can be developed. Lessons have been learned from the previous year and appendix one has a shorter list to ensure there are sufficient resources to clear the areas at the end of the year.

Members asked how successful the wildflower seeding is and suggested plant plugs might be a better option. The committee was advised that it is important to remove arisings to enable natural flowers to spread and flourish. Officers would like to work with Members and community groups to boost species numbers.

In terms of signage, members were informed that there are plans to put up signs or use message stencils to mark pathways and inform the public.

The scrutiny committee asked if there are plans to start collecting grass cuttings going forward, the committee was advised that to collect cuttings additional resources and additional new equipment would be required. The Authority has invested in some new machines that can collect in smaller areas however there is still an aspiration to do this in remaining areas and the intention is to remove grass arisings after cutting at all of the locations listed in Appendix 1.

Members asked what the plans are for spraying of weedkiller on roads and pathways. The committee were informed that the council currently engages an external contractor who carries out 2 sprays per annum, they use a glyphosate-based product which is considered the most effective method. The next planned sprays are due in February/March 2024.

A scrutiny committee Member highlighted the lack of grass cutting collection in cemeteries which can result in complaints from the public. The committee were advised that officers will look at this and will liaise with the Member concerned.

Members expressed concerns regarding the impact of the loss of senior staff, the committee were assured that whilst it is acknowledged there has been an impact with the loss of their skills and knowledge, that new staff have been recruited and have been developing their experience well.

The scrutiny committee asked if the messaging from 'No Mow May' has changed and it was confirmed that we are now prioritising nature.

A member highlighted the number of leaves left on pathways and roads and asked what the planned use of road sweepers is to remove them. The committee were reminded that it is impossible to collect all leaf fall across the County Borough and the priority is to keep "at risk" gullies clear of leaves where possible.

The Corporate Director also advised that many of the items that had been requested at the meeting (e.g.: collection of cut grass, collection of leaves, etc.) represented additional revenue costs against the backdrop of a parks and grounds service that has already given up circa £1m in savings over the last 8-10 years and more importantly the requirement corporately to save a further £50m+ over the next few years which represents significant financial challenges ahead for all service areas.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms this was agreed by the majority present.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Environment (Wales) Act 2016,
The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
The Highways Act 1980

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
Morgac15@caerphilly.gov.uk
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
whitca@caerphilly.gov.uk
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee
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Streed@caerphilly.gov.uk
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
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Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services Donovl@caerphilly.gov.uk
David Roberts, Interim Finance Manager Roberda@caerphilly.gov.uk
Kevin Eadon-Davies, Acting Green Space Strategy and Cemeteries Manager
eadonk@caerphilly.gov.uk
Jonathan Davies, Parks and Countryside Operations Manager Daviej27@caerphilly.gov.uk
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
harrisr@caerphilly.gov.uk
Paul Cooke, Transformation Manager - Decarbonisation Cookepa@caerphilly.gov.uk
Maggie Iles, Ecologist ilesm@caerphilly.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Cabinet Report 24th November 2021: 'Grass Cutting Regimes'

Cabinet Report 22nd March 2023: 'Grass Cutting Regimes'

Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee Report 12th December 2023: 'Grass Cutting Regimes'

Appendices:

Appendix 1 List of areas identified to flourish during the 2024 growing season.

Appendix 1

List of areas identified to flourish during the 2024 growing season.

Within the selected areas listed, we aim to mow a swathe along footpaths and roadsides maintaining safety for pedestrians and clear site lines. Additionally, in larger areas we aim to mow swathes throughout the areas creating desire lines/paths and where the site allows maintain areas for recreational use.

Rhymney

- Rhymney Bypass/Rhymney roundabout to Butetown /Butetown to Heads of the Valley roundabouts.
- Verge in front of Travellers site, Rhymney
- Maerdy Park, Rhymney
- Areas in Rhymney War Memorial Park

New Tredegar / Phillipstown

- New Tredegar Bypass
- White Rose Way Business Units
- 'Daisy Field' and area to entrance of Phillipstown

Aberbargoed / Britannia

- Area front of Wild Water Group Ltd. Pengam Road, Aberbargoed

Fleur de lys / Pengam

- Banking and surrounds at Trelyn Park, Fleur de lys
- Area below St Davids Football field, Pengam
- Area between High St, Pengam and St David Ind. Est

Trinant

- Banking on entrance to Trinant via Kendon Hill

Blackwood / Cefn Fforest

- Bedwellty Rd/Heol Y Cefn, Cefn Fforest
- Highfields Way banking
- Blackwood Showfield (specific areas)
- Cwmgelli verges

Pontllanfraith

- Lower Islwyn Park banking
- Blackwood Road (From Traffic lights opp. Police Station to former Tredegar Junction PH)

Penllwyn / The Bryn

- Bryn Playing Fields (specific areas)

Oakdale

- Waterloo
- Oakdale Bypass verges

Nelson

- Nelson Wern Park
- Large Grass area Ynys Las Nelson

Bargoed / Gilfach

- Triangle in front of Ty Bargoed Offices
- Angel Way (Bargoed Bypass)
- Large area between William Street/St Marys Street, Gilfach
- Large grass area The Avenue, Gilfach
- Large grass area Fairways

Hengoed / Cefn Hengoed

- Bank area to the of Raglan Road to Main Road Hengoed
- New Road RBT to Viaduct

Llanbradach

- Llanbradach Park
- Banks in Llanbradach Park and flat area behind Library
- Llanbradach Bypass and layby

Maescymmer

- Maescymmer verges Main Road/The Boot
- Areas at Maescymmer Playing Fields

Gelligaer

- Areas at junction by The Cross Inn on Gelligaer Road

Penpedairheol / Cascade

- Large area with pylon rear of Burnet Drive, Penpedairheol
- Area from Clos Mynach to Bryn Awelon/Bryn Siriol

Abercarn / Cwmcarn

- Banks at Abercarn Welfare
- Persondy Bankings
- High Meadow Old Swimming baths plot

Hafodyrynys / Crumlin

- Hafodyrynys wide verges
- Herbert Avenue Banks

Treowen

- Rear of Ael Y Bryn

Newbridge

- Newbridge RBT (McDonalds)
- Torlais Street
- Verges at former Aiwa Site, Newbridge

Wattsville / Cwmfelinfach / Ynysddu

- Surrounds of Wattsville Lower Football pitch
- Rear of Alexander Road, Ynysddu

Risca / Pontymister

- Snowdon Close
- Large open areas around Ty Sign Open Space and skate park
- Large area outside Ty Isaf Football Pitch

Caerphilly

- Verges from Trecenydd to Penrhos
- Penrhos RBT
- Watford Road turning circle
- Caerphilly Mountain Verges
- Verges from Cedar Tree RBT to Bedwas RBT
- Crescent Road Floral Area
- Morgan Jones Park - Tump & woodland

Aber Valley

- Senghenydd Recreational Ground

Penyrheol

- Hendredenny - large field by Angel PH.

Castle View Estate

- Roundabout by Cwrt Rawlin PH.

Bedwas & Trethomas

- Upper Glyn Gwyn – Large area Upper Glyn Gwyn Street (leave kickabout area)

Rudry / Machen / Draethen

- Top Orchard above Mountain View, Machen



CABINET – 17TH JANUARY 2024

SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT OF PUBLIC AND AGRICULTURAL ANALYSTS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Cabinet approval for amendments to the appointment of Public and Agricultural Analysts.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Caerphilly County Borough Council has a statutory duty to enforce the Food Safety Act 1990, which requires the authority to appoint a Public Analyst to analyse food for foreign bodies and compositional and labelling purposes. There are similar provisions in the Agriculture Act 1970 relating to the need to appoint an Agricultural Analyst. This report seeks Cabinet approval for amendment to such appointments.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Cabinet approves and appoints the Public and Agricultural Analysts as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 In order to comply with statutory requirements and to ensure proper and effective enforcement of the legislation. To ensure compliance with the statutory duty to enforce the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Agriculture Act 1970.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 It is a requirement of the Food Safety Act 1990 Section 27 that every food authority in England and Wales appoints one or more persons to act as Public Analysts for the purposes of analysing samples procured under that Act. The Agriculture Act 1970 also requires an agricultural analyst to be appointed for the analysis of animal feeding stuffs and fertilisers. The Public Analyst Service tests products for sale in the market place on instructions from the client.

- 5.2 A number of amendments to the list of approved Public analysts and Agricultural analysts require approval due to personnel and location changes within the analyst services.
- 5.3 Cabinet is requested to approve the list of appointed analysts for Caerphilly County Borough Council as follows:

Public Analysts

- **Public Analyst Scientific Services, Valiant Way Wolverhampton, WV9 5GB**

Michelle Evans
Duncan Kenelm Arthur
Nigel Kenneth Payne
Lilian Emma Jane Downie
Donna Hanks BSc, MChemA, MRSC
Mary Butts

- **Minton Treharne and Davies Limited, Forest Farm Industrial Estate, Longwood drive, Cardiff, CF14 7HY**

John Anthony Robinson
Susanne Brookes
Alastair David Low

Agricultural Analyst

- **Public Analyst Scientific Services, Valiant Way, Wolverhampton, WV9 5GB**

Donna Hanks

Deputy Agricultural Analysts

- **Public Analyst Scientific Services, Valiant Way, Wolverhampton, WV9 5GB**

Duncan Kenelm Arthur
Nigel Kenneth Payne
Lilian Emma Jane Downie
Michelle Evans
Mary Butts

- **Minton Treharne and Davies Limited, Forest Farm Industrial Estate,**

Longwood drive, Cardiff, CF14 7HY
John Anthony Robinson
Susanne Brookes
Alastair David Low

5.4 CONCLUSION

It is a legal requirement that Public Analysts and Agriculture Analysts be appointed. This report confirms updated details of the appropriate analysts for consideration and approval.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report as it merely updates existing arrangements due to changes in appointed Analyst location and personnel.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 There is no requirement for an IIA as this is an update report and there is no change to function or service provision.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Food Safety Act 1990 and the Agriculture Act 1970. This is a Cabinet function.

Author: Jacqui Morgan, Trading Standards, Licensing and Registrars Manager

Consultees:

Councillor Philippa Leonard, Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair of Housing and Environment Scrutiny
Committee
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair of Housing and Environment Scrutiny
Committee
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director, Economy and Environment
Jacqui Morgan, Trading Standards, Licensing and Registrars Manager
Ceri Edwards, Environmental Health Manager
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Steve, Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer

Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services

Background Papers: None



CABINET – 17TH JANUARY 2024

SUBJECT: AMENDMENTS TO AUTHORISATION OF OFFICERS WITHIN THE PUBLIC PROTECTION DIVISION

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of new legislation for regulatory services and to seek authorisation for officers of the Public Protection Division.
- 1.2 To seek approval for the Council's Monitoring Officer to make the necessary changes to the Constitution to reflect the implementation / need for authorisation under the legislation detailed in this report.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Officers within the Public Protection Division require additional authorisation under the following Acts of Parliament to enforce the legislation and carry out their duties: -
 - The Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023.
 - Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services be authorised under legislation detailed in this report so that relevant officers within the division can utilise delegated powers to carry out their duties.
- 3.2 That the Council's Monitoring Officer makes the necessary amendments to the Constitution.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 In order to comply with statutory requirements and to ensure proper and effective enforcement of the legislation.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 AUTHORISATION OF OFFICERS

As a result of the introduction of new legislation it is considered that the Council's Constitution should be amended to include the following legislation.

5.2 **The Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023.**

The Act aims to help tackle plastic pollution, move away from unnecessary single-use plastic and stop the flow of harmful plastics into our environment. The Act currently covers 10 specific single-use plastic products and those single-use plastic products made of oxo-degradable plastic. The Act also allows Welsh Ministers to add other single-use plastic products to this list if required in future. The phase one list includes the following:

- Single-use plastic plates – this includes paper plates with a laminated plastic surface
- Single-use plastic cutlery – for example forks, spoons, knives
- Single-use plastic drinks stirrers
- Cups made of expanded or foamed extruded polystyrene.
- Takeaway food containers made of expanded or foamed extruded polystyrene
- Single-use plastic balloon sticks
- Single-use plastic-stemmed Cotton buds
- Single-use plastic drinking straws – with exemptions so people who need them to eat and drink safely and independently can continue to have them.

5.3 It is now against the law to sell or give for free any of the banned products to a consumer in Wales (unless exemptions apply). The offence of supplying a prohibited single-use plastic product can be committed by:

- a business
- an organisation such as a company or government body
- a partnership
- a person acting as a sole trader.
- a public service provider
- a charity, club, syndicate or voluntary organisation.

5.4 Authorisation under the Act will give officers the power of entry, to make test purchases and to take formal action which could include prosecution or the issue of fixed and variable monetary payments, compliance and stop notices. Welsh Government have produced guidance for businesses /other suppliers of the banned products with the intention of supporting them into compliance with formal action reserved for those who ignore advice and continue to supply. It is hoped that compliance levels across Wales will be high, like those experienced with the introduction of charges for single use carrier bags.

5.5 **Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023.** This Act came into force on 18 November 2023 and prohibits the sale and advertising of activities abroad which involve low standards of welfare for animals. It prevents advertising and sale of specific unethical activities abroad where animals are kept in captivity or confinement, subjected to cruel and brutal training methods, forced to take selfies or are ridden, drugged and de-clawed. Section 4 requires enforcement by the local weights and

measures authority and the Act permits monetary penalties as determined by the Local Authority with provisions for penalty notices, final penalty notices, appeals against penalty notices and for the recovery of non-payment of penalty notices in the county court.

- 5.6 Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, Responsibility for Functions to be amended to include the above with the addition of the words "as amended" to the list of authorised legislation. This will ensure authorisations are kept up to date with changes to the authorised Acts of Parliament.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Authorisation under the Acts and associated regulations is required for officers to carry out their duties.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

- 7.1 No assumptions have been made within this report.

8. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has not been carried out as this Report relates to governance and delegated powers.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no significant financial implications associated with this report,

10. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

11. CONSULTATIONS

- 11.1 The report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in the report.

12. STATUTORY POWER

The Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023.
Animals (Low-Welfare Activities Abroad) Act 2023.

Author: Jacqui Morgan Trading Standards, Licensing and Registrars Manager
Morgaj4@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees:

Councillor Philippa Leonard, Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection

Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair of Housing and Environment Scrutiny

Committee

Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair of Housing and Environment Scrutiny

Committee

Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive

Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment,

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

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Ceri Edwards, Environmental Health Manager, Edwarc@caerphilly.gov.uk

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Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer,

Harrisr@caerphilly.gov.uk

Background Papers: none



CABINET - 17TH JANUARY 2024

SUBJECT: DRAFT WASTE STRATEGY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the Joint Scrutiny views on the draft Waste Strategy and associated consultation methods and to seek approval to undertake public consultation on the Council's draft Waste Strategy included at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 To seek approval of the draft Engagement Strategy and Consultation Questionnaire along with proposed timescales.
- 1.3 To advise Cabinet of the financial implications associated with the delivery of the strategy.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Building upon the Routemap which was considered by the Joint Scrutiny Committee prior to approval by Cabinet in July 2023, the Waste Strategy sets out the strategic direction and longer-term plan to ensure that the Council meets and exceeds its statutory performance targets, whilst being realistic about the timescales and resources required to meet these ambitions.

2.2 The Strategy is based on 5 five strategic objectives:

- Reduce overall waste arisings.
- Increase repair and reuse.
- Increase the proportion and quality of material that is recycled.
- Optimise contribution to and use of renewable energy.
- Help our residents to manage waste more sustainably.

Under each of these objectives there are a series of actions that will be delivered. These include the introduction of pre-sort requirements and a trial booking system at Household Recycling Centres, continuing to collaborate with partner organisations in the promotion of repair and reuse, the introduction of new a recycling collection service aligned to Welsh Government's Blueprint, a reduction in the frequency of residual waste collections and exploring options to introduce a fleet of ultra low emission vehicles. Consideration will be given to a separate, weekly collection for Absorbent Hygiene Products where the residual waste frequency is 3 or 4 weekly.

2.3 It is important to understand the size, scale, and complexity of the challenges ahead. The strategy explores key areas of data to set out our current performance as well as setting out the rationale for the proposed interventions and service changes.

- 2.4 It highlights how Caerphilly will minimise the negative impacts of waste on the environment by reducing waste, ensuring items are used again, recycled for further manufacturing, or sent for recovery. It combines actions we will take now and outlines actions for the coming years which require a commitment / decision now.
- 2.5 The strategy is designed to ensure Caerphilly CBC meets and exceeds statutory performance targets, whilst being realistic about the timescales and resources required to meet these ambitions. We are ambitious, yet realistic in what can be achieved. Globally we are facing a climate emergency, and our consumption of resources is unsustainable. The need to act for the benefit of the climate and our environment has never been more vital.
- 2.6 It is clear that we cannot make the changes alone and a collective effort is required. It is important that residents, and our communities have the opportunity to shape proposals. It is proposed that a 12 week consultation period commences in February 2024 should Cabinet approve the draft Waste Strategy. A draft engagement strategy and the draft consultation questionnaire have been included in the appendices of the report (Appendix 2 and 3).
- 2.7 A further report will then be presented to cabinet in the summer of 2024 once the consultation has been completed and the responses analysed. This report will set out the results of the consultation and seek Cabinet approval for adoption and publication of the final waste strategy.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 For Cabinet to consider the views of the Joint Scrutiny Committee and approve the draft Waste Strategy to allow public consultation to commence.
- 3.2 For Cabinet to approve the draft Engagement Strategy and accompanying draft consultation questionnaire.
- 3.3 To note the financial implications associated with the implementation of the strategy and agree that officers progress further discussions with Welsh Government in relation to the level of capital support available from WG and required for delivery of the strategy.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Unsustainable consumption of precious resources and waste disposal has a significant impact on the environment and cannot be decoupled from its impact on our climate. It is important that steps are taken to move away from the inefficient linear economy (where resources are taken, made into products, used, and finally thrown away) and transition to a more circular economy. In a circular economy, precious resources are kept in use for longer, often by repair, maximising material quality and offering social and economic opportunities.
- 4.2 The draft Waste Strategy, builds upon the previously approved Routemap and sets out the strategic direction to reduce waste and exceed Welsh Government statutory recycling targets.
- 4.3 The Authority is at risk of circa £2m per annum fines for not achieving statutory

recycling targets. The Minister previously took the decision not to fine Caerphilly subject to a root and branch review and supplementary actions being implemented to meet future targets. The Draft Waste Strategy sets out how Caerphilly will minimise the negative impacts of waste on the environment by reducing waste, ensuring items are used again, recycled for further manufacturing, or sent for recovery. It builds upon the short-term interventions agreed within part of the Routemap and provides evidence to the Minister of Caerphilly's commitment to make change.

5. THE REPORT

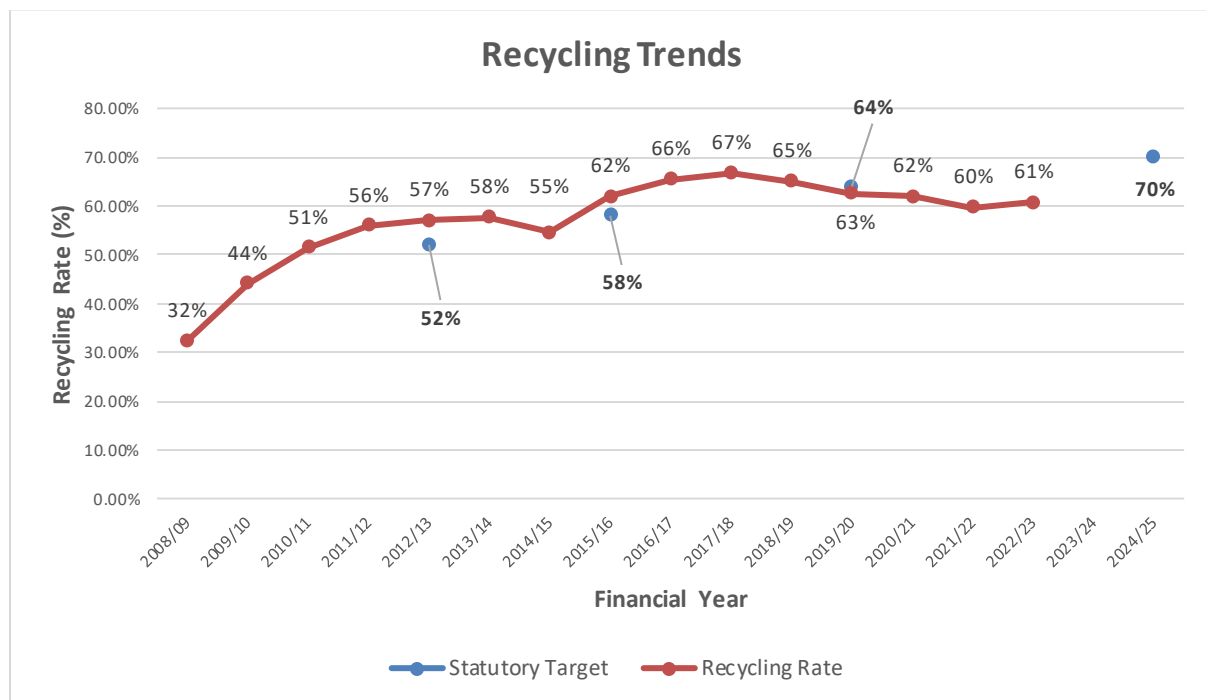
- 5.1 In responding to the climate emergency, Caerphilly has pledged to become net zero. Reducing consumption and decarbonising the waste and recycling services, is a key part of meeting this pledge.
- 5.2 The Welsh Government Strategy, Towards Zero Waste strategy (2010), sets out a series of challenging recycling targets for Local Authorities and through the Waste (Wales) Measure (2010), made the targets from 2012-13 and beyond, statutory. This status allows Welsh Government to levy financial penalties against Council's that fail to achieve them. The statutory targets are weight based and have increased gradually over time. These are outlined below:

Table 1: Welsh Government Recycling Targets 2010 – 2025

	2010/12	12/13	15/16	19/20	24/25
Min. levels of reuse & recycling/composting (or AD)	40%	52%	58%	64%	70%
Min. proportion of reuse/recycling/composting from source separation*	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Max. level of landfill	-	-	-	10%	5%
Max. level of energy from waste	-	-	42%	36%	30%
Min. levels of preparing for reuse (excluding Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE))	-	0.4%	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%

- 5.3 Caerphilly has historically performed well against these targets, achieving 66.7 percent in 2017-18, significantly higher than the then target of 58 percent. However, over the last three years recycling performance has declined and since 2019-20 has performed below the 64 percent target. Caerphilly's recycling performance is outlined below.

Graph 1 – Recycling Trends



- 5.4 In the current Welsh Government waste strategy, Beyond Recycling - A Strategy to make the Circular Economy in Wales a reality (2021), the Welsh Government has stated they will work with Local Authorities and other key partners to develop further a suite of future recycling targets in line with their pathway to zero waste, with the ultimate aim of achieving 100 percent recycling by 2050. Welsh Government indicate that they will put in place further minimum statutory recycling targets for Local Authorities beyond 2025, potentially at a level of 80 percent by 2033.
- 5.5 The 2021/22 recycling level 59.7 percent and the projected level of 60.7% for 2022/23 are well below the levels required to achieve the 70 percent statutory target by next year (2024-25) and the Authority is at risk of significant fines. Decisions to fine an Authority are considered on its own merits and the Minister for Climate Change, took the decision for the period 2019-20, not to fine Caerphilly, subject to a root and branch review of the services and a commitment to take action.
- 5.6 In July 2023, Cabinet approved a Routemap that outlined a number of priority interventions for the period 2023-25 (Table 2) As demonstrated below some of these interventions are anticipated to increase recycling performance in the short term and have been built upon in the draft waste strategy.

Table 2 – Priority Interventions to increase recycling for delivery between 2023-25

Pillar / Enabling theme	Activity	Projected Percentage point increase
Pillar 1, HRC provision	<p>Implement recommendations from the recent WRAP observational study in relation to signage and site layout, to move focus to recycling rather than waste disposal.</p> <p>Introduce recycling pre-sort requirement across the HRC network. This will require site users to bring waste to the site segregated into its various material fractions.</p> <p>Improve customer engagement across the Network through the introduction of additional customer trained operatives on site.</p> <p>Introduce a trial booking system across our network of HRCs. (Trial booking system was not supported by Cabinet).</p>	1%
Pillar 2, Kerbside Dry Recycling	<p>A widespread informational campaign will be launched, supported by WRAP’s well established “Be Mighty” campaign to reinforce messages of acceptable materials.</p> <p>The information campaign will be further supported with a behaviour change campaign. The campaign will run alongside the informational campaign and will focus on the “why recycle?” designed to evoke an emotional response and focus on the impacts of non-participation. To support the behaviour change campaign, engagement and education staff will directly engage with residents on the doorstep to promote and maximise recycling opportunities. This will include an ongoing campaign within our schools to ensure our younger people are engaged.</p> <p>Additional capacity requirements will be discussed on an individual basis and extra containers provided on a case by case basis.</p>	1%
Pillar 3, Kerbside Organic Recycling	<p>Campaign 1 and 2 will have a significant focus on food waste participation messages, both informational and emotive to evoke a behaviour change. To support the behaviour change campaign engagement and education staff will engage with residents on the doorstep.</p> <p>This will include an ongoing campaign within our schools to ensure our younger people are engaged.</p>	1%

	<p>This will be further supported by the introduction of free caddy liners for 1 year. 6 month supply of liners will be delivered to properties with an accompanying information booklet. The impact of this intervention will be reviewed thereafter.</p> <p>The team will continue with the “Mash for Cash” food waste incentivisation campaign and consider rebranding and relaunching the campaign to align with the behaviour change campaign.</p> <p>Additional capacity requirements will be discussed on an individual basis and extra containers provided on a case by case basis.</p>	
Pillar 4, Kerbside Residual	Engage with residents to maximise recycling through the enforcement of existing residual waste policies, that include for top hatting (bags stacked on top of the bin) and side waste.	
Pillar 5, Trade Service	<p>Review existing service to ensure the residual trade waste service is competitive and has a focussed customer base.</p> <p>Develop a business case for future trade recycling services and implement new service in line with the new workplace recycling regulations.</p>	1%

5.7 There has been progress made in each of the pillars since the Routemap was approved. These are outlined in table 3 below:

Table 3 – Routemap Interventions Process

Pillar	Success to Date
Pillar 1, HRC provision	<p>Successfully employed 9 additional members of staff into customer-centric roles to provide on-site support to residents, including supporting the implementation of pre-sort requirements.</p> <p>Improved the overall site layout, staff uniforms and signage to move focus to recycling rather than waste disposal and provide an enhanced customer experience.</p> <p>The pre-sort requirements will come into effect on the 12th February 2024, and associated site layout and communications campaigns are in development.</p>
Pillar 2, Kerbside Dry Recycling	Cabinet agreed a report to introduce a 5-step contamination process which included increased resident engagement and the potential to introduce a section 46 enforcement notice as a last resort to non-compliance.

	<p>The Service has successfully employed 6 Recycling Advisors to support in the delivery of our campaigns, providing direct engagement with residents at the doorstep.</p> <p>Completion of Back-to Basics Communications Campaign. The eight-week campaign outlined the scale of the waste issue in Caerphilly County Borough, whilst reminding residents of the many waste, recycling and reuse services available to them. This included a range of print and digital activity, such as a Waste Edition of Newline sent to all households and a social media campaign.</p>
<p>Pillar 3, Kerbside Organic Recycling</p>	<p>The introduction of a 12-month trial to provide all residents with free indoor food waste caddy liners. The trial will see the first 6-month supply of liners delivered directly to resident's doors, with the following 6-month supply being available for collection from local libraries, leisure centres, Bedwas Council Chambers, Ty Penallta and Penallta Reuse Shop.</p> <p>The continuation of the Council's established cash prize incentive scheme 'Mash for Cash' to encourage overall participation. To date, 16 winners have been awarded a prize funded by the business sector.</p> <p>The launch of food waste campaigns aligned to the participation in food waste recycling leading to increased food waste caddy requests this was further bolstered by the presence of the Recycling Team at local events with food waste caddies and literature.</p> <p>Completion of Food Waste Communications Campaign. The eight-week communications campaign informed residents of why they should be recycling their food waste, how to recycle it correctly and to dispel any myths around food waste recycling. This included a range of print and digital activity, such as a food waste recycling booklet sent to all households, a social media campaign and an educational campaign provided by WRAP.</p>
<p>Pillar 4, Kerbside Residual</p>	<p>A strengthened commitment to minimising the quantity of residual waste through the enforcement of existing policies of no 'top hatting' or side waste.</p> <p>Adopting the recycling contamination policy for residual waste, targeting non-recyclable content that can be diverted from the residual, using S46 notices where necessary.</p> <p>Development of educational and engagement resources, to be carried out by Recycling Advisors with residents, to better understand the barriers and issues residents are facing.</p>

<p>Pillar 5, Trade Service</p>	<p>On 6th October 2023, the Members Working Group agreed to consider a range of options for the future of our Trade Waste Services. A full report will be presented to cabinet for further consideration.</p> <p>All of the above pillars are underpinned by the following enabling themes and working groups have been established as part of the strategy development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications and Engagement • Workforce Engagement • Infrastructure • Ultra Low Emissions • Digital Offer <p>These enabling themes are crucial in ensuring the successful delivery of the objectives and strategy pillars. Several internal working groups have been established to engage the relevant stakeholders and maintain the progress of each workstream.</p> <p>Much of this work is underpinned by our enhanced digital offer. We are introducing a digital solution for waste collection rounds to improve efficiencies and enhance the customer experience. Linking to the back office it will enable officers to respond proactively and develop a targeted and individual approach to education and communication as well improve customer interactions and journeys.</p>
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5.8 The engagement and support of elected members is crucial in shaping the policies and procedures that will be necessary to support the delivery of the Waste Strategy. In July 2023, Cabinet agreed with the recommendation by Joint Scrutiny committee to establish a cross party members working group to include trade union representatives which has been instrumental in the development of the draft strategy. Further information on the outcomes of the members working group are detailed in 10.1.

5.9 The strategy is based around 5 strategic objectives:

- Reduce overall waste arisings.
- Increase repair and reuse.
- Increase the proportion and quality of material that is recycled.
- Optimise contribution to and use of renewable energy.
- Help our residents to manage waste more sustainably.

5.10 Under each of these objectives and based upon the outcomes of the members working group a series of actions have been identified. (Table 4).

Table 4 – Strategic Objectives and Actions

Objectives	Actions
<p>Objective 1, Reduce overall waste arisings</p>	<p>The Council will continue to support the messaging around waste minimisation including home composting and food waste.</p> <p>Commit to minimising the quantity of residual waste through the enforcement of existing waste policies.</p> <p>The introduction of pre-sort requirements and trial booking system in the HRC sites will support the reduction in residual waste.</p>
<p>Objective 2, Increase repair and refuse</p>	<p>Continue to collaborate with and promote the work of partner organisations to encourage reuse.</p> <p>Promoting the waste hierarchy through the newly procured digital solution.</p> <p>Support and encourage the introduction of the repair café concept in local communities.</p>
<p>Objective 3, Increase the proportion and quality of material that is recycled</p>	<p>Introduction of a new recycling collection service aligned with the Welsh Government’s collections Blueprint which will require residents to separate recyclables at the kerbside.</p> <p>A reduction to residual waste collection frequency to 3 or 4 weekly.</p> <p>The implementation of a separate, weekly collection for Absorbent Hygiene Products.</p> <p>An expansion of the range of materials collected at kerbside and HRCs where there are sustainable markets for these materials.</p>
<p>Objective 4, Optimise contribution to and use of renewable energy</p>	<p>Continue to work with suppliers to enhance the recovery of methane from organic waste.</p> <p>Driving for greater participation in food waste recycling.</p> <p>Explore options to introduce a fleet of ultra-low emission vehicles.</p> <p>Consider options and identify opportunities for renewable energy generation at new sites.</p>
<p>Objective 5, Help our residents to manage waste more sustainably</p>	<p>Continue to support residents with clear and consistent communication about how and why to recycle as part of county wide campaigns.</p> <p>Use data to inform behaviour change campaigns delivered on a hyper local level to support effective and efficient recycling practices.</p>

	Continue to digitalise the service offer for residents to ensure effective service delivery and improved customer engagement.
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5.11 The strategy and its objectives are designed to ensure Caerphilly meets and exceeds statutory performance targets, whilst being realistic about the timescales and resources required to meet these ambitions. We are ambitious yet realistic in what can be achieved. Globally we are facing a climate emergency, and our consumption of resources is unsustainable. The need to act for the benefit of the climate and our environment have never been more vital.

5.12 A thorough waste modelling exercise was undertaken by WRAP and their appointed consultants SLR in 2022/23. The objective was to review our existing services and compare against a series of options to reduce our waste arisings and improve our recycling performance. Results of the modelling have provided an insight into the actions required to meet the challenging statutory recycling targets.

Table 2 above highlights the projected performance increases against each of the pillar interventions. Combined, we project a total increase of 5% (percentage points).

The tables below provide an overview of our projected recycling performance. It should however be noted that these are projections only and should not be considered definitive.

Below is an illustration of the projected performance impacts solely from the modelling work undertaken by WRAP.

Table 5: CCBC Waste Modelling (Projected Performance)

Service Changes	Projected Performance Impact (%)	Projected Recycling Rate (%)
Recycling only (Option 1B - Blueprint) maintaining 2 weekly residual collections	3.37% increase	63.05%
Option 1B (Blueprint) – with 3 weekly residual	6.07% increase	65.75%
Option 1B (Blueprint) – with 4 weekly residual	7.89% increase	67.57%

Outlined below is a comprehensive view by combining the modelling outcomes with ‘quick wins’, projecting low, medium, and high range increases.

Table 6: Combined Impacts (Modelling plus ‘quick wins’ from table 6 plus table 2)

Service Changes	Projected Modelling Performance Impact (%)	Projected ‘Quick Wins’ Impact (%)	Combined Performance Impact (%)	Range
Recycling only (Option 1B - Blueprint)	3.37% increase	5% increase	8.37% increase	Low

maintaining 2 weekly residual collections				
Option 1B (Blueprint) – with 3 weekly residual	6.07% increase	5% increase	11.07% increase	Mid
Option 1B (Blueprint) – with 4 weekly residual	7.89% increase	5% increase	12.89% increase	High

Based on our 2022/23 recycling performance of 60.76%, this table summarises the overall projected performance impacts, considering low, medium, and high range scenarios identified above.

Table 7: Projected Recycling Performance

Service Changes	Projected Modelling Performance Impact (%)	Projected ‘Quick Wins’ Impact (%)	Projected Recycling Rate (%)	Range
Recycling only (Option 1B - Blueprint) maintaining 2 weekly residual collections	3.37% increase	5% increase	69.13%	Low
Option 1B (Blueprint) – with 3 weekly residual	6.07% increase	5% increase	71.83%	Mid
Option 1B (Blueprint) – with 4 weekly residual	7.89% increase	5% increase	73.65%	High

5.13 In developing the strategy, we have worked with officers from WRAP and Local Partnerships to undertake thorough modelling of a range of options which has informed the strategy. Regular updates have also been provided to Welsh Government. An initial strategic impact assessment which outlined progress made to date and proposed next steps was prepared and shared with government officials. The document was well received, and officers have now commenced preparation of an Outline Business Case (OBC) which will be completed and submitted to Welsh Government if approved by Cabinet in January 2024.

5.14 It is clear that we cannot make the proposed changes alone and a collective effort is required. It is important that residents, and our communities have the opportunity to shape proposals. It is proposed that a 12 week consultation period commences in February 2024. A draft Engagement Strategy (Appendix 2) and the draft Consultation Questionnaire (Appendix 3) can be found in the appendices.

5.15 **Conclusion**

The Council’s waste and recycling service needs to improve not only to meet current and future statutory recycling targets but to support the transition to net zero by 2030. Through the setting of 5 strategic objectives and key actions, the strategy sets out how Caerphilly will achieve these ambitions.

Whilst the challenge to deliver such wide-ranging changes should not be underestimated the strategy sets out realistic timescales to deliver the changes required. To achieve this the Council and its residents are going to need to work differently and together as it is clear that we cannot do this alone.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The Authority remains at risk of a fine being levied for not meeting statutory recycling targets. It is assumed that by demonstrating commitment to change through the delivery of the new waste strategy, the authority will be able to demonstrate its commitment and make the necessary progress to avoid future fines.
- 6.2 The interventions (both short-term as identified in the Routemap and longer term as detailed in the strategy) and assumed performance impact have been reviewed and are assumed will be achievable within the timescales detailed.
- 6.3 It is assumed that resource from Wrap Cymru and Local Partnerships will be made available to provide support with the implementation of the Strategy.
- 6.4 It is assumed that subject to the five-case business model and approvals Welsh Government funding and future Cabinet approvals will be made to support the investment needed to deliver the strategy.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Links to respective IIA forms have been included below. These will be further refined following consideration of the public consultation feedback.

[Link to IIA form - contamination](#)

[Link to IIA booking system](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The following table (Table 8) highlights the work needed to be undertaken in the short-term. The estimated cost is £2.347m for an initial two-year period and covers the development of the strategy, consultation, and the immediate interventions identified to improve recycling performance in the short term to demonstrate progress towards targets whilst a full strategy is developed. The costs were approved by Cabinet on 26th July 2023 as part of the Routemap for a 2 year period.

Table 8 – Short Term Financial Implications

Activity / Item	Costs £m
Overarching team capacity and capability (2 year fixed contracts)	
Information Liaison Officer x 1	0.069
Technical Assistant x 1	0.086
Data Entry Administrator x 1	0.063
Recycling Advisors x 6	0.462
Health & Safety Officer x1	0.097
HRC provision	
Sites improvements to include new signage, new branded uniforms, and site reconfiguration	0.020
HRC staff to implement changes and improve customer engagement x 9	0.567
Kerbside Collections	
Additional recycling bins (est. 8,000)	0.180
Free food waste liners for 12 months	0.255
Additional caddies for increased participation (est. 10,000)	0.052
Stickers for top hatting/side waste	0.018
Communication and Engagement	
Advertising, design costs, events, and leaflets	0.128
Digital Offer	
Complete end to end waste digital solution	0.350
Total funded commitment	2.347

- 8.2 Initial cost estimates for the wider strategic changes required are identified below (Table 9 and 10). These costs are current best estimates but remain indicative at this stage and subject to change. Final costs will depend on a range of factors including the final decision made on kerbside collection service changes, manufacturers and contractors selected, final site designs, and inflationary pressures.
- 8.3 A separate business case is being developed for commercial waste services and therefore these costs are not included here.

Table 9 – Waste Strategy Financial Implications (Revenue)

	Cost Estimate Revenue						
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Strategy							
Strategy whole system cost change				0.030			0.030
Strategy spare and restricted access vehicle cost change				0.250			0.250
Absorbent Hygiene Product collection				0.330			0.330
Team Capacity							
Additional staffing including recycling advisors (6 fte, reduce to 4 in 29/30)			0.375			-0.125	0.250
Additional staff capacity for service delivery (3 fte, information liaison officer, technical assistant and health & safety officer)			0.255				0.255
Additional staff capacity to deliver strategy (2 fte, contract officer and waste strategy and implementation officer)	0.105						0.105
HRC provision							
Digital solution including booking fee				0.115			0.115
Kerbside Collections							
Food liner costs		0.240					0.240
Communications							
Additional communications campaigns temporary for two years			0.100		-0.100		0.000
Materials							
Saving from no secondary sort at HRC	-0.465	-0.465					-0.930
Total Estimated Revenue Costs	-0.360	-0.225	0.730	0.725	-0.100	-0.125	0.645
Fleet replacement sinking fund				2.000			2.000

8.4 The revenue implications presented are indicative and will change dependent on the final decision made on kerbside collection service, inflation, treatment costs, tonnages, and the materials market. Income from recyclable material is extremely volatile and difficult to forecast, however this will be a new income stream for the Council and is included in the Strategy whole system cost change figure in the table 9 above. The modelling report was completed on the 31st October 2023 and highlights all cost implications associated with each modelled service change. Current estimates are showing an overall total net pressure of £0.645m per annum from 2029/30. Additionally, there is currently no vehicle replacement strategy which should be factored into future modelling for financial resilience. These revenue savings and pressures have not been included in the 2024/25 budget setting process or medium-term financial plan as further work is required to refine and confirm the position. The service will endeavour to design and deliver the service within existing revenue budgets. If a pressure remains then further savings or cost reductions will need to be developed and presented for consideration, this will come back to Cabinet after the consultation process for a final decision.

Table 10 – Waste Strategy Financial Implications (Capital)

Activity / Item	Year	Cost Estimate Capital	
		Low £m	High £m
HRC provision			
Repair / reuse shop infrastructure development	27/28	1.000	1.000
Heavy plant / material handlers (x6)	27/28	0.510	0.930
Kerbside Collections			
New receptacles	27/28	0.450	1.230
Collection vehicles (26 vehicles)	27/28	6.620	12.540
Absorbent Hygiene Product collection vehicles (3 vehicles)	27/28	0.300	0.300
Replace existing collection vehicles (13 vehicles)	26/27	3.250	6.500
Infrastructure			
Development of new WTS, high level estimate	25/26	5.000	7.000
Site acquisition	24/25	5.000	5.000
Total Estimated Capital Costs		22.130	34.500

8.5 As indicated in 5.12 officers have prepared an Initial Strategic Project Assessment which outlines the range of costs indicated in the tables above. Welsh Government have made it clear that they would not be able to provide any revenue funding to support the project. However, they have provided assurance that there will be capital funding available to support us on the journey. The Council does not have sufficient uncommitted reserves to fund this so would either need to reprioritise existing commitments or undertake borrowing. If the Council had to fund the full amount from borrowing, the revenue cost of borrowing would be between circa £1.4m and £2.2m for the range presented above. Savings or service reductions would need to be identified to fund this. Engagement with Welsh Government is ongoing and therefore critical to secure maximum capital contribution.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The proposals in the draft waste strategy to increase recycling performance would result in changes to the waste service and working practices. None of the changes will result in a reduced number of staff within the service but will require a significant increase in staffing levels as identified in section 8 above.

9.2 The workforce has a key role to play in making the step changes required and they have been engaged in the development of the draft strategy and this will continue through to implementation. A workforce working group has been established and consists of representatives from the various functions across the waste service as well as Trade union representatives and officers from HR, Health and Safety and Transformation.

9.3 The scale of changes within the previously agreed route map and the draft waste strategy are wide ranging and support will be required from across the Council to deliver the changes. The programmes of projects detailed within the report will be managed and delivered through a robust project management process which will

involve all key service areas across the council. There are currently 9 officer working groups looking at various elements of the strategy which include representatives from Waste, Communications, Procurement, IT, Customer Services, HR, Transformation, Property, and Infrastructure.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 As approved by Cabinet, a cross party members working group was established in September 2023. The group consisting of 12 members has been reviewing several aspects of the waste strategy. A summary of the discussions and outcomes of the meetings can be found below. (Table 11).

Table 11 – Outcomes from Members Working Group

Date	Topics	Decisions
14.09.23	Kerbside Dry Recycling	<p>Members were in favour of introducing a S46 notice with Fixed Penalty Notice for contaminated recycling bins.</p> <p>Report submitted to cabinet on 18th October 2023 with recommendations to implement Section 46 notices approved.</p>
26.09.23	Kerbside Organics	<p>Members were in favour of promoting home composting, reducing food waste and utilising left over foods.</p> <p>Members suggested a push in our communications on advising residents about used by dates and food waste being collected weekly.</p> <p>The working group was in favour of offering a free seasonal service only and campaign messaging should be linked to reducing grass cutting to aid pollinators.</p>
06.10.23	Trade Waste	<p>Members noted that this has been the subject to new legislation for WG which will come into force in April 2024 and that LA's are considering how best to implement that legislation. Members were clear that they did not want to continue subsidising the service but accepted that further information on a definitive proposal would be required.</p> <p>Therefore, a separate report for consideration by Cabinet will be produced.</p>
19.10.23	Waste Modelling Options (WRAP)	<p>The group gave clear direction on the future of waste services in Caerphilly. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing our recycling collection

		<p>service to the blueprint system (Option 1B).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food waste to be co-collected with dry mixed recycling on a resource recovery vehicle. • Collecting garden waste fortnightly and seasonal in a weighted, reusable sack.
24.10.23	Kerbside Residual	<p>Members endorsed 3 weekly residual waste collections with a separate, weekly collection for Absorbent Hygiene Products.</p> <p>Members agreed to the proposal of utilising Section 46 Notices to mirror the contamination process in the recycling stream.</p> <p>The group agreed to improving the efficiencies and effectiveness of existing collections in advance of wider collection changes linked to the strategy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning collection routes • Collecting waste from outlying properties at the end of the lane / determined collection points.
10.11.23	Household Recycling Centres (HRCs)	<p>The group supported rationalising our HRC provision by considering closing two or more sites.</p> <p>Members supported the introduction of a booking system reinforcing that this would support the pre-sort requirements in allowing effective planning of resources to maximise assistance to achieve recycling while also reducing levels of misuse.</p>
23.11.23	Digital Offer	<p>Members were supportive of introducing digitisation of the service to improve frontline and customer interactions.</p>

10.2 As outlined in the above table in each session members of the working group have provided a clear steer in developing various aspects of strategy. To help aid understanding and stimulate discussion, in addition to the presentation/workshop sessions, several site visits were arranged. These included visits to Full Moon Waste Transfer Station, Bryn Group, Rose Heyworth HRC in Blaenau Gwent and the new recyclable sorting/bulking facility/transfer station and collection service at Vale of

Glamorgan Council.

- 10.3 In the approval of the Routemap and in the development of draft strategy, meetings have taken place with the operational workforce and the proposals were broadly accepted. There was a unanimous acceptance and understanding of the need to change. A monthly staff newsletter has been developed and workforce working group has recently been established to include representatives from the various functions across the waste service. In addition, the trade unions were invited to attend the meetings of the cross-party member working group.
- 10.4 The draft strategy was presented to the Joint Scrutiny Committee on 15th January 2024 and the views of the Joint Scrutiny Committee will therefore be shared verbally with cabinet on 17th January 2024.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The following statutory powers, relevant to the Draft Waste Strategy are identified:
- Environment Protection Act (2010)
 - Revised Waste Framework Directive (2018)
 - Environment Act (2021)
 - Waste (Wales) Measure (2010)

Author: Hayley Jones Waste Strategy and Operations Manager

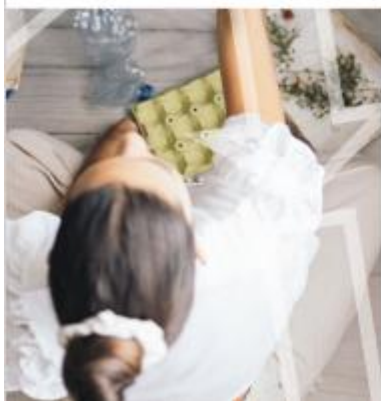
Consultees: Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Mark S. Williams, Director of Economy and Environment
Richard Edmunds, Director of Education and Corporate Services
Cllr. Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces
Cllr Sean Morgan, Leader of Council
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
Sue Richards, Head of Education, Planning and Strategy
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property Services
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Dave Roberts, Principal Group Accountant
Cath Forbes-Thompson, Scrutiny Manager
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Leanne Sykes, Deputy Head of Financial Services and S151 officer
Sarena Ford, Communications Manager
Hayley Lancaster, Transformation Manager - Engagement
Stefano Jefferson, Transformation Manager – Commercial Investment
Councillor. D. Tudor Davies MBE, Chair, Members Working Group
Councillor. Adrian Hussey, Vice Chair, Members Working Group
Councillor. Gary Johnston, Chair, Joint Scrutiny Committee
Councillor. Brenda Miles, Vice Chair, Joint Scrutiny Committee

Appendices

Appendix 1	Draft Waste Strategy
Appendix 2	Draft Engagement Strategy
Appendix 3	Draft Consultation Questionnaire



CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
**DRAFT WASTE AND
RECYCLING STRATEGY**
2023-2028



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TO 70% AND BEYOND 



FOREWORD



Councillor Chris Morgan
Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces

For many years, Caerphilly County Borough Council has gained a positive reputation for being a high performing recycling authority. However, over recent years, our performance has declined and despite some interventions, our performance has failed to improve. There appears to have been a significant change in behaviours in Caerphilly and we are now producing and reporting much higher quantities of residual (non-recyclable) waste. At present, we have one of the highest levels of residual waste per person in Wales.

It has become clear that the current model of delivery is no longer fit for purpose, both environmentally and financially. To meet the challenging national recycling targets set by Welsh Government, and the wider climate change and decarbonisation agendas, there is a shift required in service delivery and behaviour.

“This strategy sets out plans to drive up our recycling performance and our wider green credentials...”

Caerphilly collects over 27,000 tonnes of residual waste from properties each year and compositional analysis has indicated that nearly 60% of the waste that is currently placed in residual bins, can be recycled, or composted. The recovery rates for food waste collection are presently the lowest in Wales and this too, is playing a significant part in our current “below target” recycling performance.

This strategy sets out plans to drive up our recycling performance and our wider green credentials, taking us back to where we belong, as one of the highest performing waste authorities in Wales.

Additionally, the strategy reaffirms our commitment to achieving the Welsh Government’s statutory recycling targets and sets our intention to move beyond them, supporting our transition to net zero Carbon.

We have many challenges ahead, but working together with our residents, we will improve our performance through a combination of changing our collection methodology and adapting our collective behaviours.

We are confident that a *Team Caerphilly* will result in a shared purpose as we all work together to make our County Borough cleaner and greener, for today and for the future.



INTRODUCTION

This strategy sets out the significant changes intended for implementation to increase overall recycling performance across Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC).

The key objectives focussed upon in the strategy include:

1. Reduce overall waste arisings.
2. Increase repair and reuse.
3. Increase the proportion and quality of material that is recycled.
4. Optimise contribution to and use of renewable energy.
5. Help our residents to manage their waste more sustainably.

It is important to understand the size, scale, and complexity of the challenges ahead. The strategy explores key areas of data to set out our current performance as well as setting out the rationale for the interventions proposed. It is also important to highlight the success of the many interventions made to date to improve recycling rates.

This strategy sets out how CCBC will minimise the negative impacts of waste on the environment by reducing waste, ensuring items are used again, recycled for further manufacturing, or sent for recovery. It combines the actions we will take now along with firm commitments for the coming years.

The strategy is designed to ensure CCBC meets and exceeds statutory performance targets, whilst being realistic about the timescales and resources required to meet these ambitions. We are ambitious, yet realistic in what can be achieved. Globally we are facing a climate emergency, and our consumption of resources is unsustainable. The need to act for the benefit of the climate and our environment has never been more vital.

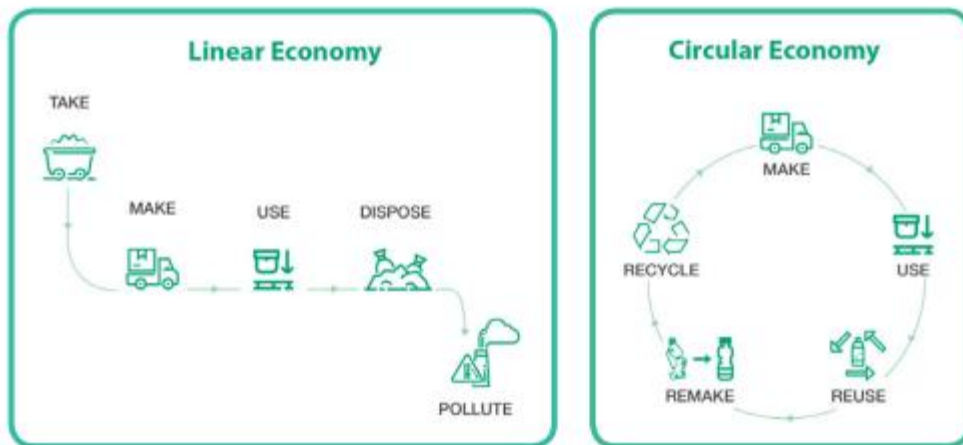
Our vision is to transform our resources and waste services to move towards an innovative circular economy in Caerphilly.

Unsustainable consumption of precious resources and waste disposal has a significant impact on the environment and cannot be decoupled from its impact on our climate. It is important that steps are taken to move away from the inefficient linear economy (where resources are taken, made into products, used, and finally thrown away) and transition to a more circular economy (Figure 1). In a circular economy, precious resources are kept in use for longer, maximising material quality and offering social and economic opportunities.

“Globally we are facing a climate emergency, and our consumption of resources is unsustainable.”



Figure 1: Linear Economy versus Circular Economy





A CASE FOR CHANGE



The climate emergency and unsustainable consumption of resources has been recognised by the Welsh Government and CCBC. A strategic and legislative framework is in place to support the move towards a more circular economy.

In 2019 the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency and CCBC in recognition pledged to become net zero by 2030. Reducing consumption and decarbonising the waste and recycling services, is a key part of reaching this pledge.

Moving to a circular economy is key to significantly reducing our carbon emissions and our over-exploitation of natural resources, and to help reverse the decline in biodiversity. Crucially, it can also improve economic and social outcomes. The drivers, and legislative and strategic framework in place to support our move towards a more circular economy are summarised below.

Welsh Government has set an overall zero waste target by 2050 and challenging recycling targets for councils in the interim period. These are statutory targets and an Authority can be fined if they are not achieved. A target of 64% is already in place and stretches further to 70% from 2024-25. In CCBC 60.7% of waste was recycled in 2022-23, which is well below the levels required to achieve the current and future targets.

As a public body, we must work with communities to protect the long-term impact of decisions in line with the Well-Being and Future Generations Act (2015) and the Environment Act (2021). It is clear that we cannot make the required step changes alone and a collective effort from residents, the workforce and the wider community will be essential to reduce consumption and improve resource management in CCBC.

Collectively, CCBC will transform resources and waste services to support the transition to net zero by 2030 and meet current and future statutory recycling targets.





NATIONAL CONTEXT

The CCBC Recycling and Waste Strategy is aligned to several key Welsh and European policies and legislative drivers linked to sustainable development, tackling climate change, and enabling improved environmental outcomes.

These include but are not limited to:

- EU Waste Framework Directive.
- The Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011.
- Towards Zero Waste: Our Waste Strategy, 2010.
- Waste (Wales) Measure 2010.
- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- EU 2030 Climate Framework.
- Climate Change Strategy for Wales.
- Beyond Recycling: A Strategy to make the Circular Economy in Wales a reality, 2021.
- Extended Producer Responsibility Regulations.
- Deposit Return Scheme Regulations.
- Workplace Recycling Regulations (November 2023).
- The Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Bill, 2022.

The Strategy has been further shaped by major national events including the Coronavirus Pandemic, which has impacted the way waste is produced and managed.

4.1 THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT (WALES), 2015

In 2015, the Welsh Government published the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales). The Act places a duty on all public bodies in Wales to ensure that they are working to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales.

The Act puts in place 7 well-being goals



Under the Act, there are 5 key ways of working which the authority must consider to ensure sustainable development principles are taken into account when making decisions.

To demonstrate our commitment to the 5 ways of working, we will seek to ensure that we:

- Work to prevent any increase in waste arisings, and engage with our communities to maximise waste reduction, reuse, and recycling.
- Look to embed long-term thinking about the role of recycling and waste management and its impact on our planet.
- Integrate the Strategy and its actions with other Council strategies, the ongoing work of our partners and other organisations to address the climate emergency.

- Continue to work in partnership and collaborate with our partners across the region to develop innovative approaches towards waste prevention and recovery.
- Involve our local communities in shaping our services and to engage with them throughout, reinforcing the importance of their role in helping us deliver the overall aims and objectives of the strategy.

4.2 THE NATIONAL WASTE STRATEGY

The Welsh National Waste Strategy, *Towards Zero Waste* was launched on 21 June 2010. The strategy sets out a series of challenging statutory recycling targets for Local Authorities to deliver.

Table 1: Welsh Government national statutory waste and recycling targets

	2010/12	12/13	15/16	19/20	24/25
Minimum levels of reuse and recycling/composting (or AD)	40%	52%	58%	64%	70%
Minimum proportion of reuse/recycling/composting from source separation	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Maximum level of landfill	-	-	-	10%	5%
Maximum level of energy from waste	-	-	42%	36%	30%
Minimum levels of preparing for reuse (excluding Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment [WEEE])	-	0.4%	0.6%	0.8%	1.0%

Through the Waste (Wales) Measure 2010, the Welsh Government (WG) made recycling targets from 2012-13 and beyond, statutory targets. This status allows Welsh Government to levy financial penalties against Councils that fail to achieve them. The statutory targets are weight based and have increased gradually over time.

In the current waste strategy *Beyond Recycling: A Strategy to make the Circular Economy in Wales a reality*, the Welsh Government has stated that they will work with Local Authorities and other key partners to develop further future recycling targets in line with their pathway to zero waste and achieving 100% recycling by 2050. Welsh Government indicates that it will put in place

“...the Welsh Government has stated that they will work with Local Authorities and other key partners...”

further minimum statutory recycling targets for Local Authorities beyond 2025, to support the trajectory to achieve zero waste (100% recycling) by 2050.

Welsh Government has stated that it wants to develop future targets collaboratively to ensure they are based on the capability of the services that are being delivered.



Collections Blueprint

Welsh Government's collection blueprint sets out a recommended service profile for the collection of waste from households, including the following central policies:

- Weekly separate collection of dry recyclables via 'kerbside' sort' with materials being collected separately in boxes and/or in reusable sacks, with two or more boxes provided per household, and recyclables being sorted into separate compartments on the collection vehicle by collection staff at the kerbside during the weekly collection process.
- A separate weekly collection of food waste.
- The use of modern, lightweight, multi compartment vehicles for single pass collection of dry recyclables and food waste.
- Fortnightly collection of residual waste and reduced residual waste capacity, and 'no side waste' policies enforced.



4.3 CLIMATE CHANGE

In 2019, Wales became the first UK nation to declare a 'climate emergency'.

In *Beyond Recycling: A Strategy to make the Circular Economy in Wales a reality*, the Welsh Government make it clear that:

"We are still in the midst of a climate emergency: globally, we are experiencing unprecedented climate events: we are on track for temperature rises above 2°C, one million species are threatened with extinction due to climate change and the over-exploitation of natural resources; and there is increasing evidence of the adverse impacts that plastic is having on the environment and living organisms. Here in Wales, we are already feeling the effects with flooding and other extremes of weather becoming more commonplace. These challenges bring important opportunities to positively shape our future."



Climate change is significantly impacted by unsustainable consumption and waste disposal processes. The circular economy approach is key to tackling over-consumption, whilst also instigating social and economic improvements for Wales.

In Wales municipal recycling rates have increased from just 4.8% in 1998-1999, to more than 65% in 2021-22. This increase has made a significant difference to emissions, saving around 400,000 tonnes of CO² per year from being released into the atmosphere. The Welsh Government has set a target for the country to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and is investing £2 billion to support communities, businesses, and organisations in their collective efforts to tackle climate change.



LOCAL CONTEXT



CCBC's Corporate Plan spans the period 2023-2028 and is focussed upon creating a better place to live, work and invest in. The recently published plan incorporates a specific objective to enable our environment to be greener with a specific outcome to achieve Welsh Government's challenging waste reduction, reuse and recycling targets.

The Council will continue to demonstrate effective stewardship for the environment by responsibly disposing of IT equipment in accordance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations. In addition to this, the Council will continue to re-use corporate furniture wherever possible. Failing this, the Authority will donate to others before considering recycling.

5.1 HOUSING AND POPULATION GROWTH

The 2021 Census reports a population decline in CCBC to 175,900, down by 2,900 compared to 2011. Despite this, there's a 2.4% increase in households, totalling 76,300 with at least one resident. Council Tax data presently accounts for 80,739 domestic properties and 5,406 non-domestic establishments. Welsh Government projections anticipate a 1% population increase in Caerphilly County Borough by 2028, primarily due to net immigration.

However, CCBC's upcoming Local Development Plan aims to accommodate the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal's goal of 25,000 additional jobs, planning for an increase of around 10,700 people and 6,750 dwellings.

This aligns with Future Wales, positioning the county borough in the Cardiff, Newport, and the Valleys National Growth Area.

This growth puts additional pressures on waste services by increasing the number of properties and volume of waste that needs to be collected and processed. As a result, this will require the Council and residents to come together, work collectively to change our behaviours and reduce the amount of waste we produce.

5.2 THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

In 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. As part of these efforts, a Decarbonisation Strategy has also been adopted which will enhance the Council's work in reducing carbon emissions and investing in efficiency measures across its portfolio. 'Reduce, Produce, Offset, Buy' aims to tackle the climate emergency by reducing the amount of carbon going into the atmosphere, as well as creating financial and social benefits, through reducing energy bills for the Council and its tenants.

Minimising our carbon footprint will necessitate the delivery of more resource efficient working systems as well as delivering more initiatives that stimulate the circular economy.

Providing cleaner air and improving the quality of the aquatic and terrestrial environments are key objectives that link to the better management of waste.

The Authority's Decarbonisation Action Plan includes actions for key service areas to contribute towards.

For the Waste Management functions this includes:

- Investigate opportunities for reducing (no gain) final waste disposal systems.
- Life Cycle Analysis to design out single use product/packaging.
- Procure goods that are less impacting on the environment.
- Repair First / Recycle last.

The Authority's Decarbonisation Strategy dovetails with the Welsh Government's 'Beyond Recycling' mantra with the core principles centring on:

- **Reduce** the amount of energy we use.
- **Produce** our own green electricity and heat.
- **Offsetting** carbon emissions.
- **Buy** goods with carbon implications in mind, carefully procuring appropriate goods and services.

The Authority's Waste Team has developed a platform upon which to develop its carbon friendly working systems. This includes contracts for the operation of a renewable energy system involving methane capture and recovery from an old brown field (landfill) site and the supply of feedstock in the form of kerbside collected food waste to contribute to a local anaerobic digestion (AD) facility. Both projects capture significant quantities of the most powerful/potentially damaging of greenhouse gases with the AD facility presently generating enough power to generate electricity for 2,000 households.

5.3 CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION FOR RESIDENTS

The Authority provides a range of household waste and kerbside recycling collections which includes:

- Dry mixed recycling.
- Food waste.
- Garden waste.
- Residual waste (non-recyclable).
- Chargeable bulky waste.
- Absorbent Hygiene Products.

In addition, the service also provides:

- Six household recycling centres (HRCs).
- Trade waste collections for businesses.
- Additional capacity and support to residents on request.
- Delivery of new and used wheeled bins and receptacles.
- Penallta Re-use Shop in partnership with Wastesavers.
- The Furniture Revival in partnership with Groundworks Caerphilly.

A summary of our current household kerbside collection services is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Household Kerbside Collection Services





CURRENT PERFORMANCE



CCBC has historically performed well against statutory targets set by Welsh Government. In 2017-18, 66.7% of household waste was sent for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion. This was significantly higher than the target of 58% at the time.

However, over recent years recycling performance has declined and since 2019/20 has performed below the 64% target. The 2021/22 recycling level 59.7% and the level of 60.7% for 2022/23 are well below the levels required to achieve the 70% statutory target by 2024/25. This means the Authority is at risk of significant fines from Welsh Government. Decisions to fine an Authority are considered on its own merits

“In 2017-18, 66.7% of household waste was sent for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion.”

and the Minister for Climate Change, took the decision for the period 2019/20, not to fine CCBC, subject to a full review of the services and a commitment to act.

Graph 1 below shows CCBC’s waste performance set against statutory targets from 2008 -2025.

Graph 1: Recycling Performance Trend Analysis

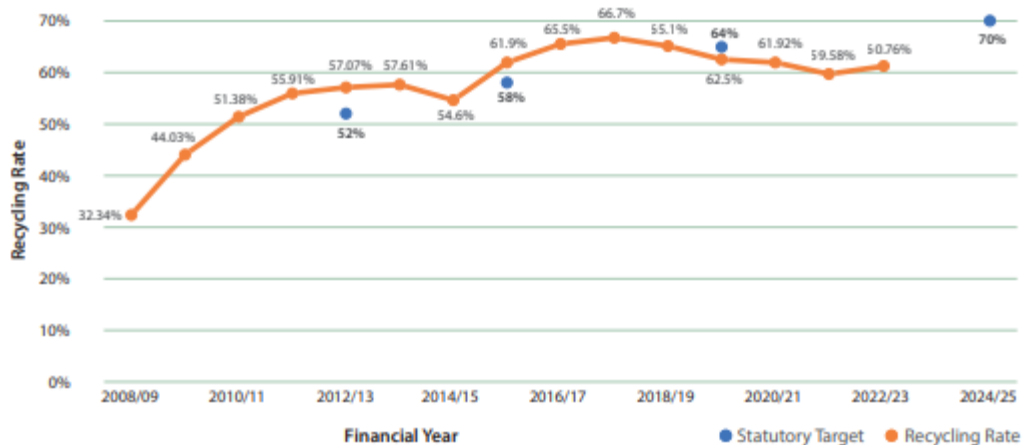
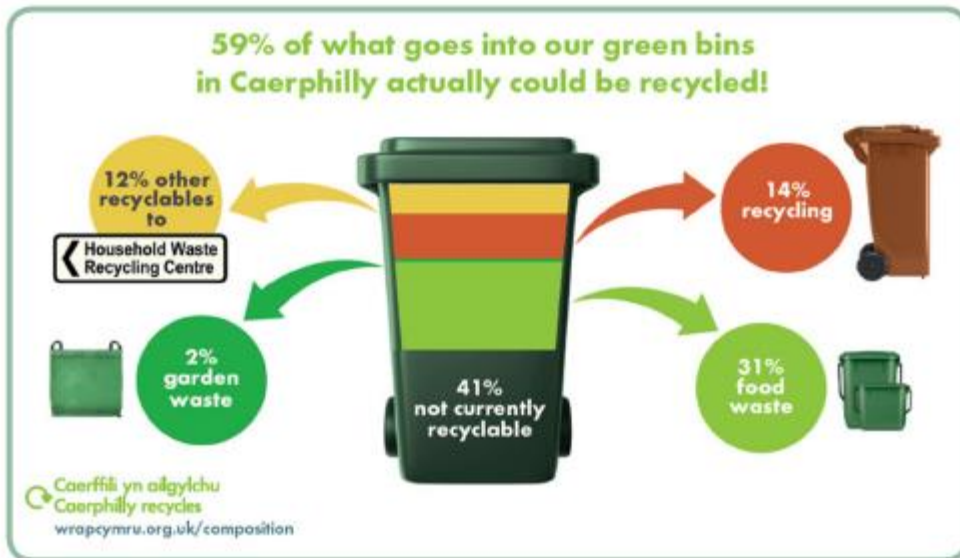


Figure 3: WRAP Compositional Waste Analysis



Analysis of what goes into our residual bins in CCBC, undertaken by WRAP in 2021, showed that 59% of the material could be recycled, shown in the Figure 3.

Just under a third of this material could be collected by the food waste collection. This shows there is significant potential for improvement.





INTRODUCING THE ROUTE MAP

Figure 4: Route Map to a Net Zero Caerphilly County Borough Council

In July 2023, CCBC's Cabinet agreed proposals for a Resource and Waste Route Map, outlining the overall direction for the Recycling and Waste Service for the next 7 years (2023 to 2030).

The Route Map (Figure 4) sets out the strategic direction to reduce waste and exceed Welsh Government statutory recycling targets, including short term interventions aimed at increasing performance by 2025-26.

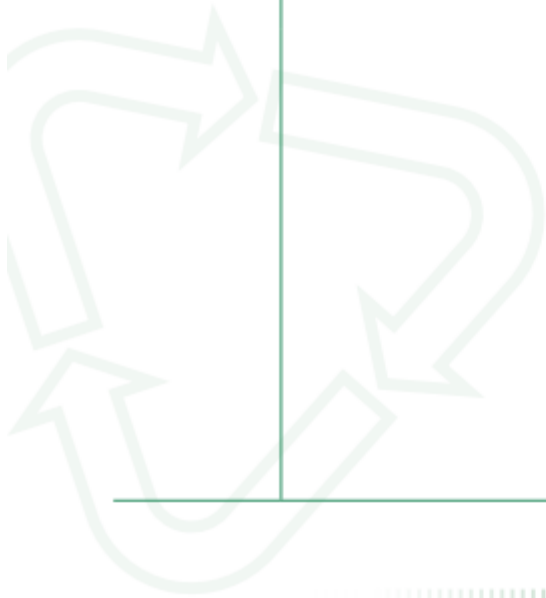
In developing this Route Map, a number of immediate interventions for the period of 2023-2025 were identified.

These are anticipated to increase recycling performance, thereby demonstrating immediate focus upon beginning our journey for long term change.



Pillar/Enabling theme	Activity	Projected increase (%)	Progress to date
<p>Pillar 1 HRC provision</p>	<p>Implement recommendations from the recent WRAP observational study in relation to signage and site layout, to move focus to recycling rather than waste disposal.</p> <p>Introduce a pre-sort requirement across the HRC Network. This will require site users to bring waste to the site segregated into its various material fractions.</p> <p>Improve customer engagement across the Network through the introduction of additional customer trained operatives on site.</p> <p>Introduce a trial booking system on one site, followed by a roll out to the remaining sites if the trial proves successful.</p>	<p>1%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Successfully employed 9 additional members of staff into customer-centric roles to provide on-site support to residents, including supporting the implementation of pre-sort requirements. ● Improved the overall site layout, staff uniforms and signage to move focus to recycling rather than waste disposal and provide an enhanced customer experience. ● The pre-sort requirements will come into effect on the 12th February 2024, and associated site layout and communications campaigns are in development.
<p>Pillar 2 Kerbside Dry Recycling</p>	<p>A widespread informational campaign will be launched, supported by WRAP's well established <i>Be Mighty</i> campaign to reinforce messages of acceptable materials.</p> <p>The information campaign will be further supported with a behaviour change campaign. The campaign will run alongside the informational campaign and will focus on the <i>Why Recycle?</i> designed to evoke an emotional response and focus on the impacts of non-participation.</p> <p>To support the behaviour change campaign, engagement and education staff will directly engage with residents on the doorstep to promote and maximise recycling opportunities. This will include an ongoing campaign within our schools to ensure our younger people are engaged.</p> <p>Additional capacity requirements 1 will be discussed on an individual basis and extra containers provided on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>1%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cabinet agreed a report to introduce a 5-step contamination process which included increased resident engagement and the potential to introduce a section 46 fixed penalty notice as a last resort to non-compliance. ● The service has successfully employed 6 Recycling Advisors to support in the delivery of our campaigns, providing direct engagement with residents at the doorstep. ● Delivery of a Back-to Basics Communications Campaign. The eight-week campaign outlined the scale of the waste issue in CCBC, whilst reminding residents of the many waste, recycling, and reuse services available to them. This included a range of print and digital activity, such as a waste edition of Newline sent to all households and a social media campaign.

Pillar/Enabling theme	Activity	Projected increase (%)	Progress to date
<p>Pillar 3 Kerbside Organic Recycling</p>	<p>Campaign 1 and 2 will have a significant focus on food waste participation messages, both informational and emotive to evoke a behaviour change. To support the behaviour change campaign engagement and education staff will engage with residents on the doorstep.</p> <p>This will include an ongoing campaign within our schools to ensure our younger people are engaged.</p> <p>This will be further supported by the introduction of free caddy liners for 1 year. 6 month supply of liners will be delivered to properties with an accompanying information booklet. The impact of this intervention will be reviewed thereafter.</p> <p>The team will continue with the "Mash for Cash" food waste incentivisation campaign and consider rebranding and relaunching the campaign to align with the behaviour change campaign.</p>	<p>1%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The introduction of a 12-month trial to provide all residents with free indoor food waste caddy liners. The trial will see the first 6-month supply of liners delivered directly to resident's doors, with the following 6-month supply being available for collection from local libraries, leisure centres, Bedwas Council Chambers, Ty Penallta and Penallta Reuse Shop. ● The continuation of the Council's established cash prize incentive scheme 'Mash for Cash' to encourage overall participation. To date, 16 winners have been awarded a prize funded by the business sector. ● The launch of food waste campaigns aligned to the participation in food waste recycling, leading to increased food waste caddy requests, this was further bolstered by the presence of the Recycling Team at local events with food waste caddies and literature. ● Completion of Food Waste Communications Campaign. The eight-week communications campaign informed residents of why they should be recycling their food waste, how to recycle it correctly and to bust any myths around food waste recycling. This included a range of print and digital activity, such as a food waste recycling booklet sent to all households, a social media campaign and an educational campaign provided by WRAP.



Pillar/Enabling theme	Activity	Projected increase (%)	Progress to date
Pillar 4 Kerbside Residual	Engage with residents to maximise recycling through the enforcement of existing residual waste policies, that include for top hatting (bags stacked on top of the bin) and side waste.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A strengthened commitment to minimising the quantity of residual waste through the enforcement of existing policies of no 'top hatting' or side waste. ● Adopting the recycling contamination policy for residual waste, targeting non-recyclable content that can be diverted from the residual, using S46 notices where necessary. ● Development of educational and engagement resources, to be carried out by Recycling Advisors with residents, to better understand the barriers and issues residents are facing.
Pillar 5 Trade Service	<p>Review existing service to ensure the residual trade waste service is competitive and has a focussed customer base.</p> <p>Develop business case for future trade recycling services and implement new service in line with the new commercial waste regulations.</p>	1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On 6th October 2023, the Members Working Group agreed to consider a range of options for the future of our Trade Waste Services. A full report will be presented to cabinet for further consideration.

The pillars are underpinned by the following enabling themes and working groups have been established as part of the strategy development.

- Communications and Engagement.
- Workforce Engagement.
- Infrastructure.
- Ultra Low Emissions.
- Digital Offer.

These enabling themes are crucial in ensuring the successful delivery of the objectives and strategy pillars. Several internal working groups have been established to engage the relevant stakeholders and maintain the progress of each workstream.

Much of this work is underpinned by an enhanced digital offer. We are introducing a digital solution for recycling and waste collection rounds to improve efficiencies and enhance the customer experience. Linking to the back office, it will enable officers to respond proactively and develop a targeted and individual approach to education and communication as well improve customer interactions and journey.



LOOKING AHEAD



The overall strategy objectives are linked to the agreed Route Map. Whilst work has been undertaken, as highlighted above, more work is needed to guarantee the success of these objectives.

Our strategic objectives aim to reduce the volume of waste generated within the county borough, maximise our precious resources through repair and reuse, increase the quality

and proportion of what can be recycled, increase our contribution towards renewable energy generation and help our residents manage their waste more sustainably.

These objectives are underpinned by carbon reduction benefits, financial savings through more efficient services and social benefits through voluntary and employment opportunities.





TO 70% AND BEYOND

Our objectives and what we plan to do:

Objective 1: Reduce overall waste arisings

The Council will continue to support the messaging around waste minimisation through a range of communications and engagement methods which includes promoting national campaigns such as, *Love Food, Hate Waste*.

Continue to strengthen the commitment to minimising the quantity of residual waste through the enforcement of existing waste policies.

The introduction of pre-sort requirements in the HRC sites will support the reduction in residual waste.

We will consider implementing a booking system on HRCs on a trial basis. The booking system will support the pre-sort requirements in reducing waste, increasing recycling, and reducing the levels of misuse. Additionally, a booking system will allow for a more personalised visit to the facilities with less congestion and queuing, reducing cross border traffic and abuse by traders.

The Council will promote home composting through a range of communication and engagement methods.

Consideration will be given to promoting and communicating methods of utilising left-over foods, therefore reducing the amount of food that is wasted in the county borough.



Objective 2: Increase repair and reuse

Continue to collaborate with and promote the work of partner organisations to encourage reuse. A positive example of this work is the Penallta Rescue Shop, Furniture Revival, the Uniform Exchange, and the Toy Box Project.

Promoting the waste hierarchy through a new digital solution (when searching for items, options will be presented in line with the correct disposal method e.g. textiles showing as re-use before recycling etc).

Support and encourage the introduction of the repair café concept in local communities.

Objective 3: Increase the proportion and quality of material that is recycled

We will transform recycling collections in CCBC. A range of options are proposed for collecting recyclables, food, garden, and residual (green bin) waste to identify the most efficient and effective service design to facilitate and encourage an increase in recycling quantity and quality.

From 2027, CCBC will introduce recycling collections aligned with the Welsh Government's collections Blueprint. Evidence from other local authorities in Wales, and analysis undertaken for CCBC, demonstrates that this method of collection is proven to increase the proportion of high-quality materials collected from households that is recycled and reduce contamination. By keeping different materials separate it increases the quality of these materials making them easier to recycle into new products. It will also help to lower carbon emissions.

The new Blueprint compliant collections system is shown in Figure 5. Residents will be provided with separate containers for plastic and cans, glass, and paper and card, which will be collected weekly. Food waste will continue to be collected weekly, and garden waste will be collected fortnightly and seasonally (throughout the spring/summer growing season).



Figure 5: Blueprint Compliant Waste Collection Service

Dry Recycling	Recycling Vehicle	Food Waste	Garden Waste	Garden Waste Vehicle
Plastic, cans and glass - Box Paper and card - Reusable bag	RRV Multi compartment vehicle	Green caddies collected with dry recycling	Reusable bag	Single chamber RCV
				

Improving recycling collections will allow CCBC to transform residual waste (non-recyclable) collections. The assessment shows that moving to collecting residual waste every three or four weeks from 2027 will help to increase recycling rates even further, reduce costs and reduce carbon emissions.

For residents that require additional collections of absorbent hygiene products, a separate collection will be offered by request.

The range of materials collected at kerbside and HRCs will be expanded where they are able to be collected efficiently and safely and where there are sustainable markets for these materials. This may include, for example, textiles, Tetra Pak, small WEEE, batteries and coffee pods.

Objective 4: Optimise contribution to and use of renewable energy

Continue to work with suppliers to enhance the recovery of methane from organic waste to support the use of renewable energy as part of the drive to encourage and support greater participation in food waste recycling.

Explore options to introduce a fleet of ultra-low emission vehicles.

Consider options and identify opportunities for renewable energy generation at new sites.

Objective 5: Help our residents to manage their waste more sustainably

Continue to support residents with clear and consistent communication about how and why to recycle as part of county wide campaigns.

Use data to inform behaviour change campaigns delivered on a hyper local level to support effective and efficient recycling practices.

Continue to digitalise the service offer for residents to ensure effective service delivery and improved customer engagement.





MONITOR, MEASURE AND REVIEW



CCBC uses a variety of performance indicators to monitor how well services are performing in meeting the needs of service users and to measure efficiency and value for money. Table 2 highlights these statutory and non-statutory measures.

Performance indicators and project milestones relating to the delivery of strategic priorities will be managed, monitored, and reviewed in addition to those noted in Table 2, throughout the year by an established Performance Working Group.

Challenging targets are also set for each indicator, to ensure that the services provided perform amongst the best in Wales, and targets are set accordingly. Additionally, measures for monitoring and review which are bespoke to interventions and objectives will be considered.

These will be used for continued review and improvements, ensuring CCBC can deliver efficiencies through savings from route optimisation and other digital tools, and negotiating better terms and prices with contractors. Thus, ensuring CCBC can operate services that are efficient and value for money.

Table 2: Service performance measures

Service Measures	Frequency	Unit of Measure	DPA (Y/N)
Municipal waste collected and prepared for reuse/recycling	Quarterly	%	Y
Missed waste/recycling collections as a % of total collections	Quarterly	%	Y
Vehicle availability % (residual, recycling, green)	Quarterly	%	Y
HRC recycling percentage	Quarterly	%	N
Average working days to collect bulky waste	Quarterly	Days	Y
Average working days to clear fly-tipping	Quarterly	Days	Y
Number of missed waste/recycling collections	Quarterly	100 households/yr	Y
% Highways inspected of a high/acceptable standard of cleanliness	Annually	%	Y
Food waste participation numbers	Annually	%	N
Recycling participation numbers	Annually	%	N
Proportion of waste recycled	Annually	%	N
Proportion of waste composted	Annually	%	N
Proportion of waste reused	Annually	%	N
Kilogram of resident waste generated per year per person	Annually	Kg/person/yr	Y
Food waste yield	Annually	Tonnes/yr	N
Trade waste refuse/recycling/food agreements	Annually	Number	N
Public opinion survey	Biannually	Qualitative	N



FUNDING

CCBC's Recycling and Waste service needs significant investment to make the improvements identified to support the transition to net zero by 2030 and meet current and future statutory recycling targets.

CCBC has already committed to providing investment for immediate early intervention. Additional financial support will be called upon from Welsh Government throughout the journey, and CCBC values this investment to save long term and for future generations.





Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.
This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.

Team Caerphilly
BETTER TOGETHER

Caerphilly County Borough Council - Draft Waste and Recycling Strategy

Engagement Strategy – December 2023

The importance of effective consultation...

“...There are many statutory requirements for consultation, but the truth is that ALL significant changes to long-standing services need consultation.

If the public has a sound basis for expecting to be consulted, then failure to do so can lead to losing a Judicial Review. And Judges have ruled that if people have been accustomed to the benefit of a service, then its withdrawal without consultation can in many circumstances, be unlawful...”.

The **doctrine of legitimate expectation (common law)** means that essentially, where people have come to legitimately expect a process of consultation, there are grounds for a judicial review should a public consultation not take place.

Similarly, a consultation must be conducted properly should the choice be taken to embark on one (whether a legal requirement exists for it or not). This is part of ensuring that the consultation process remains a fair one.

This is rapidly becoming the most important aspect of the law of consultation. The legitimate expectation applies:

- when there has been a clear promise of consultation
- where official guidance or policies imply a promise to act in a particular way
- where there is a withdrawal of a benefit with significant impacts to be considered
- where the nature of the relationship would create unfairness if there were to be inadequate consultation.

Gunning Principles:

The gunning principles dictate that:

Proposals are still at a formative stage. A final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers.

There is sufficient information to give ‘intelligent consideration’. The information provided must relate to the consultation and must be available, accessible, and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response.

There is adequate time for consideration and response. There must be sufficient opportunity for consultees to participate in the consultation. There is no set timeframe for consultation, despite the widely accepted twelve-week consultation period, as the length of

time given for consultee to respond can vary depending on the subject and extent of impact of the consultation.

‘Conscientious consideration’ must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made. Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account.

‘Involve’ – Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act

One of the five ways of working within the Act is ‘Involvement’. The five collectively, when done effectively demonstrate that the sustainable development principle has been considered and applied.

The ‘involve’ principle is central to Caerphilly County Borough Council’s consultation and engagement activity. ‘Involve’ means ‘The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves’. This is further demonstrated throughout the Integrated Impact Assessment.

Steps to consider:

1. Complete an Integrated Impact Assessment for the proposal(s)
2. Identify the purpose/what we’re trying to achieve
3. Identify stakeholders
4. What other evidence/data/feedback do we have?
5. Timescales
6. Methods of engagement and resources required
7. Key messaging
8. Analysis and interpretation of consultation/engagement
9. Close the loop – providing feedback and outlining next steps

Complete an Integrated Impact Assessment for the proposal(s):

Integrated Impact Assessments are how we assess whether a proposal we are planning to recommend might have unintended consequences, including impacts on particular groups of people, on the environment in which they live, or otherwise unforeseen risks to the council.

Carrying out an Integrated Impact Assessment does not prevent the council from taking difficult decisions when needed (e.g. making budget savings) but it will ensure that those decisions are made in accordance with our policy objectives, legislative requirements (**including those within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act and our socio-economic duty**) and on the basis of a full understanding of the implications for people, the environment and the council.

The assessment also allows us to consider any actions we can take to mitigate any negative impacts or risks we identify. Doing these assessments well will help the council make better decisions and improve the transparency and accountability of decision-making.

Detail:	Progress	RAG rating
IIA on proposals for consideration within strategy to be developed	Drafted – to be further developed following public consultation feedback	

Identify the purpose/what we are trying to achieve:

The overarching aim of the draft Waste and Recycling Strategy is to offer a roadmap for Caerphilly County Borough Council to meet the Welsh Government statutory recycling targets of 70% and beyond, with an overall aspiration to become the highest performing local authority area in the UK.

As well as improving recycling performance, we aim to reduce the overall amount of waste produced, as well as maximise the amount of waste that can be reused, in accordance with the reduce, reuse, recycling hierarchy. This strategy supports the Council's Corporate Plan, decarbonisation aspirations, climate emergency commitments and circular economy ambitions.

The following key objectives are highlighted within the draft strategy:

- Reduce overall waste arisings
- Increase repair and reuse
- Increase the proportion and quality of material that is recycled
- Optimise contribution to and use of renewable energy
- Help our residents to manage their waste more sustainably

The public consultation supporting the council's draft Waste and Recycling Strategy will seek the views of our communities on the proposals within the draft strategy that would assist the council in meeting its outlined objectives.

Particular attention will be paid to those under-represented/seldom heard communities and specifically those identified where the proposals may have a potentially adverse impact upon them through development of the Integrated Impact Assessments for the proposals (e.g. those affected by age and disability are two examples).

In line with the gunning principles, 'conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made. Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account.

Detail:	Progress	RAG rating
Purpose of the public consultation on the councils' draft waste and recycling strategy is agreed	Endorsed by CMT and Cabinet Member – 12/12/23	

Identify stakeholders:

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

- Residents – people from every part of the county borough and from every community and of all ages, making a particular effort to encourage those not currently engaged/seldom heard including:
 - Community groups and clubs including those on our various panels, community, voluntary and special interest groups
 - Users of specific council services
 - Vulnerable groups and those with protected characteristics as identified within the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales)
 - Children and young people including those on the Youth and Junior Forums
- Employees of the council

- Relevant trade unions
- Business owners/business forums
- Those who visit, work or participate in activities within the county borough
- Our democratically elected representatives
- Town and Community Councils
- Members of the Senedd and Members of Parliament
- Partner organisations
- Welsh Commissioners (Children’s, Welsh Language, Older Persons, Future Generations)
- Specific subject forums
- Any other body or group with an interest in the work of the authority and the future wellbeing of the area

Detail:	Progress	RAG rating
Identification of comprehensive stakeholder list	Complete	
Further stakeholder groups as highlighted from the IIAs	IIAs drafted. Further groups to be identified throughout consultation in discussion with local elected members	

What other evidence/data/feedback do we already have?

The draft strategy is written against the context of ongoing conversations the council has held with residents through its engagement programme ‘The Caerphilly Conversation’.

In November/December 2022, the council ran a phase of engagement called ‘What matters to you?’. 93% of respondents agreed that waste collection and recycling services should continue to be a priority when planning council services and budgets for 2022/23 and beyond.

Through that same engagement activity, 86% of respondents felt that waste collection and recycling services was as important or more important to them than 12 months ago. Insight from the ‘What matters to you?’ phase also suggested that residents appreciate the simplicity of our current recycling system in place.

In addition, an online ‘quick poll’ sought additional views on waste and recycling during January 2023. Key insights from this poll, which received 2,632 responses included:

- 79% of respondents said they recycle food waste at the kerbside. From those respondents who don’t currently recycle food waste, their reasons for not doing so were primarily that they compost any food waste, they don’t waste any food, they don’t like the smell/feel its unclean or they don’t have any liners to place inside the caddy.
- 99% of respondents said they regularly recycle using their brown bin/recycling box/recycling bags at the kerbside
- 73% of respondents said they regularly make use of the green/garden waste recycling service. From those respondents who don’t, their reasons for not doing so were primarily that they don’t have any garden waste/a garden or that they use the service but seasonally (not year-round)

Summary reports for the ‘What matters to you?’ November/December 2022 engagement phase and the ‘Caerphilly Conversation – budget setting 2023/24’ engagement programme can be found at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillyconversation.

Detail:	Progress	RAG rating
Early phase engagement findings/insight embedded in the principles of the draft strategy	Complete	

Timings:

The formal public consultation on the proposals within the draft waste strategy will run, subject to Cabinet endorsement, for a twelve-week period from Monday 5th February 2024 until Tuesday 30th April (subject to Cabinet approval).

Subsequent in-depth, targeted engagement will be programmed as phase two of the programme, following final Cabinet approval of the waste strategy.

Detail:	Progress	RAG rating
Timing of formal period of consultation, analysis, reporting and consideration by members agreed, incorporating the requirements within the gunning principles	Timings outlined as above subject to Cabinet approval	

Methods of engagement and resources required:

Residents will be invited to give their views in a variety of ways including:

- A survey will be available on the council’s website www.caerphilly.gov.uk. It will be available online and in printed copy. Hard copies will be available from all libraries across the county borough and returned via libraries or through the post.
- A dedicated edition of Newline, delivered to each household within Caerphilly county borough, will also contain a hard copy version of the proposals and associated consultation materials.
- A series of informal face-to-face drop-in sessions for residents will be arranged at venues across the borough. A series of online face-to-face sessions will also be scheduled. 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. They will also be planned to coincide with times of highest footfall at individual venues.
- A dedicated meeting of the Viewpoint Panel. The Viewpoint Panel is a group of residents who are regularly invited to get involved in the council’s engagement and consultation activities. Anyone who is a resident of the county borough can join.
- Online engagement opportunities through the council’s digital engagement platform, Engagement HQ
- Targeted engagement with stakeholders and seldom heard groups – identification of these was supported through the development of in-depth integrated impact assessments (IIAs) for the draft proposals.

- A far-reaching communications campaign will support the consultation by widely promoting the various opportunities for people to have their say including an extensive digital campaign
- Further engagement opportunities to be identified in discussion with local elected members

Detail:	Progress	RAG rating
Draft consultation questions to be agreed in line with draft strategy's key objectives	Endorsed by CMT and Cabinet Member (12/12/23) and PDM (03/01). Awaiting feedback from Joint Scrutiny Committee	
Confirmation of specific dates/times for engagement sessions to be confirmed	Dates pencilled in – to be publicised following Cabinet approval	
Development and of design materials/promotional posters etc for face to face engagement	Drafts in progress	
Development of digital engagement platform to support engagement on the waste strategy as its inaugural activity	Drafts in progress	
Timeline for special edition of Newslite to be confirmed	In progress	

Key messaging:

Key messaging will mirror that outlined within the Cabinet report and the appended draft waste strategy. As outlined earlier in this document, the public consultation supporting the development of the council's draft Waste and Recycling Strategy will seek the views of our communities on the proposals within the draft strategy that would assist the council in meeting its outlined objectives.

Particular attention will be paid to those under-represented/seldom heard communities and specifically those identified where the proposals may have a potentially adverse impact upon them through development of the Integrated Impact Assessments for the proposals (e.g. those affected by age and disability are two examples).

Detail:	Progress	RAG rating
Key messaging to support the consultation on the various proposals within the draft waste strategy are agreed	Draft survey is in line with proposals within the strategy	

Analysis and interpretation of consultation/engagement:

Following the conclusion of the formal period of public consultation in May 2024, a summary report and comprehensive annexes will be produced, affording members full access to the findings and insight from the public consultation.

In line with the gunning principles, conscientious consideration must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made. Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account.

Upon publication of the final Cabinet report into the public domain, the summary report and associated annexes will be available at www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillyconversation

Detail:	Progress	RAG rating
Timeline for report production, analysis of findings and interpretation to be agreed	To be determined	
Webpage for publication of summary report and annexes to be prepared in readiness	Currently in progress	

Close the loop – providing feedback and outlining next steps:

Following consideration of the findings/insight from the public consultation, and subsequent member endorsement of a final waste strategy, it will be key to ‘close the loop’ and provide feedback to the various stakeholders/groups on the final decision. This is crucial both reputationally to build trust, and also to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.

As well as direct responses to those engaging with us through the formal process and publishing the summary report and associated annexes, the supporting communications strategy will also assist in ensuring effective feedback processes to our communities.

Following approval of the waste strategy an important second phase, longer period of engagement will commence, working to educate, inform and encourage participation in the various changes that are agreed. This will be a multi-faceted engagement process that will almost certainly require additional resource to fulfil.

Detail:	Progress	RAG rating
Communication strategy to support feeding back insight gathered during the consultation and subsequent decisions taken	To be developed	
Webpage for publication of summary report and annexes to be prepared in readiness	To be developed	
Development of ‘phase two’ of engagement programme – post-Cabinet decision on the final waste strategy	To be developed	

Appendix 3 – Draft Consultation Questionnaire

The Caerphilly Conversation Have your say on the draft Waste and Recycling Strategy 2023-28 – ‘To 70% and beyond’

Why the need to change?

Caerphilly, like all councils in Wales, is working towards a Welsh Government target for ‘overall zero waste’ by 2050. With that, come challenging recycling targets for councils.

The current target councils must meet is 64%, increasing to a 70% recycling target by 2024/25. Caerphilly's recycling performance is currently at 59% - well below the target set by Welsh Government.

This means the council is at real risk of having to pay significant fines (around £200,000 per percentage point below the target) for not reaching the performance targets.

Caerphilly currently:

- Has the highest level of residual waste (refuse) per person in Wales
- almost half the contents of our residual waste (refuse) bins contain material that could be recycled

Quite simply, doing nothing is not an option.

The draft Waste and Recycling Strategy has been developed to outline how the Council, working **with** its residents could meet the Welsh Government statutory recycling targets of 70% by 24/25 and work towards zero waste by 2050.

The overarching aim is to reduce the total volume of residual waste collected by encouraging people to recycle more of their waste. Ultimately this will allow us to work towards a Circular Economy, reduce carbon footprint and become more resource efficient.

This is so important to us and so important to you and our future generations, so we would really appreciate it if you could time to offer us your views on these proposals – as we can only meet these targets if we work together.

It is clear we cannot make the required step changes alone and a collective effort from residents, the workforce and the wider community will be essential to reduce consumption and improve resource management in Caerphilly. As a public body we will ensure we work with our communities to protect the long-term impact of our decisions in line with the Well-Being and Future Generations Act (2015) and the Environment Act (2021).

SECTION 1: AIMS AND OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF THE DRAFT WASTE AND RECYCLING STRATEGY

To meet Welsh Government statutory recycling targets of 70% by 24/25 and work towards zero waste by 2050, the council is proposing to focus on:

- Reduce the overall amount of waste that needs to be disposed of (waste arising)
- Increase opportunities for repair and reuse
- Increase the proportion and quality of material that is recycled
- Optimise contribution to and use of renewable energy
- Help our residents to manage materials more sustainably

Do you agree or disagree that these are the areas that the council should focus on?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Reduce the overall amount of waste that needs to be disposed of (waste arising)			
Increase opportunities for repair and reuse			
Increase the proportion and quality of material that is recycled			
Optimise contribution to and use of renewable energy			
Help our residents to manage materials more sustainably			

If you disagree with any of these focus areas, please tell us why:

Are there any other areas that the Council should focus on to help achieve the goal of 'overall zero waste' by 2050.

SECTION 2: PROPOSALS TO CHANGES IN SERVICE

To help achieve these goals, the council is proposing a number of actions/changes to the way we deliver waste and recycling services. We would like to know your views on each of these proposals:

- Whether you agree or disagree that each proposal will help us achieve our goals
- How each proposal will impact on you and your household and the reasons for this
- How we can work with you to reduce the impact of these proposed changes

KERBSIDE DRY RECYCLING COLLECTION

The current comingled system for collection of dry recycling is **not compliant with the Welsh Government Blueprint**. We need to improve the quality of recycling and reduce contamination. After looking at what has worked in other areas, we need to introduce a system of recycling waste collection.

Do you currently recycle brown bin/recycling box/recycling bag materials on a weekly basis at the kerbside?

Yes

No

If you answered no, please tell us why:

Proposal: To introduce separated dry waste recycling

The proposal is to introduce the use of weighted hessian sacks and boxes for separation of recycling. It would see requirements to separate cardboard, glass and mixed containers such as cans and plastic into three separate receptacles for collection.

Do you agree or disagree that this proposal will help us achieve our statutory recycling targets?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please tell us why you say this:

Do you feel that this proposal will have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on your household?

- Positive
- Negative
- Neutral

Please tell us why you chose this option:

If you feel that this proposal will have a negative impact on you and your household, please tell us how we could help to reduce the impact. This may include offering alternative receptacles such as a stacked trolley for separation of recycling at a cost to the individual household:

KERBSIDE ORGANIC RECYCLING

We have been encouraging residents to recycle food waste and making sure that residents understand what and why we need to do this. The Mash for Cash campaign will remain in place (this is funded by the private sector and not the Council) as an incentive to take part in food waste recycling. This is making a difference, but many residents are still placing food waste in their general waste bins. In a previous survey, many residents told us that they would be more likely to recycle food waste if provided with caddy liners. The council has introduced, for a trial period of 1 year, to provide free caddy liners to all residents across the borough.

Do you currently recycle food waste on a weekly basis at the kerbside?

- Yes
- No

If you answered no, please tell us why:

Garden waste collection:

In a recent survey, residents suggested that garden waste could be collected less frequently. They also suggested that seasonal garden waste collection would be more appropriate as very few make use of this service during the winter months. Before we consider this proposal further, we would like to hear your views on how this change would affect you.

Proposal: To reduce the frequency of garden waste collection from weekly to fortnightly during the summer months only (March-end of October).

Do you currently make use of the weekly green/garden waste collection service?

- Yes
- No

If you answered no, please tell us why:

Do you agree or disagree that the fortnightly and seasonal collection proposal for garden waste collections will help us achieve our statutory recycling targets and provide a more cost-effective service?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please tell us why you say this:

Do you feel that this proposal will have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on your household?

- Positive
- Negative
- Neutral

Please tell us why you chose this option:

If you feel that this proposal will have a negative impact on you and your household, please tell us how we could help to reduce the impact:

KERBSIDE RESIDUALS (GENERAL WASTE)

Proposal: To reduce the frequency of refuse (residual waste) bin collections

Studies carried out confirm that approximately 50% of the contents our refuse (residual waste) bins can be recycled. With the ambitious targets the council must achieve, this is unsustainable.

To encourage residents to further increase participation in food waste recycling and recycling, (brown recycling bin/box/bag materials) the Council have to propose changing the frequency of refuse (residual waste) collections, from fortnightly as they currently are. Other councils across Wales have already done this and this change brings increased recycling performance.

Simply put, fortnightly refuse collections cannot remain as they are. By staying the same, the Council cannot reach its targets.

We are keen to seek views from our residents on whether their preferred option would be to change the frequency of refuse collections to three weekly or to four weekly.

It is important to note here that other councils across Wales that have previously embedded three weekly refuse collections are now having to consider a **further** change to four weekly collections in order to achieve their 70% targets and beyond. With either option, both food waste and recycling collections would remain weekly.

Please tell us your preferred option for changes to frequency of the refuse (residual waste) collection

- 3 weekly collection.** We have calculated that if done correctly, this change could result in just over 4% improvement in our recycling rates). This however may still not be enough to meet our targets moving forward, and would mean that we would have to reconsider options for refuse collection frequency again (potentially to four weekly) in the short to medium term (within two years).
- 4 weekly collection.** If done correctly, this could result in just over 6.7% improvement in our recycling rates.

Do you agree or disagree that a reduction in frequency of refuse (residual waste) will help us achieve our statutory recycling targets?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please tell us why you say this:

Do you feel that the proposed change to frequency of refuse (residual waste) collections will have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on your household?

- Positive

Negative

Neutral

Please tell us why you chose this option:

If you feel that this proposal will have a negative impact on you and your household, please tell us how we could help to reduce the impact:

Proposal – Expand Absorbent Hygiene Product (AHP) Collection

We recognise that there are certain groups who require additional/special assistance to deal with the type and amount of waste generated such as nappies and incontinence products. As the refuse (residual waste) collection service frequency reduces, it is proposed that the council would further expand its **weekly** collection service for Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP), allowing for this specialist waste to be recycled.

This would remain a request-based service and residents who need this service will be provided with bags which we will collect separately.

Do you agree or disagree that the expansion of the AHP collection service will help us achieve our statutory recycling targets?

Agree

Disagree

Don't know

Please tell us why you say this:

Do you feel that the expansion of the Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP) collection service will have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on your household?

Positive

Negative

Neutral

Please tell us why you say this:

If you feel that this proposal will have a negative impact on you and your household, please tell us how we could help to reduce the impact:

Proposal: Additional bin capacity:

There is enough capacity within the brown, green and food waste bins for all household waste/recycling. It is proposed that additional recycling bins and food waste caddies will be provided free of charge to those who require additional recycling capacity. Additional refuse (residual waste) bin capacity will only be issued following an individual assessment.

Do you feel that the provision of additional recycling bins and food waste caddies free of charge will have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on your household?

- Positive
- Negative
- Neutral

Please tell us why you say this:

Do you agree or disagree that the provision of additional recycling bins and food waste caddies free of charge will help us achieve our statutory recycling targets?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please tell us why you say this:

If you feel that this proposal will have a negative impact on you and your household, please tell us how we could help to reduce the impact:

REVIEW OF HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRES (HRCs)

The council currently operates six HRC sites. Across the sites, HRCs are open 363 days of the year, from 1 April to 30 September – 9am to 5.30pm, Monday to Sunday and between 1 October to 31 March - 9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Sunday. Each site is closed 1 or 2 days per week. The range of what can be recycled is different across the sites.

We have already started to make changes to the HRCs to improve the service at these sites through appointing more staff to work at the sites and will be introducing a pre-sorting of waste before visiting the sites. This will help us ensure that more waste is recycled and less waste goes to landfill.

Have you used a Household Waste Recycling Centre in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many times have you used a site in the last 12 months?

- Less than 6 times
- 6-10 times

- More than 10 times

Which site do you use most often?

- Bowen Industrial Estate, Aberbargoed
- Lawn Industrial Estate, Rhymney
- Penmaen, Pontllanfraith
- Full Moon, Crosskeys
- Penallta Industrial Estate
- Trehir, Llanbradach

Proposal: To review the current provision of HRC sites

The proposal would see an overall reduction to the number of sites. This would allow for increased opening hours at remaining sites.

Do you agree or disagree that this proposal will help us achieve our statutory recycling targets?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please tell us why you say this:

Do you feel that this proposal will have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on your household?

- Positive
- Negative
- Neutral

Please tell us why you chose this option:

If you feel that this proposal will have a negative impact on you and your household, please tell us how we could help to reduce the impact:

Proposal: Introduce a pilot booking system at each HRC site

Following the closure of sites during the pandemic, we surveyed residents and, at that time, residents did not support the introduction of a booking system. A booking system however would allow for more bespoke support for residents on site as well as reducing queue times and queues on the highway.

Do you agree or disagree that this proposal will help us achieve our statutory recycling targets?

- Agree

- Disagree
- Don't know

Please tell us why you say this:

Do you feel that this proposal will have a positive, negative, or neutral impact on your household?

- Positive
- Negative
- Neutral

Please tell us why you chose this option:

If you feel that this proposal will have a negative impact on you and your household, please tell us how we could help to reduce the impact:

SECTION THREE: LONGER TERM OPPORTUNITIES

Longer term, as the strategy highlights, we may need to take further proposals forward for consideration to help meet the Welsh Government statutory recycling targets of 70% by 24/35 and work towards zero waste by 2050.

Are any further actions you think the Council and our communities should consider that will help us meet the Welsh Government statutory recycling targets of 70% by 24/25 and work towards zero waste by 2050?

- Yes
- No

If there are any other actions you think the Council and our communities should consider that will help us meet the Welsh Government statutory recycling targets of 70% by 24/25 and work towards zero waste by 2050. Please give details below:

SECTION 4: ABOUT YOU

Caerphilly's waste services will continue to be fair and equitable to all residents. Supporting all those with additional needs, restricted mobility, and ill-health where possible. Further to this, supporting larger families and parents with children in nappies through access to appropriate information and guidance and access to ancillary services such as assisted collections and AHP.

Information will be presented bi-lingually and in a variety of formats upon request.

To help us ensure that the waste services we provide meet the needs of all residents, if you feel that any of these proposals will affect 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:

--

I am responding as:

Postcode:

Age:

Disability long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits your daily activities:

Pregnancy/maternity status:

Type of property – detached/semi/terraced:

How we use your personal information: The information you provide will be used by the service area relevant to the consultation / survey within Caerphilly County Borough Council. Views expressed will be collated together and used to produce a summary report. Depending on scope / nature of the survey / consultation, the summary report will be used to evaluate and remodel services / priorities etc. We will not keep your views in a way that will identify you for longer than is necessary.

You have a number of rights in relation to the information we hold about you, including the right of access to your information and the right of complaint if you are unhappy with the way your information is processed. For further information on how we process the information and your rights please follow this link:

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/FOI/PrivacyNotices/Privacy-Notice-Consultations-Surveys.aspx

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CABINET – 17TH JANUARY 2024

SUBJECT: PURCHASE OF A PROPERTY TO DEVELOP SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR CARE LEAVERS

REPORT BY: HEAD OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the plans to purchase a property to develop supported accommodation for young people leaving care who are aged 16-18 years and to confirm the purchase price which is above the independent market valuation.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Cabinet received a report in July 2022 outlining the plans for Children's Services to expand both residential children's homes and supported accommodation options for young people making full use of Welsh Government grant funding available through the Regional Integration Fund (RIF).
- 2.2 Whilst the availability of suitable properties in suitable locations has hampered progress, the strategic commitment to expand in-house care options has continued to be a priority and has been further strengthened by Welsh Government's (WG) pledge to eliminate profit from children's care.
- 2.3 A suitable property for development to offer supported accommodation for young people aged 16 to 18 years has now been identified and purchase negotiations have commenced. In line with WG funding criteria, the grant can only cover the market value of the property which is not necessarily the estate agents or vendors valuation. In this instance there is a difference of £50,000 which Cabinet are asked to approve.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet is requested to note the content of this report and confirm their support of both the purchase price and the intended future use of the property.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Cabinet is fully aware of the service development and supports the

acquisition of the property for £50,000 over the independent market valuation.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 As stated above, Cabinet has previously approved plans for the expansion of care and accommodation provision for Children Looked After, Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).
- 5.2 Since approving the plans, two solo placement children's homes have been purchased, two annexes in existing children's homes are being extended to provide crisis / move on placements and the development of a new build property in Rhymney is progressing.
- 5.3 The search for properties has been ongoing and a suitable house for conversion to become supported accommodation has been identified in Park Place, Newbridge. The house offers 7 bedrooms in the main house with a further 2 bedrooms in a self contained annex. It is a large detached property in its own grounds with ample off road parking and is in close proximity to the town and transport links.
- 5.4 Although too large to develop as a Registered Children's Home, the house is ideal for the provision of supported accommodation for young care leavers – offering an important step on their journey to independence. Children's Services is under growing demand for accommodation options for young people aged 16 to 18 years. Current provision includes foster care, supported lodgings and both supported and unsupported houses ie staffed or not.
- 5.5 It is proposed that this development will be staffed 24 hours a day with the support being commissioned from an independent 'not for profit' provider specialising in providing supported accommodation for young people. Effectively, whilst the Council will own the property, the service will be run by the independent provider. Such arrangements are already in place in Children's Services with both Llamau and Pobl.
- 5.6 The property was marketed by the estate agents at £1.25 million. Following viewings by officers including Children's Services and Properties, it was confirmed that the property was suitable to meet the needs of the service and an independent market valuation was commissioned in line with financial and procurement requirements. This independent market valuation concluded a value of £1.05 million.
- 5.7 In line with the capital grant funding criteria, WG are only able to fund up to the level of the market value and therefore the Council offered £1.05 million to purchase the property. This offer was rejected but the vendors confirmed they would accept £1.1 million.
- 5.8 Due to the Christmas holiday period commencing, the Head of Children's Services sought verbal agreement from the Leader, Cabinet Member, Deputy Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer to fund the shortfall of £50,000 from Service reserves. The offer was subsequently made and has been formally accepted subject to the usual surveys, searches and confirmation from WG.
- 5.9 Whilst the funding amount falls within the Delegated Decision Making process, it was recommended that Cabinet be sighted on the matter and provide their approval.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 This report assumes the allocation of £1.05 million WG Capital Grant funding via the Gwent Regional Partnership and an allocation of £50,000 from Social Services reserves.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The provision of suitable accommodation options for Children Looked After and young people Leaving Care is a statutory requirement and any additional provision is therefore of great benefit to those specific groups of children. Where the need for accommodation has been assessed, the individual needs of that child or young person have to be met including any additional protected characteristics. On that basis there are no intended or unintended adverse impacts resulting from this development and the Council's full Integrated Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As stated, the development is reliant on the allocation of £1.05 million WG grant funding and £50,000 Council funding through the use of Service reserves.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel or HR implications arising from this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The report reflects the views of consultees. In light of this report being presented to Cabinet, consultation with the relevant Ward Members for Newbridge has commenced.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014

Author: Gareth Jenkins, Head of Children's Services jenkig2@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Councillor Sean Morgan, Leader of Council
Councillor Elaine Forehead, Cabinet Member for Social Care
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Brenda Miles, Vice Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Mark S. Williams, Director of Economy and Environment
Richard Edmunds, Director of Education and Corporate Services
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer

Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property Services
Children's Services Divisional Management Team



CABINET – 17TH JANUARY 2024

SUBJECT: DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2024/25

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 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.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of draft budget proposals based on the Welsh Government (WG) Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2024/25.
- 2.2 The report also provides details of a range of cost and service pressures that require funding, details of proposed savings and the use of reserves, along with a proposed increase of 6.9% in Council Tax to enable the Council to set a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year.
- 2.3 An updated indicative Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is also appended to the report showing a potential savings requirement of £46.700m for the two-year period 2025/26 to 2026/27.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to: -
 - 3.1.1 Endorse the 2024/25 draft budget proposals, including the proposed permanent and temporary savings totalling £30.984m and the proposed one-off use of reserves of £11.394m.
 - 3.1.2 Endorse the proposed increases in charges for school meals in secondary schools, Meals Direct, and the Hive Restaurant along with the proposed increase in the fee for MOT testing as detailed in paragraph 5.4.5.
 - 3.1.3 Agree that 100% of the net projected underspend on the Council's 2023/24 revenue budget will be transferred into General Fund balances as outlined in paragraph 5.5.2.
 - 3.1.4 Support the proposal to increase Council Tax by 6.9% for the 2024/25 financial year to ensure that a balanced budget is achieved (Council Tax Band D being set at £1,446.37).

3.1.5 Agree that the draft budget proposals should now be subject to consultation prior to final 2024/25 budget proposals being presented to Cabinet and Council on 27 February 2024.

3.1.6 Note the indicative potential savings requirement of £46.700m for the two-year period 2025/26 to 2026/27.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Council is required annually to approve proposals to set a balanced budget and agree a Council Tax rate.

4.2 Council is required to put in place a sound and prudent financial framework to support service delivery.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Background and Economic Context

5.1.1 The continuing impact on the UK from higher interest rates and inflation, a weakening economic outlook, an uncertain political climate due to an upcoming general election, together with war in Ukraine and the Middle East, are major influences in determining the 2024/25 Draft Budget Proposals and the medium-term financial outlook.

5.1.2 The Bank of England (BoE) increased Bank Rate to 5.25% in August 2023, before maintaining this level for the rest of 2023. In December 2023, members of the BoE's Monetary Policy Committee voted 6-3 in favour of keeping Bank Rate at 5.25%. The three dissenters wanted to increase rates by another 0.25%.

5.1.3 The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) forecast a prolonged period of weak Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth with the potential for a mild contraction due to ongoing weak economic activity. The outlook for Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation was deemed to be highly uncertain, with upside risks to CPI falling to the 2% target coming from potential energy price increases, strong domestic wage growth and persistence in price-setting.

5.1.4 Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures showed CPI inflation was 3.9% in November 2023, down from a 4.6% rate in the previous month and, in line with the recent trend, lower than expected. Looking ahead, using the interest rate path implied by financial markets the BoE expects CPI inflation to continue falling slowly, but taking until early 2025 to reach the 2% target before dropping below target during the second half of 2025 and into 2026.

5.1.5 ONS figures showed the UK economy contracted by 0.1% between July and September 2023. The BoE forecasts GDP will likely stagnate through 2024. The BoE forecasts that higher interest rates will constrain GDP growth, which will remain weak over the entire forecast horizon.

5.1.6 The labour market appears to be loosening, but only very slowly. The unemployment rate rose slightly to 4.2% between June and August 2023, from 4.0% in the previous 3-month period, but the lack of consistency in the data between the two periods made comparisons difficult. Earnings growth has remained strong but has showed some signs of easing; regular pay (excluding bonuses) was up 7.3% over the period and total pay (including bonuses) up 7.2%. Adjusted for inflation, regular pay was 1.4% and total pay 1.3%. Looking forward, the MPR showed the unemployment rate is expected to be around 4.25% in the second half of calendar 2023, but then rising steadily over the forecast horizon to around 5% in late 2025/early 2026.

5.1.7 The current economic situation and increases in demand for services (particularly in Social Care) means that the Council (along with all others) continues to face unprecedented financial

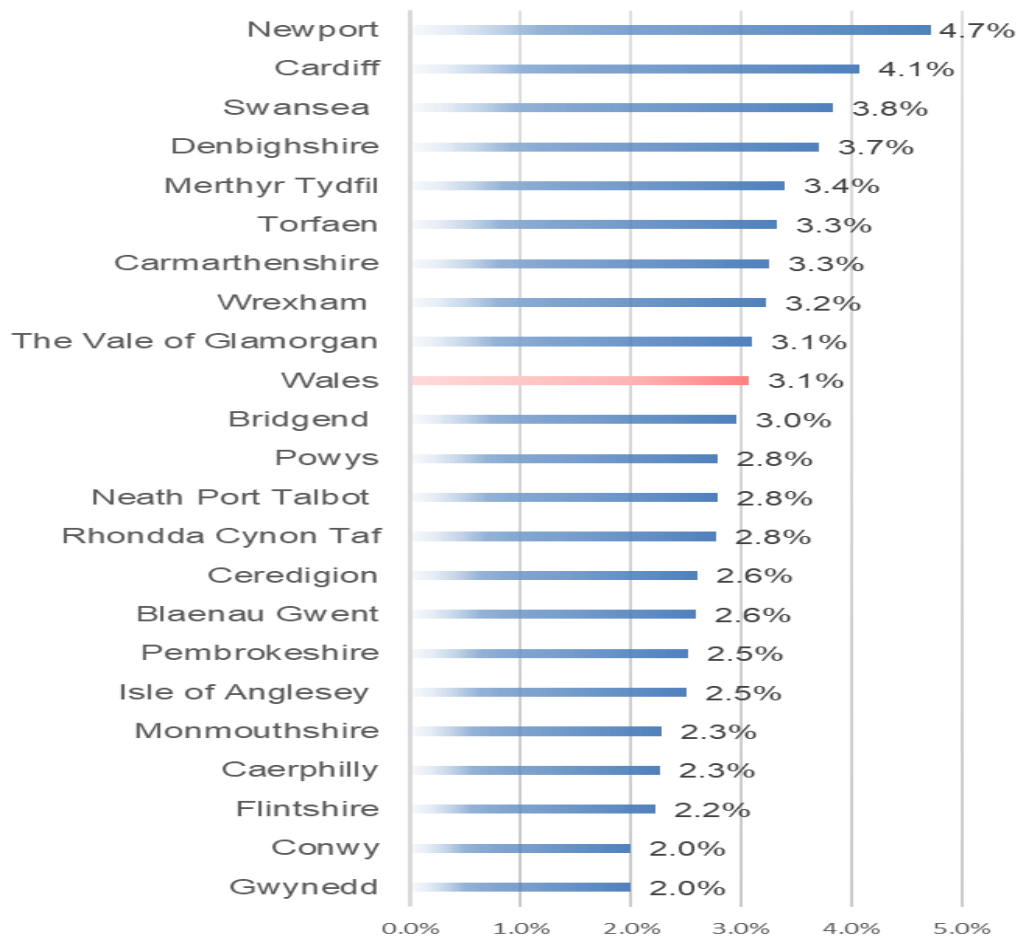
challenges. The seriousness of this situation is evidenced by a number of Councils issuing Section 114 Notices in recent years (Croydon, Slough, Northumberland, Thurrock, Birmingham, and Nottingham), which effectively means that these Councils were serving notice that they were unable to deliver balanced budgets. It is anticipated that a number of other Councils will issue Section 114 Notices moving forward.

- 5.1.8 Due to austerity, between 2008/09 and 2023/24 Caerphilly CBC has already delivered savings in excess of £111m to address reductions in funding and inescapable cost pressures. However, the details set out in this report show a savings requirement of £42.378m for 2024/25 alone, and due to the temporary nature of many of the measures proposed to balance the budget for 2024/25, it is currently anticipated that total permanent savings of £46.700m will be required for the two-year period 2025/26 to 2026/27.
- 5.1.9 The scale of the financial challenge facing the Council cannot be underestimated. Clearly, 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 are able to meet the needs of our communities, whilst operating with significantly reduced funding, a whole council and a whole county borough holistic approach is needed, and this is being defined and developed through the Council's Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme.
- 5.1.10 During the last twelve months significant work has been undertaken during the discovery phase of Mobilising Team Caerphilly to identify a wide range of projects that will help the Council balance its budget moving forward. We are now moving into the delivery stage with numerous projects being defined in detail in readiness for approval and implementation. A change programme of the scale being considered will require significant resources to be deployed and will inevitably take time to fully deliver. With this in mind, the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 effectively provide a transitional budget which is partially supported through the one-off use of reserves and a number of temporary savings measures. This will provide the time needed to deliver the range of prioritised projects under Mobilising Team Caerphilly.
- 5.1.11 Given the scale of the financial challenge faced by the Council, it is inevitable that some difficult decisions will need to be made at pace to ensure that balanced budgets can be delivered in the forthcoming years.

5.2 Welsh Government (WG) Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2024/25

- 5.2.1 The Local Government Financial Settlement received from WG on an annual basis is referred to as Aggregate External Finance (AEF). This consists of a Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Redistributed Non-Domestic Rates (business rates). Details of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement are usually announced by WG in early October each year. However, in recent years due to economic uncertainty the announcement has been delayed until December and details of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2024/25 were not released until 20 December 2023.
- 5.2.2 On an All-Wales basis there is an increase in Aggregate External Finance (AEF) of £170m or 3.1% on a like-for-like basis. Table 1 below shows the range around the average of 3.1% driven by the funding formula. This is largely a reflection of data movements in population and pupil numbers and an analysis of the components of change in the funding formula is set out in the suite of tables published alongside the settlement. The lowest increases are in Gwynedd and Conwy with 2.0%, and the highest is Newport with an increase of 4.7%. The Minister has implemented a floor mechanism at 2% which benefits the two authorities at the bottom and is funded from outside the settlement at a cost of £1.3m. The increase for Caerphilly CBC is 2.3%.

Table 1 - Changes to AEF by Local Authority (2023/24 to 2024/25)



5.2.3 Overall core revenue funding rises to £5.69bn in 2024/25. As this is the last year of the current Spending Review period there is no forward indication of settlements beyond the work that has been done by Wales Fiscal Analysis.

5.2.4 In terms of public sector pay, there is specific reference in the Minister’s letter that accompanied the settlement to teachers pay. This confirms that this will have to be funded from within the settlement envelope: -

“I have again taken the decision to provide all the available funding up front and not hold back funding for in-year recognition of the 2024/25 teachers’ pay deal. Authorities’ budget planning must therefore accommodate these costs.

5.2.5 Further on in the Minister’s letter there is also reference to the funding of the teachers’ and firefighters’ pension contributions: -

“The Chancellor’s Autumn Statement referred to the changes to the SCAPE rate, which has implications for the costs of employers’ contributions to teachers and fire-fighter pensions. This in turn has implications for Local Authority budgets. Funding for this is expected to be provided by UK Government but not until 2024/25. I will be writing to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to press for assurances on the level and timing of this funding. My officials will keep your officers informed.

5.2.6 In cash terms, the 2.3% increase for Caerphilly CBC provides additional funding of £7.766m for 2024/25. Whilst this is of course welcomed, the increase needs to be considered in the context

of the financial challenge being faced by the Council, with cost pressures totalling £56.079m for 2024/25 alone.

5.2.7 Changes to other pass-ported grants in the Provisional Settlement result in a net reduction of £202k for Caerphilly CBC in relation to the tapering of WG funding for Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Schemes.

Specific Revenue Grants

5.2.8 On a like-for-like basis, specific revenue grants will decrease on an All-Wales basis by circa 6.3% or around £92m. Education grants will go to local authorities from 2024/25 rather than the regional consortia and significantly many education grants will consolidate into 4 new grants: -

- Local Authority Education Grant (Schools Standards) £160m.
- Local Authority Education Grant (Equity) £155m.
- Local Authority Education Grant (Reform) £54m.
- Local Authority Education Grant (Cymraeg) £10m.

5.2.9 Some of the larger and more significant reductions in 2024-25 include: -

- Retail, Leisure, and Hospitality Rates Relief reduces from £130m to £79m.
- Social Care Workforce Grant reduces from £45m to £35m.
- Communities for Work+ reduces from £27m to £17m.
- Bus Emergency Scheme reduces from £42m to £39m.

5.2.10 There are increases in several grant schemes, some of the larger and more significant include:

- Substance Misuse Action Fund increases from £39m to £41m.
- Universal Free Primary School Meals increases from £63m to £94m.

5.2.11 Heads of Service are currently working with Finance Managers to fully assess the impacts of reductions in grant funding, but the working assumption is that services will need to manage within the reduced funding allocations.

Capital Funding

5.2.12 The capital allocations available to Caerphilly CBC in the RSG and from the General Capital Grant have decreased from £9.772m in 2023/24 to £9.709m for 2024/25. An updated Capital Programme will be presented to Cabinet and Council on 27 February 2024.

5.3 2024/25 Draft Budget Proposals

5.3.1 The proposals contained within this report will deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25 on the basis that Council Tax is increased by 6.9%. Table 2 provides a summary: -

Table 2 – 2024/25 Draft Budget Proposals Summary

	£m
Cost Pressures: -	
• General Fund Services inflationary pressures (pay and non-pay)	11.934
• General Fund inescapable service pressures	13.655
• Schools cost pressures	8.283
• Reinstatement of 2023/24 temporary budget measures	22.207
Total: -	56.079
Funded By: -	
• 2.3% uplift in Provisional Settlement	7.766

• 6.9% proposed increase in Council Tax	5.935
• Permanent savings proposals	19.534
• Temporary savings proposals	11.449
• One-off use of reserves	11.394
Total: -	56.079

5.3.2 Whilst the proposals in this report present a balanced financial position for 2024/25, a significant element of this is being achieved through one-off temporary measures i.e. £11.449m of temporary savings and £11.394m through the use of reserves. These temporary one-off measures totalling £22.843m will only support the budget for 2024/25 financial year and they effectively allow a transitional budget to be presented that provides the time needed to deliver the range of prioritised projects under the Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme.

5.3.3 The 2024/25 General Fund Services inflationary cost pressures totalling £11.934m are set out in Table 3 below: -

Table 3 – General Fund Services Inflationary Cost Pressures

	£m
National Joint Council (NJC) Pay Award	8.869
Increase in Employer Pension Contributions (NJC Staff)	1.245
Non-Pay Inflation	2.673
Non-Pay Inflation (Fees and Charges)	(0.853)
TOTAL: -	11.934

5.3.4 **National Joint Council (NJC) Pay Award** – The 2023/24 budget approved by Council in February 2023 assumed a NJC pay award of 5% from April 2023. However, the final approved pay award was an uplift of £1,925 across all pay scales (average net increase of 6.51%), which required additional funding of circa £2.3m to be identified. This is being funded in 2023/24 through a one-off contribution from reserves, and the additional cost has also now been factored into the base budget for 2024/25. In addition to this, a further pay award of 4% is assumed from April 2024. The assumed 4% uplift will be held corporately in the first instance and released to budgets once the actual pay award for 2024/25 has been determined.

5.3.5 **Increase in Employer Pension Contributions (NJC Staff)** – The Greater Gwent (Torfaen) Pension Fund is subject to an independent triennial valuation of its assets and liabilities. The outcome of the most recent valuation in 2022 requires a 1% increase in the employer's contribution for 2024/25, with a further increase of 0.5% for 2025/26. Any increase for 2026/27 will be determined by the next triennial valuation.

5.3.6 **Non-Pay Inflation** – The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation rate peaked at 11.1% during 2022. The most recent published data for the 12 months to November 2023 showed CPI at 3.9%, down from 4.6% in the previous month. Looking ahead, using the interest rate path implied by financial markets the BoE expects CPI inflation to continue falling slowly, but taking until early 2025 to reach the 2% target before dropping below target during the second half of 2025 and into 2026. For budget setting purposes an inflation rate of 3% is assumed for 2024/25. The figure of £2.673m does not include any uplift for independent sector Social Care providers as the full cost of these increases is included in inescapable service pressures.

5.3.7 **Non-Pay Inflation (Fees and Charges)** - A generic increase of 5% is assumed for Fees and Charges.

5.3.8 Table 4 provides a summary of the 2024/25 General Fund Services inescapable service pressures totalling £13.655m. These pressures have been subject to a detailed review and have been incorporated into the 2024/25 Draft Budget Proposals on the basis that they are essential. Full details are provided in Appendix 1 for Members' consideration.

Table 4 – Summary of General Fund Inescapable Service Pressures

Service Area	£m
Corporate Services	0.252
Miscellaneous Finance	1.950
Social Services	10.448
General Fund Housing	1.004
TOTAL: -	13.655

5.3.9 The 2024/25 Schools cost pressures totalling £8.283m are set out in Table 5 below -

Table 5 – Schools Cost Pressures

	£m
Teachers' Pay Award	5.951
National Joint Council (NJC) Pay Award (School-Based Staff)	0.724
Increase in Employer Pension Contributions (NJC Staff)	0.188
Non-Pay Inflation	0.826
Other Service Pressures	0.594
TOTAL: -	8.283

5.3.10 **Teachers' Pay Award** – The teachers' pay awards in September 2022 and September 2023 were both 1.5% higher than the budgeted levels, and one-off grant funding was provided by the Welsh Government to meet the in-year costs relating to the September 2022 pay award only. WG has now confirmed that no further funding will be provided to meet the recurring additional cost of these pay awards, and that this must be funded from within the average 3.1% uplift in the 2024/25 Provisional Financial Settlement. A further pay award of 4% is currently assumed from September 2024 and this again must be funded from within the settlement.

5.3.11 **National Joint Council (NJC) Pay Award (School-Based Staff)** – The 2024/25 Draft Budget proposals include budgetary growth to fully fund the full-year impact of the 2023/24 pay award, along with additional budget provision for an assumed pay award of 4% from April 2024.

5.3.12 **Increase in Employer Pension Contributions (NJC Staff)** – As mentioned in paragraph 5.3.5, the outcome of the most recent triennial valuation of the pension fund in 2022 requires a 1% increase in the employer's contribution for 2024/25, with a further increase of 0.5% for 2025/26. Any increase for 2026/27 will be determined by the next triennial valuation.

5.3.13 **Non-Pay Inflation** - As detailed in paragraph 5.3.6 a CPI inflation rate of 3% is assumed for 2024/25.

5.3.14 **Other Schools Service Pressures** – These consist in the main of the following: -

- School floor area related changes.
- Expansion of Trinity Fields Special School.
- Demand pressures linked to Specialist Resource Bases (SRB's) or Specialist Satellite provision.

5.3.15 The Chancellor's Autumn Statement referred to changes to the 'Superannuation Contributions Adjusted for Past Experience' (SCAPE) rate from April 2024, which has implications for the costs of employers' pension contributions for teachers, which in turn has implications for Local Authority budgets. Funding for this is expected to be provided by the UK Government but not until 2024/25. The estimated cost of the proposed changes for Caerphilly schools is circa £4.8m, which presents a significant financial risk if this is not fully funded on a recurring basis.

5.4 2024/25 Draft Savings Proposals

- 5.4.1 Draft savings proposals have been identified for the 2024/25 financial year totalling £30.984m. These are summarised in Table 6 with further details being provided in Appendix 2.

Table 6 – 2024/25 Draft Savings Proposals

Service Area	Permanent Savings £m	Temporary Savings £m	Total Savings £m
Corporate Services	1.187	0.658	1.845
Miscellaneous Finance	5.305	5.499	10.805
Economy & Environment	1.558	1.713	3.271
Social Services	0.526	2.545	3.071
Education & Lifelong Learning	0.284	1.034	1.319
Schools	3.000	0.000	3.000
All Directorates	7.673	0.000	7.673
TOTAL: -	19.534	11.449	30.984

- 5.4.2 The savings proposals have been split into 2 categories, those that are permanent and those that are temporary (i.e. not sustainable in the medium to longer-term). Savings of a temporary nature are not ideal, but they do provide a window of opportunity to identify, approve and implement permanent savings in readiness for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.
- 5.4.3 Members will note that there is a proposed saving of £3m for schools. As outlined in Table 5, schools cost pressures totalling £8.283m have been identified for 2024/25. It is proposed that the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) will be uplifted by £5.283m, which means that schools will need to identify cost efficiencies of £3m. Finance staff will work closely with schools to identify opportunities to reduce costs wherever possible.
- 5.4.4 The permanent savings proposals include an initial 2024/25 in-year savings target of £5m for the Mobilising Team Caerphilly transformation programme. This will be delivered through projects that are currently “in flight” and there is an expectation that further significant savings will be delivered in subsequent financial years once further projects have been prioritised for development and delivery.
- 5.4.5 In addition to the savings proposals outlined in Table 6, it is proposed to increase the charges for school meals in secondary schools, Meals Direct and the Hive Restaurant in Ty Penallta by 7.5%. These increases will generate additional income of circa £57k above the 5% fees and charges increase already assumed in the 2024/25 draft budget proposals. It is also proposed to increase the charge for MOT testing undertaken in the Council’s workshop from the current charge of £45 to the statutory fee of £54.85, which will generate additional revenue of circa £6k per annum. These above 5% increases are proposed by the relevant Heads of Service to help address budgetary pressures in the respective service areas and as such the additional revenue will not be available to support the 2024/25 savings requirement. The additional increases will instead be used to assist in managing expenditure within existing budgets.

5.5 Proposed Use of Reserves

- 5.5.1 To achieve a balanced budget for 2024/25 it will be necessary to utilise reserves totalling £11.394m as a further one-off measure. This again provides a short window of opportunity to develop sustainable solutions to address the projected budget deficit for 2025/26 and 2026/27.
- 5.5.2 It is proposed that the reserves in Table 7 are released to support the budget for 2024/25.

Table 7 – Proposed Use of Reserves

Description	£m	
Service Reserves: -		
• Corporate Services	2.697	
• General Fund Housing	0.100	
• Economy and Environment	0.610	
• Education and Lifelong Learning	0.362	
• Building Consultancy	0.017	3.786
Insurance Reserve		2.000
Projected Surplus General Fund Balance		4.189
Uncommitted Capital Earmarked Reserves		1.419
TOTAL: -		11.394

5.5.3 Members will note the proposed use of the projected surplus balance on the General Fund (i.e. the balance in excess of the minimum 3% recommended by the Section 151 Officer). This is based on a 100% take to the General Fund from the projected overall net underspend on the 2023/24 revenue budget as at period 7. Historically, services have retained 50% of underspends but given the scale of the financial challenge we currently face this will be postponed for the 2023/24 financial year. The projected General Fund surplus will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary for the final budget report that will be presented to Cabinet and Council on 27 February 2024, as period 9 projections will be available at that time.

5.5.4 A Joint Scrutiny Committee has been scheduled for 23 January 2024 to consider the 2024/25 Draft Budget Proposals. An Update on Reserves report will also be presented at this meeting for Members' consideration.

5.6 Council Tax Implications 2024/25

5.6.1 The draft budget proposals within this report include a proposed increase of 6.9% in Council Tax for the 2024/25 financial year. This will increase the Caerphilly CBC Band D precept from £1,353.01 to £1,446.37 i.e. an annual increase of £93.36 or weekly increase of £1.80.

5.6.2 The proposed increase of 6.9% for 2024/25 will result in the following totals for the Caerphilly CBC element of the Council Tax (the Police & Crime Commissioner and Town/Community Council precepts will be added to these totals when confirmed at a later date): -

Table 8 – 2024/25 Council Tax (CCBC Element) at 6.9% Increase

Band	Council Tax (CCBC Element) £	Weekly Increase £
A	964.25	1.20
B	1,124.95	1.40
C	1,285.66	1.60
D	1,446.37	1.80
E	1,767.78	2.19
F	2,089.20	2.59
G	2,410.61	2.99
H	2,892.74	3.59
I	3,374.86	4.19

5.6.3 The proposed increase in Council Tax of 6.9% results in weekly increases ranging from £1.20 for Band A properties to £4.19 for Band I properties. 75.73% of properties in the county borough are in bands A to C. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) mitigates against the socio-economic impacts on the most vulnerable households. 16,098 households currently receive

support with their Council Tax payments from the scheme, representing 19.93% of all households in the county borough. 17.18% (13,874 households) receive the maximum 100% level of support.

5.7 Financial Outlook for Future Years

5.7.1 Due to the unprecedented levels of inflation in recent years, the current economic outlook, and the range of temporary measures that are proposed for the 2024/25 financial year, it is clear that the Council will continue to face significant financial challenges moving forward. With this in mind the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has been updated based on a range of assumptions, resulting in a further potential savings requirement of £46.700m for the two-year period 2025/26 to 2026/27. Details are provided in Appendix 3 and the following is a summary of the key assumptions: -

- An uplift in WG funding of 1% for both financial years.
- An indicative increase of 4.9% in Council Tax for 2025/26 and 3.9% for 2026/27.
- 3.5% for pay inflation in 2025/26 and 3% for 2026/27 (covering all staff including teachers).
- 0.5% uplift in 2025/26 for NJC employer pension contributions.
- Non-pay inflation at 2% for 2025/26 and 2026/27 in line with the Bank of England target.

5.7.2 In addition to the above, significant work has been undertaken with Directors and Heads of Service to identify further potential service cost pressures that will need to be considered in future years. These are currently estimated at £5.627m for 2025/26 and £5.761m for 2026/27. This is work in progress and the figures will be subject to change moving forward.

5.7.3 The temporary measures in the 2024/25 Draft Budget Proposals totaling £22.843m can be used for one year only. Whilst the temporary savings and the prudent use of our reserves provide an opportunity to smooth the path to major reform and transformation, we have only one chance to do this. As Members are acutely aware reserves can only be used once and therefore do not offer a sustainable long-term solution to bridging the budget gap of this and future years.

5.7.4 Given the unprecedented 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. To ensure we are able to meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents in our communities, whilst operating with reduced finances, a whole council and a whole county borough holistic approach is needed.

5.7.5 The Council's emerging Mobilising Team Caerphilly transformation programme will be a key element in driving forward the significant changes required to ensure that we are able to address the financial challenges that we face. The programme has been under development over a number of months and has now moved beyond the initial discovery phase. Over 150 ideas and projects have been identified and organised into a portfolio, and resources have been brought into the programmes from across the organisation to begin implementation.

5.7.6 The transformation programme is built on Agile Programme Management principles, 'working in the open', and will deliver 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. 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.

5.7.7 The full organisational narrative for the transformation programme was adopted by Cabinet on 15 November 2023 and 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 departure 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.”

5.7.8 The essence of this organisational narrative has been distilled down into a series of transformation principles that have also been adopted by Cabinet: -

When delivering transformation, the Council will: -

- *focus on flexibility and finding different ways to deliver what our communities need, when they need it;*
- *engage with our communities to understand the needs of our residents and provide the right support to meet those needs as simply as possible;*
- *deliver channel shift across our Council services moving from more expensive, face to face or telephone channels to online services where appropriate;*
- *explore alternative delivery models when it makes sense to do so;*
- *look at voluntary departure options and as colleagues move on to new opportunities or retire, carefully assess how roles can be managed going forward;*
- *use our reserves to help balance the budget in the short-term whilst change programmes are fully developed and implemented; and*
- *use our reserves on an invest to save basis to fund one-off costs to deliver changes where required.*

5.7.9 The Mobilising Team Caerphilly transformation work has been organised into a portfolio. This is essentially a collection of programmes, which in turn are collections of sub-programmes and projects as follows: -

Figure 1 - Mobilising Team Caerphilly Portfolio

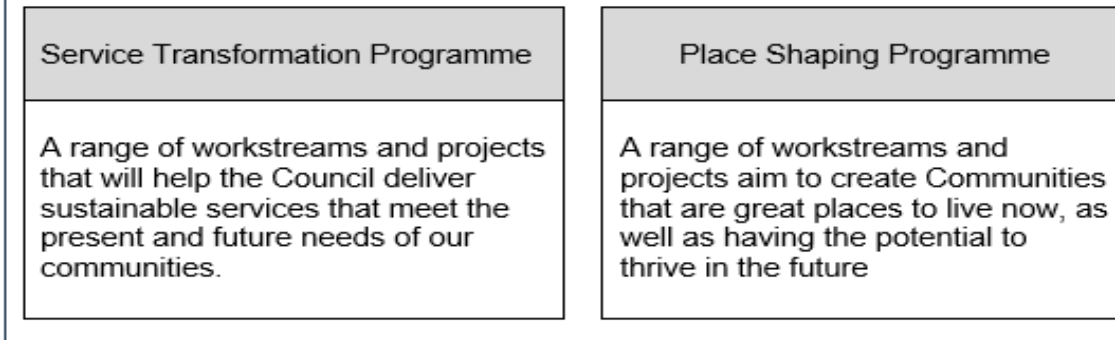


Figure 2 – Service Transformation Programme

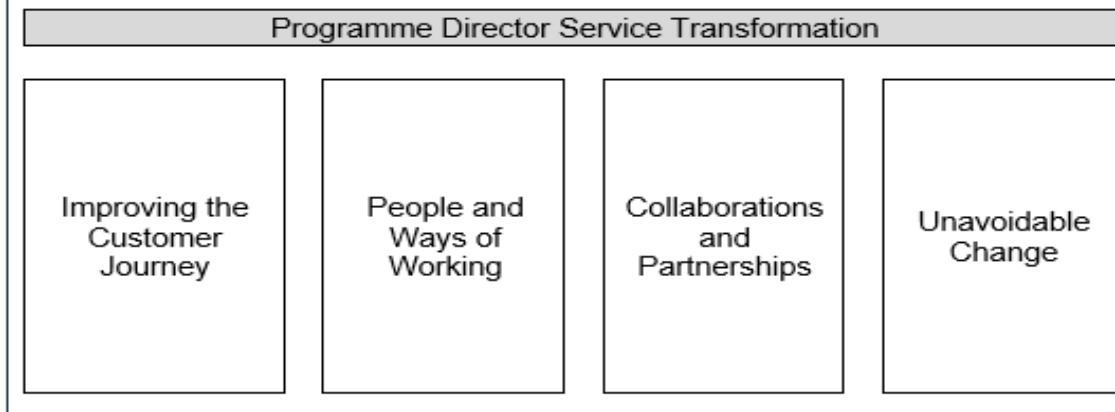


Figure 3 – Place Shaping Programme



5.7.10 As already mentioned, over 150 ideas and projects have been identified as part of the discovery phase of the service transformation programme. Some of these projects are now “in flight” and are being further defined and developed into firm change proposals. These “in flight” projects are being prioritised as the first change programmes to meet an initial £5m in-year savings target that has been proposed for Mobilising Team Caerphilly for the 2024/25 financial year. The initial projects under development include the following: -

- Review of the customer journey – Council Tax.
- Review of the customer Journey – Housing Repairs Service.
- Development of the Waste Management Strategy.
- Review of the Fleet Service.
- Asset management review including the implementation of a corporate landlord model.
- Improving spend controls and centralising/automating invoice processing.
- Community Asset Transfers.

- 5.7.11 In the medium to longer-term, a number of other change projects will need to be developed, defined, approved, and implemented to ensure that a significant contribution is made to the additional savings requirement of £46.700m for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years. The scale of the financial gap will inevitably mean that some very difficult decisions will need to be made but this is unavoidable in the current financial environment for local authorities. We will need to strike the right balance between “needs” and “wants” and a holistic, whole-authority approach will be required with all services contributing to the savings requirement. We will also need to consider alternative service delivery models and explore opportunities to work collaboratively with our partners. It is inevitable that the Authority will be smaller moving forward and service levels in many areas will need to be reduced, or even removed.
- 5.7.12 Over the coming months further transformation projects will be prioritised in line with the Mobilising Team Caerphilly narrative and agreed principles, and firm proposals will be brought forward for scrutiny and subsequent decision-making. It is vital that these proposals are developed at pace and that decisions are made early, in advance of the annual budget setting process.
- 5.7.13 The placeshaping element of the transformation programme will identify investment projects, the financial resources required, and the associated funding strategy. As capital resources are finite, choices will need to be made to agree what priority projects can be delivered. A report will be prepared for Cabinet consideration in the coming months.

5.8 Conclusion

- 5.8.1 This report provides details of the Draft Budget Proposals for 2024/25 based on the WG Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement.
- 5.8.2 A balanced budget can be delivered for 2024/25 based on a combination of permanent and temporary savings totalling £30.984m, the one-of use of reserves totalling £11.394m and an increase of 6.9% in Council Tax.
- 5.8.3 The report also provides details of the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which currently shows a potential savings requirement of £46.700m for the two-tear period 2025/26 to 2026/27.
- 5.8.4 The unprecedented scale of the financial challenge facing the Council requires new approaches to service delivery and this will be driven through the Mobilising Team Caerphilly transformation programme. It is vital that service change proposals are developed at pace, and that decisions are made early to ensure that the projected savings requirement for 2025/26 and 2026/27 can be delivered.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 A range of assumptions have been made throughout the report in respect of pay and non-pay inflationary increases, inescapable service pressures, and the level of funding settlements moving forward.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Where it is anticipated that there will be an organisational or public impact arising from specific savings proposals, budget impact assessments are required. Due to the late notification of the Provisional Settlement the budget impact assessments and integrated impact assessments (where required) are currently in draft form. These will be refined over the coming weeks and supplemented by the outcomes of the public consultation, which will not conclude until 13 February 2024. All budget impact assessments and associated integrated impact assessments will be finalised for the reports to Cabinet and Council on 27 February 2023.

7.2 Draft impact assessments can be found on the following dedicated webpages: -

Budget Impact Assessments 2024/25

[Link to Budget Impact Assessments 2024/25 – Eng](#)

[Link to Budget Impact Assessments 2024/25 – Cym](#)

Integrated Impact Assessments 2024/25

[Link to Integrated Impact Assessments 2024/25 – Eng](#)

[Link to Integrated Impact Assessments 2024/25 – Cym](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 As detailed throughout the report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Where staffing reductions are required as a consequence of savings proposals the Council will firstly try to achieve this through 'natural wastage' and not filling vacancies. However, where this is not possible the Council will utilise agreed HR policies and compulsory redundancies will only be considered as a last resort after all other options have been fully exhausted.

9.2 The Trade Unions will be consulted on the 2024/25 Draft Budget Proposals and will also be fully engaged in proposals to reshape services moving forward.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 Through the Council's cyclical engagement programme 'The Caerphilly Conversation', residents have, and continue to give their views on which Council services are of particular importance to them and where they feel the Council should prioritise its budget spend.

10.2 The next phase of this engagement work, subject to Cabinet endorsement, will launch on 22 January 2024 and run until 13 February 2024.

10.3 Views will be sought on the specific draft proposals highlighted within this report where there is potential impact upon members of the public. This work will build upon the budget impact assessments and where relevant, integrated impact assessments (IIAs) developed for specific proposals. The engagement programme will once again include further extensive face-to-face engagement, a survey, a high-profile presence on the Council's digital engagement platform and targeted stakeholder engagement, particularly focussing on groups identified through the development of IIAs.

10.4 A Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting is scheduled for 23 January 2024, which will provide an opportunity for all elected members to consider and comment upon the 2024/25 draft budget proposals.

10.5 Key findings and responses through the engagement activity will help shape the final draft budget report for Members' consideration on 27 February 2024.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

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Appendices: -

Appendix 1 – 2024/25 General Fund Inescapable Service Pressures

Appendix 2 – 2024/25 Draft Savings Proposals

Appendix 3 – Updated Medium-Term Financial Plan

Background Papers: -

Cabinet (15/11/23) – Mobilising Team Caerphilly Governance Arrangements

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2024/25 General Fund Inescapable Service Pressures

Directorate	Service Area	Details	2024-25 Growth
			(£)
Corporate Services	Digital Services	Migration of Schools Information Management System (SIMS) to Cloud platform.	76,734
Corporate Services	Digital Services	Migration of Pay 360 income management system to Cloud platform.	48,311
Corporate Services	Digital Services	New Fleet Management Software (Chevin).	48,480
Corporate Services	Legal & Governance	Additional budget provision for increase in Members' Allowances from April 2024.	78,860
Sub-Total: -			252,385
Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	33.26% increase in the Coroner's Levy.	132,546
Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	1.19% increase in the Levy for Glamorgan Archives.	1,180
Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	2.70% increase in the Levy for Gwent Archives	4,169
Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	4.12% increase in the Fire Service Levy.	428,008
Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	The Authority is required to fund a Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS). This replaced Council Tax Benefit a number of years ago and is a means-tested benefit that assists in full or part towards a resident's Council Tax bills. The additional liability arises from the proposal to increase Council Tax by 6.9% in 2024/25.	1,177,082
Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Contract price increases are being experienced in respect of both public bus services and home to school transport. It is proposed that a contingent sum of £409k is held corporately pending a review of commitments moving forward.	409,000
Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Adjustment required to reflect the net reduction in the Provisional Financial Settlement of £202k in relation to the tapering of WG funding for Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Schemes.	(202,000)
Sub-Total: -			1,949,985
Social Services	Children's Services	Increased demand and complexity of Children's placements.	585,000
Social Services	Children's Services	Anticipated increases in fees for independent sector providers in relation to the Real Living Wage and wider inflationary pressures.	1,210,000
Social Services	Adult Services	Increased demand for care packages for vulnerable adults.	2,171,000
Social Services	Adult Services	Anticipated increases in fees for independent sector providers in relation to the Real Living Wage and wider inflationary pressures.	6,482,000
Sub-Total: -			10,448,000
Social Services	General Fund Housing	Temporary Accommodation - Further significant increase in Bed & Breakfast placements.	1,004,175
Sub-Total: -			1,004,175
TOTAL: -			13,654,545

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2024/25 Draft Savings Proposals

Reference Number	Directorate	Service Area	Details	2024-25 Permanent Savings	2024-25 Temporary Savings
				(£)	(£)
CS1	Corporate Services	All	Adjustment to gross pay budgets to incorporate vacancy management.	734,501	
CS2	Corporate Services	All	Reduction in mileage budgets to reflect new flexible working models.	7,612	
CS3	Corporate Services	All	20% reduction in staff training budgets.	39,878	
CS4	Corporate Services	Chief Executive	Budget realignment on various non-pay budgets.	4,215	
CS5	Corporate Services	Director	Budget realignment on various non-pay budgets.	5,558	
CS6	Corporate Services	Corporate Finance	Head of Corporate Finance - Budget realignment on various non-pay budgets.	2,818	
CS7	Corporate Services	Corporate Finance	Internal Audit - Minor restructuring of Team.	54,280	
CS8	Corporate Services	Corporate Finance - Housing Benefits	Housing Benefits - Deletion of vacant 0.81 FTE Benefits Assessor post.	28,963	
CS9	Corporate Services	Digital Services	Digital Services Manager post temporarily funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and reserves.		93,310
CS10	Corporate Services	Digital Services	IT Public Sector Broadband Aggregation (PSBA) saving - Temporary until outcomes of analogue switch off confirmed.		50,000
CS11	Corporate Services	Digital Services	IT fixed telephone lines.	20,000	
CS12	Corporate Services	Customer Services	Cash in Transit (no longer required).	5,000	
CS13	Corporate Services	Customer Services	Photocopying (no longer required).	5,000	
CS14	Corporate Services	Customer Services	Customer Service Centres - Premises cleaning (temporary until decision on buildings). No impact on cleaning staff as sites are currently closed.		2,280
CS15	Corporate Services	Customer Services	Saving in National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR).	1,000	
CS16	Corporate Services	Procurement	Rebate income from Food Procurement Framework.		50,000
CS17	Corporate Services	Legal & Governance	Deletion of vacant Grade 5 Administrative Assistant post.	36,200	
CS18	Corporate Services	Legal & Governance	Deletion of vacant Grade 6 Complaints Officer post.	40,095	
CS19	Corporate Services	Legal & Governance	Reduction in postage budget.	5,000	
CS20	Corporate Services	Legal & Governance	Additional grant income.	5,000	
CS21	Corporate Services	Human Resources	Deletion of MeUS Leadership Programme budget.	68,250	
CS22	Corporate Services	Human Resources	Deletion of vacant Grade 12 Human Resources Manager post.	71,792	
CS23	Corporate Services	Human Resources	Apprenticeship Budget - 2024/25 costs to be funded from reserves.		262,500
CS24	Corporate Services	Business Improvement Services	Reduction in the budget for external Welsh Language Translation	20,000	
CS25	Corporate Services	General Fund Housing	Private Sector Housing - Budget realignment to reflect historical underspends.	32,000	
CS26	Corporate Services	General Fund Housing	Private Sector Housing - One-off contribution from agency fee income.		200,000
Sub-Total: -				1,187,162	658,090
MF1	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Additional investment income due to increases in the Bank of England Base Rate.	3,224,628	
MF2	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	No revenue contribution to Capital Programme for 2024/25 only.		3,452,148
MF3	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Uncommitted free school meals grant transferred into the financial settlement in previous years - reflects historical financial position.	322,250	
MF4	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Former Authorities pension contributions budget realignment.	150,000	
MF5	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	City Deal Debt Charges - Temporary saving to reflect no requirement to borrow in 2024/25.		757,306
MF6	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Deletion of uncommitted Targeted Rate Relief budget.	247,751	
MF7	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Temporary saving on IT Replacement Strategy budget pending assessment of ongoing need.		148,644
MF8	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Deletion of the Matched Funding for Community Schemes budget.	16,783	
MF9	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Deletion of Miscellaneous Items budget - no call on budget.	94,899	
MF10	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Budget realignment on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) budget to reflect current commitments.	250,000	
MF11	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Temporary reduction in debt charges budget due to there being no requirement to borrow in the 2024/25 financial year.		1,141,168
MF12	Corporate Services	Miscellaneous Finance	Clawback of part of the energy growth approved in the 2023/24 budget following a review of actual costs being incurred in-year.	999,000	
Sub-Total: -				5,305,311	5,499,266
EE1	Economy & Environment	All	Adjustment to gross pay budgets to incorporate vacancy management.	811,261	
EE2	Economy & Environment	All	Reduction in mileage budgets to reflect new flexible working models.	13,300	
EE3	Economy & Environment	All	20% reduction in staff training budgets.	41,847	
EE4	Economy & Environment	Regeneration	Business Enterprise and Renewal Team budget realignments.	34,000	
EE5	Economy & Environment	Regeneration	Business Support and Funding - Increased rental income from industrial portfolio.	30,000	
EE6	Economy & Environment	Regeneration	Reduction in tourism venue subsidies.	30,000	
EE7	Economy & Environment	Regeneration	Community Projects budget realignments.	3,182	
EE8	Economy & Environment	Regeneration	Temporary reduction in Caerphilly Enterprise Fund budget to be funded through grant.		50,912
EE9	Economy & Environment	Regeneration	Temporary reduction in the Events budget to be funded through grant.		91,511
EE10	Economy & Environment	Regeneration	Close Coffi Vista and lease building to private sector (possible additional income with the lease). Staff to be redeployed.	78,044	

2024/25 Draft Savings Proposals

Reference Number	Directorate	Service Area	Details	2024-25 Permanent Savings	2024-25 Temporary Savings
				(£)	(£)
EE11	Economy & Environment	Regeneration	Mothball the Winding House while a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is explored. Staff will temporarily transfer to alternative buildings. The engine will continue to be run by volunteers on a monthly basis as it does at present.		93,000
EE12	Economy & Environment	Planning	Additional income from charging for specialist heritage advice.	2,000	
EE13	Economy & Environment	Planning	Introduction of new fee for street naming and numbering.	2,000	
EE14	Economy & Environment	Infrastructure	Temporary reduction in the Infrastructure budget.		922,000
EE15	Economy & Environment	Corporate Property	Property Rationalisation Phase 1 - Consolidation of staff onto Tredomen campus and the closure of a number of back office satellite sites. The savings relate to the reduced running costs relating to the closure of offices and rental income realised as a result.	175,000	
EE16	Economy & Environment	Corporate Property	Temporary 20% reduction in non-essential Building Maintenance budgets - The main council buildings have been invested in previously and are capable of sustaining a further year of delayed maintenance. This would consist of non-urgent or non-essential works being delayed for future years when the funding is available. This saving has been made this year and at the time of writing the saving has caused minimal disruption, it should however be noted that key proactive maintenance tasks will still need to be performed in future years.		150,000
EE17	Economy & Environment	Corporate Property	FM Maintenance Savings 20% - Buildings managed by the facilities management team have been invested in previously and are capable of delayed maintenance. This would consist of non-urgent or non-essential works being delayed for future years when the funding is available. This saving has been made this year and at the time of writing the saving has caused minimal disruption, it should however be noted that key proactive maintenance tasks will still need to be performed in future years.		150,000
EE18	Economy & Environment	Corporate Property	Commercial Property income - Rent reviews on key commercial buildings to bring income in line with market terms.	150,000	
EE19	Economy & Environment	Corporate Property	Energy savings - The installation of a new heat pump at Ty Penallta will generate financial savings alongside further schemes on council buildings which will be developed in the coming months.	150,000	
EE20	Economy & Environment	Public Protection	Hold 2 vacant Community Safety Warden posts pending the outcome of a wider enforcement review.		80,000
EE21	Economy & Environment	Community & Leisure Services	Temporary reduction in RDP match-funding budget to be funded by grant.		135,381
EE22	Economy & Environment	Community & Leisure Services	Tapered reduction of 4 hours in the subsidy for Caretaker costs in Community Centres over a three-year period from October 2023 (approved as part of 2023/24 budget).	17,167	
EE23	Economy & Environment	Community & Leisure Services	Tapered withdrawal of the subsidy for Markham Community Leisure Centre over a three-year period from April 2023 (approved as part of 2023/24 budget).	3,334	
EE24	Economy & Environment	Community & Leisure Services	Increase fees for the use of outdoor sports pitches (rugby, football and cricket) to generate 20% additional income.	12,750	
EE25	Economy & Environment	Community & Leisure Services	Increase fees for Knotweed and other invasive species treatment plans from £360 to £500.	4,600	
EE26	Economy & Environment	Community & Leisure Services	Temporary reduction in the Cemeteries Maintenance Budget.		40,000
Sub-Total: -				1,558,485	1,712,804
SS1	Social Services	Children's Services	Balance of budget for an Administrative Assistant role in the Safeguarding & Review Team that is no longer required following a previous restructure.	8,735	
SS2	Social Services	Children's Services	Budget for 0.50 FTE Administrative Assistant in the Secretariat Team no longer required following re-deployment of postholder.	16,742	
SS3	Social Services	Children's Services	Budget for 0.50 FTE Clerical Assistant in the Complaints and Information Team that is no longer required following a part-time appointment to a full-time role.	16,410	
SS4	Social Services	Children's Services	Management, Fieldwork and Administration vacancy savings target temporarily increased from 4.5% to 9% to reflect current staff turnover and recruitment difficulties.		485,643
SS5	Social Services	Adult Services	Management, Fieldwork and Administration vacancy savings target temporarily increased from 4.5% to 9% to reflect current staff turnover and recruitment difficulties.		419,075
SS6	Social Services	Adult Services	Minor Works of Adaptation costs to be temporarily funded from grant for a period of 2 years.		243,370
SS7	Social Services	Adult Services	Temporary reduction in contribution to Gwent Frailty Pooled Fund, reflecting recurrent underspends in previous years.		55,000
SS8	Social Services	Adult Services	Additional client contributions following increased occupancy levels in Own Residential Care.	400,000	
SS9	Social Services	Adult Services	Budget realignment on Supported Employment contract.	8,000	
SS10	Social Services	Adult Services	Temporary adjustment to Home Assistance and Reablement budget to reflect current difficulties in recruiting carers and securing care packages.		1,050,000
SS11	Social Services	Adult Services	10% increase in hourly charge for Home Care.	26,000	
SS12	Social Services	Adult Services	Budget realignment for contribution to the Learning and Development Pooled Budget.	25,000	

2024/25 Draft Savings Proposals

Reference Number	Directorate	Service Area	Details	2024-25 Permanent Savings	2024-25 Temporary Savings
				(£)	(£)
SS13	Social Services	Service Strategy & Business Support	Reduction in contribution to the Regional Partnership Team.	25,000	
SS14	Social Services	Service Strategy & Business Support	A number of posts in the Caerphilly Cares Team to be temporarily funded through grants.		291,887
Sub-Total: -				525,887	2,544,975
ELL1	Education & Lifelong Learning	All	Vacancy management/staff turnover in Central Education.		180,000
ELL2	Education & Lifelong Learning	All	Reduction in mileage budgets in Central Education to reflect new flexible working models.	4,000	
ELL3	Education & Lifelong Learning	All	20% reduction in training budgets across Central Education.	1,600	
ELL4	Education & Lifelong Learning	21st Century Schools	50/50 Building maintenance (LA/Schools). Temporary savings proposal, recommendation to fund (to this value) from earmarked LMS Contingency balances in 2024/25.		346,320
ELL5	Education & Lifelong Learning	Adult Education	Adult Education - Additional income generation linked to economies of scale/shared costs with project to 31 March 2025. Short-term reduction in premises maintenance costs due to recent investment.		60,000
ELL6	Education & Lifelong Learning	Libraries	Book funding reduction.		57,000
ELL7	Education & Lifelong Learning	Administration	Restructure in Administration Team.	30,450	
ELL8	Education & Lifelong Learning	Early Years	Rising 3's budget (reduction based on recent spend/trends). Spend driven by requests from families for places.		20,000
ELL9	Education & Lifelong Learning	Early Years	Early Years Central Team - Some posts being funded by grant.		150,000
ELL10	Education & Lifelong Learning	Youth Service	Reduction in service budget (temporary saving) - Rationalisation with regards to premises; in-year savings linked to staff turnover/vacancies; maximising efficiencies linked to service resources and external grants.		125,000
ELL11	Education & Lifelong Learning	School Improvement	Education Improvement Grant (EIG) match funding. This reduction has no impact for schools and reflects an in-year underspend in 2023/24. The Authority's match funding commitment is fully met after this reduction.	32,000	
ELL12	Education & Lifelong Learning	School Improvement	Education Achievement Service (EAS) - 10% reduction in core contribution to Regional Consortia.	88,260	
ELL13	Education & Lifelong Learning	Inclusion & ALN	Vacant Post (Hours) - Behaviour Support Team.	56,700	
ELL14	Education & Lifelong Learning	Inclusion & ALN	Vacant Post (Hours) - Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) Team.	15,225	
ELL15	Education & Lifelong Learning	School Improvement	Local Management of Schools (LMS) Contingency. This budget supports ad hoc in-year school formula issues and recent trends have indicated that this reduction is achievable. Should any issues arise would look to access earmarked LMS Contingency Reserves (subject to appropriate approval).		25,000
ELL16	Education & Lifelong Learning	All	Police Checks (reduction based on recent spend/trends).		5,000
ELL17	Education & Lifelong Learning	All	External Audit Fees (reduction based on recent spend/trends).	5,000	
ELL18	Education & Lifelong Learning	All	General Computer Costs (reduce budget).	10,000	
ELL19	Education & Lifelong Learning	Post 16	14-19 Transport (Post 16). This reduction is linked to an underspend in recent years.	5,000	
ELL20	Education & Lifelong Learning	Music Service	Music Service - 10% saving on the service budget, which will impact delivery hours for pupils.		41,000
ELL21	Education & Lifelong Learning	School Improvement	School Improvement - Funding allocated to support schools in difficulty. No schools in a statutory category since beginning of 2023.		20,000
ELL22	Education & Lifelong Learning	All	Vacant Properties (one-off). Costs associated with site security and utility costs. Reduction based on anticipated budget capacity in 2024/25.		5,000
ELL23	Education & Lifelong Learning	Early Years	Childrens Centre - External contract ending in 2023/24. Changes to develop registered childcare provision, funding to be supported through grants.	36,000	
Sub-Total: -				284,235	1,034,320
ELL24	Education & Lifelong Learning	Schools	Schools to absorb £3m of 2024/25 projected cost pressures of £8.283m.	3,000,000	
Sub-Total: -				3,000,000	0
ALL1	All Directorates	All	Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme in-year savings target for 2024/25.	5,000,000	
ALL2	All Directorates	All	General Fund Services non-pay inflationary pressures to be absorbed by services. A range of spend control measure are in the process of being developed through the Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation Programme to assist budget holders in managing down these inflationary pressures.	2,673,000	
Sub-Total: -				7,673,000	0
TOTALS: -				19,534,080	11,449,455

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Updated Medium-Term Financial Plan

Description	2024/25 £000s	2025/26 £000s	2026/27 £000s
Increase in Aggregate External Finance (2.3%, 1%, 1%)	7,766	3,477	3,512
Increase in Council Tax (6.9%, 4.9%, 3.9%)	5,935	4,583	3,886
Total Funding to Support Budget	13,701	8,061	7,398
General Fund Services Inflationary Pressures			
NJC Pay Award - 4% in April 2024, 3.5% in April 2025 and 2% in April 2026	8,869	6,065	5,400
NJC - Increase in Employer Pension Contributions (1% , 0.5%, 0%)	1,245	644	0
Non-Pay Inflation (3%, 2%, 2%)	2,673	3,601	3,675
Non-Pay Inflation (Fees and Charges) - (5%, 2%, 2%)	(853)	(358)	(366)
Total General Fund Services Inflationary Pressures	11,934	9,952	8,710
Inescapable Service Pressures			
Corporate Services	252	0	0
Miscellaneous Finance	1,950	834	844
Social Services	10,448	4,173	4,352
General Fund Housing	1,004	0	0
Inescapable Service Pressures	13,655	5,007	5,196
Schools Cost Pressures			
Teachers Pay Award (5% to Aug 2024, 4.5% from Sep 2023 then 3.5%, 3%)	5,951	3,576	3,206
NJC Pay Award - 4% in April 2024, 3.5% in April 2025 and 2% in April 2026	724	664	591
NJC - Increase in Employer Pension Contributions (1% , 0.5%, 0%)	188	98	0
Non-Pay Inflation (3%, 2%, 2%)	826	568	580
Schools Service Pressures	594	620	565
Total Schools Cost Pressures	8,283	5,528	4,942
Proposed Savings/Use of Reserves			
Permanent savings proposals	19,534	21	0
Temporary savings proposals	11,449	243	0
Use of reserves	11,394	0	0
Proposed Savings/Use of Reserves	42,378	264	0
Reinstatement of Temporary Savings Proposals and Use of Reserves	22,207	22,843	243
Annual Shortfall	0	35,006	11,694
Cumulative Shortfall	0	35,006	46,700

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CABINET – 17TH JANUARY 2024

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST – EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS PARAGRAPH 14 OF SCHEDULE 12A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

**SUBJECT: SURRENDER AND RELET PROPOSAL – UNIT 3 AND 4 BRYN
BRITHDIR, OAKDALE BUSINESS PARK, BLACKWOOD**

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 manages its industrial unit estate.

PREJUDICE WHICH WOULD RESULT IF THE INFORMATION WERE DISCLOSED:

The report contains detailed confidential financial information relating to a number of companies and information of the proposed commercial deal.

MY VIEW ON THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST IS AS FOLLOWS:


That paragraph 14 should apply.

Whilst there is a public interest in the way the council manages its industrial units, the report contains confidential details of the companies' business plans and the proposed commercial deal that will allow a company to succeed the current incumbent of the industrial units.

For these reasons 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 excluding the press and public from this part of the meeting.

RECOMMENDED DECISION ON EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE:

On the basis set out above 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: 8.1.24

Post: Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

I accept the recommendation made above.



Signed: _____

Proper Officer

Date: 08.01.24

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Agenda Item 14

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

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