

## PART 2 - Improvement Objectives 2014-2015



**↑ PASSPORT TO EMPLOYMENT**

SC231	SOCIAL CARE
MC578	MECHANIC
CA923	CATERING
HE447	HEALTH
EN190	ENGINEER
MN361	MANAGER

**PASSPORT  
CAERPHILLY  
PROGRAMME**



**ESF**

Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ewrop & Cymru: Buddsoddi yn eich dyfodol  
Croatia Gyredolaethol Ewrop

Europe & Wales: Investing in your future  
European Social Fund



**Our Shorter term priorities  
2014/15**

## Foreword from Our Leader

**Council Leader: Cllr. Keith Reynolds**



As the new Leader of the Council, I am keen to build on the excellent work that has been done over the last few years to progress our improvement agenda. This Improvement Plan is a key strategic document, which sets out our Improvement Objectives for the next 12 months, and I am delighted to be associated with its contents.

This authority continually strives to do things better and raise standards in the way we deliver services to our residents.

There is no doubt that we are facing tough times ahead due to the current financial climate, but we are committed to demonstrating best value whilst delivering quality services at all times.

The six Improvement Objectives contained within this document are key as they help keep the organisation focused on specific goals and outcome areas. They cover a wide range of issues including support for looked after children, giving more young employment opportunities, boosting sport and leisure and transforming our housing provision.

These areas are clearly not the only work that we do, the Council provides a diverse range of day-to-day services but within this time of financial difficulty it is important to focus on a few key areas that provide a 'road map' for the year ahead. We will continually review our progress as part of this process, which helps ongoing improvement.

I truly believe we are an excellent local authority with a dedicated, professional workforce, but I also acknowledge that we have our shortcomings, which need to be addressed, and this document is a key part of our improvement process

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in development of this document and I will take a keen interest in the way we deliver against these priorities going forward.

## Introduction

We are pleased to introduce our Improvement Objectives for 2014/15, which details the improvements we intend to make for our citizens over the year. In 2010, legislation required Council's to identify areas for improvement and called these 'Improvement Objectives'. Caerphilly Council has always set 'areas for improvement' however our Improvement Objectives are sometimes a little different from our overall Council priorities in that they are based specifically on areas of unmet need from the public's point of view and where we want to place our focus in a shorter time frame. More importantly they are based on outcomes (or what difference these make for the public) and are often carried out in collaboration with other organisations. Periodically we identify things that:

- Are important to our citizens
- Are under performing
- Affects the sustainability of our communities and their surrounding environments
- Affects the health and well-being of individuals
- Help us deliver efficient, fair and productive services

These objectives were chosen because these are the areas where it was felt that we needed to improve or wanted to do more and following our consultation the public agreed / partly agreed etc. We also use a range of intelligence, from survey data, statistics and local knowledge was used to identify draft areas for improvement in 2014/15.

Having Improvement Objectives and Priorities does not replace nor stop us carrying out all the many other things that we do, but in this time of financial constraint it is helpful to concentrate on a set of specific outcomes, focusing our efforts to make specific Improvements more quickly. Our Improvement Objectives for 2014/15 are listed below on page 4.

Each Improvement Objective will have a detailed breakdown telling the reader why it was chosen and what we aim to achieve in the short term. This information follows the summary below and provides detailed aims and targets for the forth-coming year.

**IO 1 Safeguarding Children. We are committed to ensuring children and young people who are looked after by Caerphilly County Borough Council are supported to achieve their full potential, in a joined up way.**

**IO 2 - We want to improve job opportunities so people can live better lives by implementing the Council's Passport Scheme. This will create wider employment and training opportunities.**

**IO 3 - Develop an effective and accessible Youth Service that supports the personal and social development of young people. Personal and social development of young people**

**IO 4 - Improve awareness, access, variety and use of leisure, community and sporting facilities in our borough.**

**IO5 - Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) investment will transform Council homes and act as a catalyst to also transform lives and communities throughout the county borough.**

**IO 6 - Improve the availability of private and public sector housing to reduce the number of residents who may become homeless**

## **Our Improvement Objective Number 1**

### **Ensure children and young people who are looked after are supported to achieve their full potential.**

#### ***1. What difference do we plan to make?***

- Continue to recruit sufficient foster carers in order to meet the placement demands of Looked After Children (LAC). We plan to reduce reliance on Independent Fostering Agency placements and maintain Placement Stability.
- Children requiring adoptive placements are suitably matched and placed with adoptive families in a timely manner.
- Improve educational attainment levels of Looked After Children.
- Improve the engagement of young people leaving care in education, training and employment.
- Continue to improve the range of accommodation options for young people leaving care and those facing homelessness.

#### ***2. Why we have chosen this***

Corporate Parenting is the legal and moral duty that Councillors and the Authority have for Looked After Children, to provide them with the level of support, care and protection that any good parent would be expected to provide for their own child. Good quality foster care placements provide Looked After Children with the support and stability they need in order to achieve positive outcomes. It is important for Caerphilly to have sufficient foster carers to offer appropriate placements for children and young people who are increasingly displaying complex and challenging behaviours.

For those Looked After Children who are unable to be rehabilitated to parents or extended family, we need to plan for permanence through Adoption. In line with Welsh Government guidance, Caerphilly has worked in partnership with the other Gwent Local Authorities to establish the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS). It will be important for us to ensure the effectiveness of these new arrangements and to continue to improve the quality of the service being delivered.

Looked After Children have the right to expect the same outcomes as every other child including educational outcomes. Although some do well, Looked After Children across Wales generally have lower than average educational achievement in comparison to their peers. We need to ensure that every Looked After Child has access to good quality education and the opportunity to achieve

their full potential. Similarly, young people leaving care are particularly vulnerable and we will continue to promote their engagement in education and training to ensure they have opportunity to secure employment in young adulthood.

The reforms to welfare benefits will put more pressure on vulnerable families and this is likely to lead to additional demand for our services. Children's Services will need to continue to look at innovative and cost effective ways of providing good quality services to those who need them.

### **3. *Where are we now?***

In order to improve the educational achievement of our Looked After Children further, an integrated partnership approach to extra tuition has been developed. As at 31.03.14, **95.20%** of our Looked After Children have a Personal Education Plan. This is an increase on last year's figure of 85.40%. We need to continue to raise the education achievement of our Looked After Children and therefore this will continue to be a priority for us in 2014-15.

We know that children and young people who are placed within or close to their local communities achieve better outcomes. Therefore, wherever possible and appropriate, we make every effort to ensure children are placed with Caerphilly foster carers. Last year we set a priority for the Division to place more children with Caerphilly carers and our performance for the year end shows the percentage has increased from 44% in 2013 to 47% in 2014. Although the increase is small, it is positive, and one that we aim to continue to build on.

Work to establish the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) continued throughout 2013/14 and the new service was fully implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Local policies, procedures and protocols will continue to be reviewed to take account of the new arrangements and the Heads of Service Management Board will take responsibility for ensuring effectiveness and quality of the new service going forward.

It is believed that too many young people leave the care system with poor educational attainment, health issues and end up long-term unemployed. The service offered to care leavers across Gwent varies, due to the different structures each area has in place. An evaluation was completed on the Leaving Care Service in Caerphilly that concluded that services could be improved through the development of a 16 Plus Service. As a result the new 16 Plus Service was officially launched in September 2013.

The service has already improved Care and Pathway Planning processes, reduced duplication of worker roles and responsibilities across the Division and is supporting improved outcomes for young people. A significant service development has been the implementation of a Joint Protocol with Housing Services which has led to improved co-ordination of services and an increase in the range of accommodation options provided across the County.

#### ***4. What actions are we going to take to improve?***

- Continue to recruit sufficient foster carers in order to meet the placement demands of Looked After Children (LAC) and reduce reliance on Independent Fostering Agency placements
- Maintain Placement Stability levels ensuring children experiencing three or more placement moves remains below the Welsh Average of 10%.
- Ensure that children requiring adoptive placements are suitably matched and placed with adoptive families in a timely manner.
- Improve the educational attainment levels of Looked After Children.
- Improve the engagement of young people leaving care in education, training and employment.
- Continue to improve the range of accommodation options for young people leaving care and those facing homelessness.

#### ***5. How will we know if we are improving?***

**Continue to recruit foster carers in order to meet the placement demands of Looked After Children (LAC) requiring foster placements. We plan to reduce reliance on Independent Fostering Agency placements and maintain Placement Stability. We aim to achieve:**

- An overall increase in the numbers of foster carers recruited
- Continued rate of foster care placements with Caerphilly foster carers at 45%
- 100% of first placements commencing with a Care Plan in place (SCC/001[a])
- Less than 10% of Looked After Children experiencing three or more placement moves (SCC/004)

**Children requiring adoptive placements are suitably matched and placed with adoptive families in a timely manner. We aim to achieve:**

- 100% of Looked After Children with a plan for permanence in place at the due date (SCC/001[b])

- Monitor the numbers and rates of Looked After Children achieving permanence through Adoption, Special Guardianship and Residence Orders

**Improve educational attainment levels of Looked After Children. We aim to achieve:**

- Maintain performance in the completion of Personal Education Plans (PEP's) within timescale at 90+% (SCC/024)
- An increase in the percentage of Looked After Children achieving the Core Subject Indicator at KS2 (SCC/035) and KS3 (SCC/036).

**Improve the engagement of young people leaving care in education, training and employment. We aim to achieve:**

- 100% of young people formerly LAC with whom the authority is in contact with at the age of 19 (SCC/033[d]).
- An increase in the number of young people formerly LAC with whom the Local Authority is in contact, which are known to be engaged in education, training or employment (SCC/033[f]).

**Continue to improve the range of accommodation options for young people leaving care and those facing homelessness. We aim to achieve:**

- An increase in the number of young people formerly LAC who the authority is in contact with and are known to be in suitable non-emergency accommodation at age 19 (SCC/033[e])

**6. Who are we going to work with to deliver this objective?**

- Children, young people and their families and carers
- Corporate Parenting Group
- Education
- Fostering Service
- South East Wales Adoption Service
- 16 Plus Service



## **7. What resources do we have to deliver this objective?**

Supporting children and young people who are Looked After is a statutory and corporate responsibility for the Local Authority and as such will always be prioritised in terms of allocation of available funding. Our overall strategic aim is to reduce the numbers of Looked After Children by providing effective early intervention and preventative support, by ensuring children are rehabilitated home to parents or extended family in a timely manner wherever it is assessed to be safe to do so and for those children requiring permanent alternative care, by achieving Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders as appropriate.

However, this is set in the context of unprecedented budgetary cuts and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) clearly identified the service areas that are being affected from 2014 to 2017.

## **Our Improvement Objective Number 2**

### **Improve job opportunities by implementing the Council's Passport Scheme.**

#### ***1. What difference do we plan to make?***

We know how important jobs are to lifting people out of poverty. The economic climate and rising unemployment makes this area for improvement a difficult yet important objective to try and achieve. We have implemented the 'Caerphilly Passport Programme' which is aimed at helping 16-24 year olds within the Caerphilly Borough into employment.

There are 3 key reasons for developing the Council's strategy and plans for apprenticeships and traineeships. The first is to support young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in accessing work experience and training opportunities.

Secondly, this will support the Council in dealing with the future challenge of its own potential skills gaps across the organisation. Over 30% of our employees are aged 50 plus where they are beginning to approach traditional retirement ages, whilst less than 4% of our workforce are 21 or under. There is a risk that in future years the Council will be exposed to skills gaps unless we can balance our career opportunities more effectively and engage with young people so they see Local Government as a positive career choice. Finally, our Local Service Board partners and private sector partners tell us that they have job opportunities but cannot find people with the right skills and knowledge to join their businesses. The training that young people can access on the Passport Programme will help them get to a position where they can confidently apply for those jobs.

Our specific targets are laid out on page X however our intent is to:

Help more young people aged 16–24 are supported into sustainable employment via the Caerphilly LSB Passport Programme where we:

1. Create at least 150 work experience opportunities each year
2. Create at least 25 apprenticeship opportunities each year
3. Create at least 40 employment opportunities each year
4. And contribute to the reduction of the number of people aged 18—24 claiming JSA and the number unemployment for more than 26 weeks by 3%.

## ***2. Why we have chosen this***

The funding for this project ends in December 2014 and as yet we do not yet know whether we will receive European funding to continue the Programme, however, as this was one of our priorities last year we wanted to continue to focus on the success of this for the 9 months the funding. Evaluation of the project shows 71% of respondents say that without the Passport scheme they would still be unemployed. More information on the performance of this objective and the difference made will be published in our October Performance Report 2013/2014.

## ***3. Where are we now?***

Although the council cannot be responsible for unemployment generally, one of our goals was to help reduce the number of people aged 16-24 unemployed for more than 26 weeks, and to aim to reduce this by 3% over the lifetime of the project.

Currently the number of job seekers allowance claimant (18-24) last year was 1895 and as of April this year the number is down to 1470, this cannot totally be attributed to the Council but our contributions are helping. The total number of job seekers allowance irrespective of age was 6012 a year ago and is now down to 4883, to help put this into context Wales has approximately 65,000 claimants of which South East Wales has 28,000.

Whilst the reduction is positive, this level is still above the level we had 12 years ago so it is important we see continue to support employment opportunities and see this particular project through to its conclusion of its end date with the available resources until that time.

To date we have delivered 176 placements and helped 68 young people into employment (within and outside of CCBC) and 73% into employment or having returned to education

Creation of opportunities for work experience remains a critical priority because the focus of the passport scheme is to create sustainable employment and people being given training and work experience enables that sustainability.

## ***4. What actions are we going to take to improve?***

As this was one of our objectives last year, our action plans to set up the scheme and works in partnership with the Job Centre have already taken place. An external evaluation of progress have already taken place so our actions now are to maintain and to improve where possible on the mechanics of the scheme using the feedback participants, employers and partners give us.

### ***5. How will we know we are improving?***

The evidence below in terms of the numbers of people helped is an indication of our success, however more qualitative evidence is shown in our consultation with individuals that have gone through the process and from an external evaluation, for example 80% of those who have worked with the programme say they have been changed by their Passport experiences. All of this will contribute to enabling young people into sustainable employment. Additionally, feedback from the employers engaged with Passport has shown that their experience of the Programme and working with the team has been extremely positive and beneficial, which is excellent feedback.

### ***6. Who are we going to work with to deliver this objective?***

We have developed relationships with partners, which have been critical to the success of the scheme such as or LSB partners, Job Centre Plus, Groundwork Caerphilly, Careers Wales, local training providers and built on links with Education providers. The passport team has established strong links with the Private Sector (through the Caerphilly Business Forum) and our LSB partners to promote the use of traineeships not just as a vehicle for workforce planning but also as a means of delivering on the wider Social Responsibility agenda. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, 70 placements have been within external organisations.

### ***7. What resources do we have to deliver this objective?***

The Council allocated an annual budget of £485,000 to support the development of this scheme and the additional £372,000 came from the European Social Fund and £121,000 from the Job Centre Flexible Support Fund that was due to end in March but from seeking approval from the Job Centre, the monies can now be used up until Dec 2014.

Depending on the success of the programme, the intention would be for the Programme to become a part of a different bid to maximise outcomes or alternatively to reapply for funding to maintain the project, which could then be regionalised. However the European Funding element runs out in December 2014 and at this time we do not know if there will be replacement so this may be the last year this objective is run as a specific council priority although the need may still exist.

### **Improvement Objective Number 3**

## **Develop an effective and accessible Youth Service that supports the personal and social development of young people.**

### ***1. What difference do we plan to make?***

The Welsh Government demonstrated their commitment to youth work by publishing the National Youth Work Strategy in February of this year. The CCBC Youth Service will focus on delivering in response to this through the Caerphilly Youth Service Strategy and Operational Plan 2014- 2019 to ensure a consistent drive on the previous years achievements but in a more specific and measurable way.

### ***2. Why we have chosen this***

Effective youth work practice can build the capacity and resilience of young people. Youth Services have a strong track record in engaging young people in positive activities that are participative, empowering and encouraging. Through non-formal and informal learning, which supports personal and social development, Youth Services help young people to develop the skills and qualities they will need in adulthood.

The improvements that took place during 2013-14 have provided a strong foundation from which to continue developing effective youth work practices. This is an important area of work for the authority, and a joined up approach in supporting young people to reach their potential has been recognised as area for ongoing development

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### ***3. Where are we now?***

The Service has reached a critical stage of development, as the imminent publication of its Strategy coincides with consideration being given to the making of structural management and operational changes, most especially with regard to the youth club

(predominantly p/t) element of the Service. Consultations regarding the nature of both the Strategy and general operations with staff, young people and partners have proved fruitful – ahead of further consultation with elected members it is anticipated that a definitive and robust operational plan will come into play for 2014/15, onwards.

The Service’s Communities First and Families First programmes have continued to operate and thrive throughout 2013-14, successfully managing changes to grant criteria and re-commissioning processes

**4. What actions are we going to take to improve?**

Consult, publish and implement the Youth Service Strategy.
Increase the numbers of young people engaged by the Youth Service in comparison to the youth population
Introduce a “Youth Work in Schools” project to engage young people experiencing poverty and deprivation, to improve attendance, behaviour and achievement. <i>Increase the numbers of young people benefiting from intervention within a school environment. (Youth workers in schools)</i>
Increase the numbers of young people securing non-formal learning qualifications.
Improve equality of access to Youth Service provision, by widening delivery of Youth Work. <i>Expand youth work methodology and settings in order to meet the needs of young people.</i>
Refining methods of data collection, embracing current technology and aligning with other educational data, to better track the engagement and progression of young people. <i>Introduce a method of data collection, which embraces technological methods of collection, to track engagement and progression for young people.</i>

**5. How will we know we are improving?**

The outputs for the actions in the plan are highlighted in the IO3 scorecard. Targets will be set for each of the performance indicators and will be monitored, analysed and reported quarterly to Senior Management Team and the Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee. Evidence to monitor the impact of our work will be supported by the development of case studies to highlight the soft outcomes attributed to the work being undertaken.

Improvements in data collection and the tracking of engagement and progression of young people is essential to ensure improvements are sustained

**6. *Who are we going to work with to deliver this objective?***

Caerphilly Youth Service will work with: Children and Young People aged 0-25, with a specific focus on 11-19, their parents, local schools, the South East Regional Youth Service, the Education Achievement Service and the wider partnerships between the voluntary and statutory Youth Services (including the Youth Offending Service, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, participating Youth Support Services, the Emergency Services).

**7. *What resources do we have to deliver this objective?***

The Youth Service budget is £2,862,990, of which £1,225,681 is made up from external grants. This budget provides a platform for the development of a broad and progressive range of youth work methods, which are delivered through an extensive partnership structure

## **Improvement Objective Number 4**

### **Improve awareness, variety and use of leisure, community and sporting facilities**

#### ***1. What difference do we plan to make?***

The key outcome for this objective is that people in Caerphilly lead active lifestyles. The vision is to get more people, more active, more often. People would be clearly aware of what leisure facilities and programmes of activity were available for them across our county borough. New sporting facilities would be built that cater for all sections of the community. All facilities would be maintained to an excellent standard and people would have a choice of good quality facilities and programmes to suit their individual needs or desires. The number of people visiting our sports and leisure facilities would increase.

#### ***2. Why we have chosen this***

This improvement objective is concerned with improving the sporting and leisure facilities across our county borough. It's also about increasing the usage of our facilities. We want our borough to have excellent sporting and leisure facilities that encourage all parts of the community to be more active, more often.

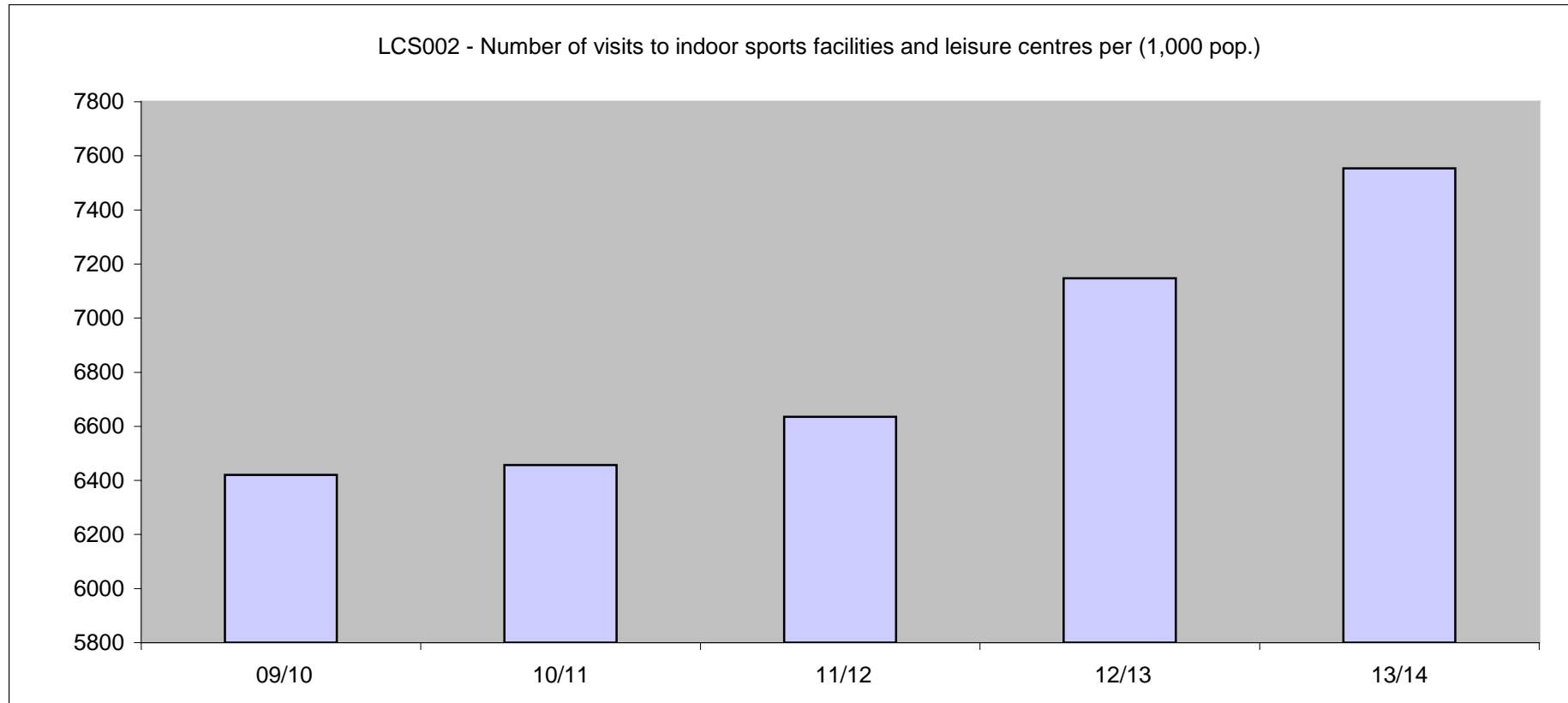
This has been chosen because we recognise that being physically active is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Improving our sports and leisure facilities and finding innovative ways to encourage our citizens to use the facilities on offer to them is one way in which we, the local authority, can help support our citizens with leading healthier lives. While there is medical evidence to prove that being physically active has health benefits there is also evidence to prove that active lifestyles can improve educational attainment and tackle some of our social issues by transforming the lives of those living in communities in areas of deprivation.

#### ***3. Where are we now?***

In Caerphilly there has been an increase in the number of people participating in sports and leisure activities over recent years. This is shown in the chart below. However, when compared to the rest of Wales we are still not performing as well as we should. With regards to the national indicator (LCS002b) the number of visits to sports facilities and leisure centres (per 1,000 pop)



Caerphilly performance for 2012/13 was 7,715 visits (per 1,000 pop), compared to an all Wales average of 8,864 visits (per 1,000 pop) for the same period. Also, according to the 2012 Welsh Health Survey, in Caerphilly 29% of people said they were physically active on 5 or more days per week across the county borough, which is an increase compared to 2010 whilst the Welsh average dropped during the same period from 30% to 29%.



#### **4. What actions are we going to take to improve?**

- We will ensure all activities are in a fun and safe environment
- We will source additional investment
- We will develop a Leisure Facilities Strategy to inform priority investment in sports and leisure facilities

- We will engage with schools and parents to ensure that children have the opportunity to learn to swim by the age of 11 years, through the delivery of a Aqua Passport, Learn to Swim scheme
- We will retain users by fully implementing a scheme that rewards customer loyalty and improves communication with customers
- We will grow a skilled and enthusiastic workforce (includes coaches, tutors and volunteers) and increase the number of volunteers
- We will introduce a programme to identify and support those who are more able and talented in sport
- We will promote the well-being benefits of being physically active
- *We will improve pathways to reduce drop off, improve community links and a wider choice of activities*
- *We will support sustainable community clubs through 'Thriving Clubs' scheme*
- *We will invest in improving facilities for customers*

### **5. How will we know we are improving?**

Improving the awareness, access and variety of leisure, community and sporting facilities to increase people's participation in sports and active recreation. We aim to achieve:

- An increase in the number of visits (per 1,000 population) to local authority run sport facilities and leisure centres (LCS002b) to 8,510.
- An increase in the number of visitors to Sport Caerphilly activities to 83,000
- An increase in the number of Smartcard holders by at least 10,000 users
- Maintain the number of people participating in the health referral scheme at around 840, due to an increase in the number of complex cases
- An increase in the take up of WG's 'Free Swim' sessions to around 46,000 for adults and around 28,500 for children.
- Over 63.5% of children, by the age of 11 years, can swim at least 25 metres. This is an incremental increase towards the national target of 91% by 2020
- Percentage improvements in the results of the School Sports Survey for Caerphilly; which is carried out, biannually, by SportWales. (See appendix for details).

**6. Who are we going to work with to deliver this objective?**

The service is working along side a number of key partners to ensure the effective delivery of this objective.

Sport Wales and a host of Sporting National Governing Bodies support the delivery of our activities and our approach to wider partnership working with local Colleges and businesses assist with achieving this. Maintaining a good working relationship with the network of primary and secondary schools across the county borough is vital to support the achievement of this objective

**7. What resources do we have to deliver this objective?**

Most actions will be delivered through existing service budget, however additional sources of funding will be secured to enhance delivery of this objective.

## Our Improvement Objective 5 – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities

### 1. *What difference do we plan to make?*

Everyone in Wales should have the opportunity to live in a good quality home within a safe and secure community. To help achieve this, the physical standard and condition of existing housing must be maintained and improved to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). The WHQS is a minimum standard for homes. The core elements are that homes:

- are in a good state of repair
- are safe and secure
- are adequately heated
- fuel efficient and well insulated
- contain up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms
- are well managed (for rented housing)
- are located in attractive and safe environments
- as far as possible suit the specific requirements of the household, for example, catering for specific disabilities.

We will aim to ensure all council homes meet WHQS, which will improve the quality of life for people who live in those homes. We will develop long-term arrangements, which will help sustain local jobs, offer skills development and training opportunities and deliver wider community benefits.

By 2020 we want our communities to know: -

- We delivered the best quality home improvements scheme to our tenants as promised in the Offer Document
- We did it with them and not to them
- Their homes created real jobs in our communities
- We delivered the whole project on time and in budget

These ambitions can only be achieved with the entire council and tenants and other key stakeholders working together and we are confident that with their support this programme will transform council homes, the lives of our citizens and our communities."

## **2. Why we have chosen this**

In 2012 council tenants took part in a ballot to have their say about the future management of their homes and they voted to remain with the council.

We have outlined major spending plans in the “Your Home Your Choice” document to give our housing stock a massive facelift to meet the requirements of the WHQS. Council homes across the Caerphilly county borough will benefit from over £200million investment over the next few years. This is a major flagship programme that will be a boost to the local economy. In addition the Council has set the ambition that money spent improving homes should be a catalyst to wider regeneration, improving lives and communities.

The Caerphilly Homes Task Group (7 councillors and 7 tenant representatives) meets on a regular basis to discuss progress with the WHQS Programme and improvements to the housing service. The Task Group is informed by two tenant groups – the Repairs and Improvements Group and the Older Persons Group.

## **3. Where are we now?**

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 the housing stock was recorded as 10,912. Only 63 were recorded as fully compliant with WHQS. Although for individual components there are high levels of compliance e.g. windows 92%, external doors 88%, mains powered smoke detectors 100%.

During 2013/14 in excess of 600 properties have benefitted from internal improvements and 23 non traditional properties have been fully refurbished. In excess of 400 properties have benefitted from energy efficiency works (mainly through external wall insulation and render) under the ECO and Arbed initiatives.

In September 2013 the single source supply partner contract commenced providing all materials for the in house work force and key components for contractors.

During 2013 some significant areas of additional expenditure were identified estimated at £29million but there have been off setting savings maintaining a viable business plan.

## **4. What actions are we going to take to improve?**

There will be a significant increase in the volume of work during 2014/15. The internal works contracts are anticipated to commence in October 2014 and external works will commence in the lower Rhymney Valley and the Eastern Valleys. This will be in addition to an internal works programme being undertaken by the in house work force. In excess of 2,800 properties have been scheduled in the 2014/15 programme

- Delivery of the 2014/15 capital investment programme in respect of internal and external repairs and improvements.
- Pursue external funding opportunities to support energy improvement measures.
- Carry out adaptations to meet specific needs of individual households.
- Adhere to the standards set out in the Charter for Trust. This applies to both the in house workforce and contractors.
- Achieve high levels of tenant satisfaction with the work undertaken to their homes.
- Promote the Community Improvement Fund to benefit projects within the communities across the county borough.

#### ***5. How will we know we have improved?***

**Deliver the best quality home improvements scheme to our tenants as promised in the Offer Document. We aim to achieve:**

- 80 homes fully compliant with WHQS
- 80% of tenants whose homes have been improved will be satisfied

**Deliver wider community benefits. We aim to achieve:**

- Monitoring of community benefit requirements within contracts.
- Delivery of projects supported by Community Improvement Fund, Local Employment Fund, Community Safety Initiatives.

#### ***6. Who are we going to work with to deliver this objective?***

The council will work with tenants, community groups, and public sector organisations to deliver the WHQS Programme and to secure improvements for individuals and communities through collaborative action.

***7. What resources do we have to deliver this objective?*** The capital programme for 2014/15 has been set at £29m.

## **Our Improvement Objective 6 Improve the availability of private and public sector housing to reduce the number of residents who may become homeless.**

### ***1. What difference do we plan to make?***

Traditionally, those approaching the council for help and advice relating to a homelessness or a potential homelessness situation have been households and individuals considered more vulnerable or with greater needs than the average household. However, due to the many and varied external pressures for example unemployment, home owners in negative equity, higher levels of household debt, ease of access to credit and high interest loans, we know find that many more non-traditional households find themselves at risk of losing their home. The stresses brought on by such external factors also have wider affects, e.g. relationship breakdown and increased levels of domestic abuse. Housing and health are intrinsically linked to the quality of housing provided, as does a household's ability to reside in a settled home. Access to good quality, affordable housing and sustainable tenancies positively impacts on a household's health and well-being and helps to develop a sense of community.

We plan to introduce a person centred approach to the Housing Options and Homelessness Advice service in which customers will engage with one caseworker who will assess the their housing needs and their ability to either maintain an existing tenancy or access alternative suitable, affordable and sustainable accommodation and wherever possible, prevent homelessness.

### ***2. Why we have chosen this***

The enactment of the Housing Bill in Wales in April 2015 will require local authorities to take all reasonable steps to prevent homelessness where a threat of homelessness exists within 56 days. This requirement will require authorities to focus more on early intervention to prevent the loss of accommodation or facilitate the pathway to suitable accommodation within 56 days. The current processes will remain unchanged for those presenting to the authority that are actually homeless, as these will continue to be assisted through our emergency and temporary accommodation provision.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced reductions in the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for single people under 35 years of age to that of the shared room rate of housing benefit. Access to affordable housing for single people in receipt of benefits is extremely difficult and has resulted in more single people presenting as homeless.

Prison leavers with no accommodation to return to on release will no longer be owed an automatic duty of housing by the local authority when the Housing Bill is enacted, unless they are determined as vulnerable.

Owner-occupiers represent the majority of households within the borough and social housing landlords (such as the council and registered social landlords) are the most popular alternative to owner occupying. Since the 2011 Census, however, the number of households in the private rented sector has increased from 11% to 14% and is predicted to increase further. With the negative impact of the welfare reform cuts starting to take effect, mortgage repossession notifications to the authority has increased five-fold. The authority with its partners has developed a mortgage rescue service, however this is currently operating as a reactive service and more supportive interventions could be achieved if the mortgage rescue partners were notified at an earlier stage to allow more effective casework to prevent homelessness.

Households in receipt of benefits are less likely to successfully access the private rented sector due to the removal of direct benefit payments to landlords, i.e. landlords are becoming more risk averse and the reductions in LHA rates in general means less financial support for rent payments. Many local lettings agencies openly advertise for tenants and exclude those in receipt of benefits.

### **3. *Where are we now?***

Single homeless males and single homeless ex-offenders make up the greatest percentage of homeless households for whom emergency accommodation has to be provided. These two groups are also most likely to be under 35 years of age and subject to the reduced LHA rate.

We actively engage with private sector landlords through a quarterly forum and a dedicated website. We encourage accreditation training for landlords to improve their knowledge of the services they provide to tenants. We provide a free property advertising web-based service for landlords to increase accessibility to prospective tenants and, where necessary, we will provide financial assistance to enable people to set up tenancies through access to the bond scheme partners. We have a partnership with Smart Money Credit Union to enable direct LHA payments to landlords, although many landlords do not take advantage of the facility because of a £5, monthly-transactional fee.



#### **4. *What actions are we going to take to improve?***

- Restructure the Housing Options and Homelessness Advice team functions to offer a person centred casework service
- Provide mediation/early intervention support to households at risk of becoming homeless to remain in their homes, and
- Provide support to households to sustain new tenancies accessed through the Housing Allocations and Advice Centre
- Work with private sector landlords to increase the level of affordable accommodation available through the development of a social lettings agency, accessible to any household regardless of benefit dependency.
- Review and, where necessary, revise the existing pre-release prison protocol to empower prisoners to plan for their accommodation needs on release
- Produce guidance for all landlords (public and private) on the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 to promote non-discriminatory practice by all housing providers
- Host a specialist domestic abuse support worker to provide early intervention support, target hardening services and person centred support to prevent homelessness in relation to domestic abuse victims and their families
- Improve both the working relations with prison accommodation services to prepare prisoners for their release and the level of assistance provided to prison leavers by support agencies on their release

#### **5. *How will we know we have improved?***

- Reduction in the number of single males in emergency accommodation
- Reduction in the number of ex-offenders in emergency accommodation
- Reduction in the number of repeat homeless presentations
- Increase in the number of PRS accommodation units accessed by our service users
- Guidance on Equalities Act 2010 produced and publicised
- Number of credit union rent accounts increased
- Number of cases who have had their risk of homelessness prevented by assistance to remain in their existing accommodation
- Number of cases who have had their risk of homelessness prevented by accessing alternative accommodation available to them for a min of 6 months
- Number of non-priority, intentionally homeless cases not owed any duty, where they have become homeless and we have relieved this homelessness by securing accommodation for a minimum of 6 months

**6. Who are we going to work with to deliver this objective?**

- Prison Linc Cymru and the prison accommodation officers
- Supporting People to fund tenancy support and tenancy sustainability officers and specialist domestic abuse worker through Llamau Women's Services
- Shelter Cymru, CAB Caerphilly, registered social landlords, independent financial/mortgage advisers and Smart Money Credit Union
- All Wales Homelessness Network partners to develop and share good practice models for the forthcoming legislative changes and use of In house IT for recording of casework outcomes and prevention actions

**7. What resources do we have to deliver this objective?**

The Housing Allocations and Advice Centre team currently consists of 4 homelessness case officers and one housing options officer, assisted by one tenancy sustainability officer.

It is likely that funding will be made available to local authorities by Welsh Government to prepare for the changes in homelessness legislation.

## Appendix A – List of the Improvement Objectives Measures and Evidence

IO 1 - Ensure children and young people who are Looked after achieve their full potential	2012/13 Result	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Result	2014/15 Target
<b>We will measure how much we are doing using the evidence below</b>				
The Number of Foster Carers recruited.	18	25 (over 2 years)	23	15
% Of Children placed in Foster Care.	84.5%	85%	84%	85%
% Of 1st placements of LAC during the year that began with a care plan in place (SCC001a)	100%	100%	100%	100%
% Of LAC with a plan for permanence at due date (SCC/001b)	100%	100%	100%	100%
% Of LAC pupils who leave compulsory education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification. (EDU002ii)	6.1%	0%	0%	0%
<b>We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below</b>				
% Of LAC achieving the Core Subject Indicator at KS2. (SCC/035)	58.33% (7/12)	64.28% (9/14)	66.66%* (10/14)	Education to provide
% Of LAC achieving the Core Subject Indicator at KS3. (SCC/036)	34.62% (9/26)	33.33% (6/18)	42.86%* (6/14)	Education to provide
The average external point score for 16yr olds looked after (SCC037)	157	198	238	Education to provide

<b>IO 1 - Ensure children and young people who are Looked after achieve their full potential</b>	<b>2012/13 Result</b>	<b>2013/14 Target</b>	<b>2013/14 Result</b>	<b>2014/15 Target</b>
<b>We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below</b>				
% Of Children placed with adoptive families during the financial year.	9.2%	3%	4.7%	3%
% Of Children looked after on 31 March who have had 3 or more placements during the year. (SCC004)	7.2%	6.2%	9.5%	<10%
% Of young people formerly LAC with whom the authority is in contact at 19yrs (SCC033d)	100%	100%	100%	100%
% Of young people formerly LAC who the authority is in contact with and are known to be in suitable non-emergency accommodation at 19yrs (SCC033e)	95.8%	95.80%	93.3%	95%
% of young people formerly LAC with whom the LA is in contact, who are known to be engaged in education, training or employment. (SCC033f)	75%	75%	60%	75%

\*Provisional education data until fully validated and agreed.

IO 2 - Improve job opportunities by implementing the Council's Passport Scheme	2012/13 Result	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Result	2014/15 Target
<b>We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below</b>				
More young people aged 16–24 are supported into sustainable employment via the Caerphilly LSB Passport Programme where we:				
Will create at least 150 work experience opportunities each year	New	150	176	* 150
Will create at least 25 apprenticeship opportunities each year	New	25	25	*25
Will create at least 40 employment opportunities each year	New	40	68	*40
% Of participants that now feel they are more 'work ready' from being on the Passport Programme	New	80%	100%	80%
<b>We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below</b>				
% Of positive outcomes achieved**	New	70%	Waiting final data	75%
**Positive outcomes means participants who have gained employment or gone onto further Education following successful completion of the Passport Programme.				

\* These are Jobs Growth Wales formal targets. Funding ends in DEC 14 so we have not set further local targets and although we have exceeded our formal requirements we are still working

<b>IO 3 - Develop an effective and accessible Youth Service that supports the personal and social development of young people</b>	<b>2012/13 Result</b>	<b>2013/14 Target</b>	<b>2013/14 Result</b>	<b>2014/15 Target</b>
<b>We will measure how much we are doing using the evidence below</b>				
Number of young people achieving national accreditation (non-formal and formal)	129	160	399	440
Number of young people achieving local accreditation (non-formal and formal)	1188	1200	2331	2400
<b>We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below</b>				
% local inspections of selected youth service projects and clubs graded as adequate or above	New Indicator 2013/14	Not set	New	100%
Pupil attendance at Secondary School. (EDU016b)	91.7%	92%	92%	93.5
% of young people rating the quality of the Youth Service to be good or above	New Indicator 2013/14	New	Awaiting update	90%
<b>We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below</b>				
% of pupils aged 15 as at the preceding 31 August who leave compulsory education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification. (EDU002i)	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%
Reduce the % of 16 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEET) in October	5.9%	4%	4.4%	0.4%
% of New and Expectant Parents engaged by the service achieving a formal accreditation (Pre-16)	New Indicator 2013/14	80%	100%	*To be deleted
% of New and Expectant Parents engaged by the service achieving a non-formal accreditation (Pre and Post 16)	New Indicator 2013/14	60%	100%	*To be deleted

\* In the new round of Families First commissioning the New and Expected Parents project will be incorporated in the wider Family Engagement Project, addressing new areas of need. Therefore targets and data specifically around New and Expected Parents will not be available

IO 4 - Improve awareness, access, variety and use of leisure, community and sporting facilities.	2012/13 Result	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Result	2014/15 Target
<b>We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below</b>				
Increase the number of visits (per 1,000 population) to local authority run sports facilities and leisure centres (LCS002)	7,715	8,184	7,553.67	8,510
Increase the number of visitors to Sport Caerphilly activities	78,089	81,000	87,059	83,000 Performance for 13/14 was unusually high due to the Sport Relief Mile event, targets are increasing year on year
Increase the number of Smartcard holders	101,211	112,000	112,797	122,000
Increase in the number of Free swims adults	41,871	42,708	45,412	46,320
Increase in the number of Free swims children	27,415	27,963	27,411	27,522
<b>We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below</b>				
The number of people participating in the health referral scheme	982	880	910	840 target is less than 13/14 performance due to an increase in the number of complex cases
% of children in school swimming 25 metres	NA	91%	58%	63.5%
% Young people attending 30 or more sessions in academic year	6.31%	8%	7.96%	10%

<b>IO 4 - Improve awareness, access, variety and use of leisure, community and sporting facilities.</b>	<b>2012/13 Result</b>	<b>2013/14 Target</b>	<b>2013/14 Result</b>	<b>2014/15 Target</b>
% School years 3-6 participating in sport 3 times per week	26%	30%	41%	*41%
% School years 7-11 participating in sport 3 times per week	29%	35%	38%	*38%
% pupils in school years 3 - 6 in Caerphilly reporting participation in a Sports Club	84%	88%	78.9%	*88%
% pupils in school years 7 - 10 in Caerphilly reporting participation in a Sports Club	68%	73%	69.5%	*73%
% Pupils achieving level 5 in KS3 PE Assessments	82%	83.5%	82.3%	84.5%
* Results are derived from the biennial School Sports Survey, original targets have been carried forward, as will the results for 2013/14, the next survey will be undertaken 2015/16				



IO 5 – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities.	2012/13 Result	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Result	2014/15 Target
<b>We will measure how much we are doing using the evidence below</b>				
Number of homes brought to WHQS as recorded on annual return to Welsh Government.	63	891	Figure available end of July 2014	80
<b>NEW</b> Number of homes compliant with WHQS in respect of their internal elements	N/A	N/A	630	1332
<b>NEW</b> Number of homes compliant with WHQS in respect of their external elements	N/A	N/A	23	2381
<b>We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below</b>				
<b>NEW</b> Charter for Trust Standards - The Charter for Trust developed in consultation with tenants and staff sets out the standards that tenants can expect when work is being undertaken in their homes, which will be assessed by specific questions on the customer satisfaction survey (before, during and after works).	N/A	N/A	84%	90%
The number of residents who want to volunteer to assist in the maintenance of environmental improvements to compliment quality housing  <i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15</i>	N/A	To increase the number of volunteers	1	
The number of local people that have received training as a result of a contract containing a community benefit clause that will improve their skills and help them to gain employment  <i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15</i>	N/A	5	5	

IO 5 – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities.	2012/13 Result	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Result	2014/15 Target
<b>We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below</b>				
% of tenants whose homes have been improved <b>internally</b> through the WHQS programme are satisfied with the completed works  <i>(In 2013/14 this indicator was “Tenants who house meet the WHQS standard will be satisfied”)</i>	N/A	80%	92%	80%
Number of organisations making successful applications to the Community Improvement Fund.  <i>(In 2013/14 this indicator was “Local residents will use the Community Improvement Fund which will make environment improvements to their external surroundings”)</i>	N/A	10	3	10
The number of local people who gained employment as a result of a community benefit clause.  <i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15</i>	N/A	N/A	1	

*\* Three indicators will be removed from the 2013/14 set. Three new indicators will be included for measurement in 2014/15. The new measures reflect more accurately some of the objectives behind the WHQS programme.*

IO 6 -Improve the availability of private and public sector housing to reduce the number of residents who may become homeless.	2012/13 Result	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Result	2014/15 Target
<b>We will measure how much we are doing using the evidence below</b>				
The number of tenants affected by welfare reforms who were visited in their own homes and provided with advice and support to minimise the impact of the changes	Baselines not available, welfare reform changes not implemented until April 2013	1500	476	TBA
The number of tenants referred for money and debt advice as a direct result of face to face support on the impact of welfare reforms		120	79	TBA
<b>We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below</b>				
We will improve the quality of life of disabled residents and their carers by lowering the average number of calendar days to deliver a disabled facilities grant (DFG) (PSR002)	299	284	302.8	TBA
The number of calendar days to deliver low cost adaption in private dwellings where the DFG process is not used (PSR006)	42	40	38.17	TBA
<b>We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below</b>				
There is a reduction in the number of people presented as homeless (% of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months) (HHA013)	88.2%	85%	84.78%	TBA

There is an increase in the number of empty homes returned back to beneficial use (% of private sector dwellings that had been vacant for more than 6 months that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action by the local authority. (PSR004)	3.07%	3.6%	3.83%	TBA
<b>IO 6 -Improve the availability of private and public sector housing to reduce the number of residents who may become homeless.</b>	<b>2012/13 Result</b>	<b>2013/14 Target</b>	<b>2013/14 Result</b>	<b>2014/15 Target</b>
The value of financial savings generated for tenants as a direct result of face to face support on the affect of welfare reforms	Baseline not available, welfare reform changes not implemented until April 2013.	£150,000	131,519.88	TBA

**For further information on our Improvement Objectives for 2013-14, please click on the link below:**

[http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/pdf/Council\\_Democracy/improvement\\_plan\\_objectives\\_2013\\_14.pdf](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/pdf/Council_Democracy/improvement_plan_objectives_2013_14.pdf)

## Section 7 - Contact -

We welcome your views and opinions on the content of our performance reports and the priorities that we set each year, so that we can continue to provide meaningful information that helps inform you of the service focus, ensuring that we are indeed working on the things that are important to making a difference to you, our citizens and our communities.

Please contact us by: Email: [PMU@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:PMU@caerphilly.gov.uk) OR by Web link:

[https://eforms.caerphilly.gov.uk/AF3/an/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=FcP9x2bt\\_Eq&s=AZ/IXrNun6sq/im3fvK+tah14MvD+uS4Tix2Ku3UPBZrfdauS1RHgg==&pg=site](https://eforms.caerphilly.gov.uk/AF3/an/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=FcP9x2bt_Eq&s=AZ/IXrNun6sq/im3fvK+tah14MvD+uS4Tix2Ku3UPBZrfdauS1RHgg==&pg=site) and follow the instructions on screen:



The screenshot shows the top of a web form for Caerphilly County Borough Council. The header includes the council's logo and name in both English and Welsh. Below the header is a navigation bar with a 'home' link. The main content area is titled 'Improvement Objectives - feedback'. It contains a mandatory field question: 'Do you agree that the priorities the council has set are the right priorities? (these are called Improvement Objectives)'. The question has three radio button options: 'Yes', 'Partly', and 'No'. Below this is another question: 'When publishing how we are performing against our priorities, what would you like to see more information on? (e.g financial data, quality of service, stories from members of the public?)'. This question has a text input field. At the bottom of the form, there is a 'Thank you for your time.' message and two buttons: 'Submit' and 'Cancel'.

Alternatively, please contact:

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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](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk)