



Caerphilly County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2013-17



A greener place Man gwyrdach



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Foreword from Cllr Keith Reynolds, Leader of the Council

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 Corporate Plan is a key strategic document, which sets out our aspirations for the next few years 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 and (eight longer-term priorities) 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 people 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 the development of this document and I will take a keen interest in the way we deliver against these priorities going forward.

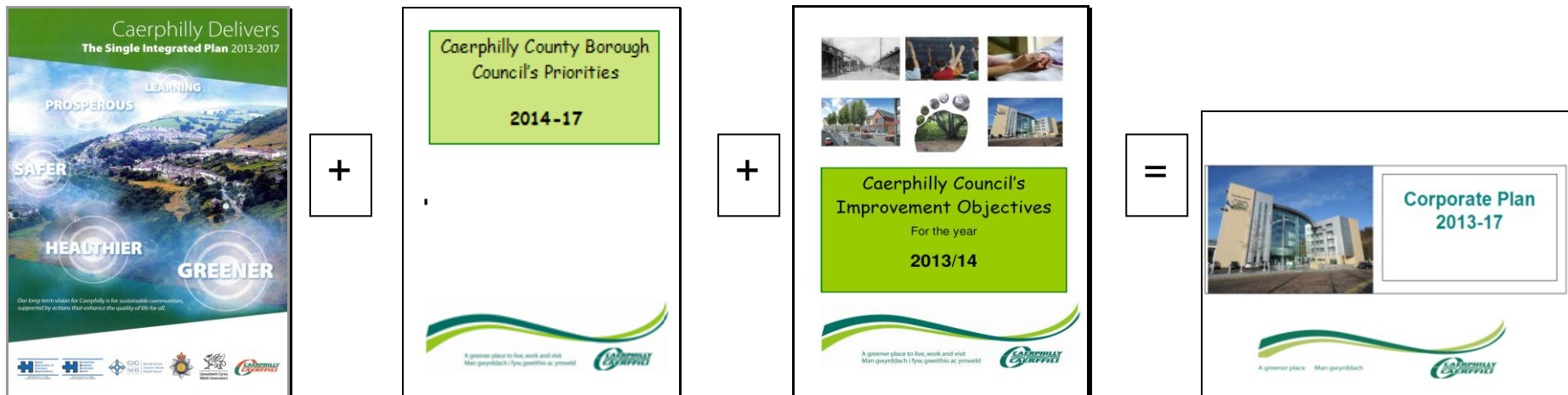
1. Introduction – The Purpose of the Plan

This Corporate Plan tells the reader about the Council's high-level priorities for 2013-17. It informs decision making at all levels of the Council and highlights how our priorities contribute towards achieving our partnership goals within the long term plan entitled Caerphilly Delivers. The Plan will show the reader:

- How we will make a real difference to our area
- Sets the framework we will use to plan, drive and deliver our services
- Influences the way we shape our budget and
- Help's us to monitor our progress and take stock of our achievements

The Plan details the links between the high level community priorities within Caerphilly Delivers and the council's own contribution towards those community improvements and its shorter term Improvement Objectives.

The Corporate Plan is made up specifically of the three sections below:



2. The context in which we work

Caerphilly County Borough Council is the 5th largest authority in Wales in terms of geographic size and serves around 170,000 residents. It has a divergent demographic profile with a higher proportion of children and people of retirement age than Welsh averages. It has the second lowest employment rate in Wales and comparatively higher level of deprivation. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals (used as an indication of deprivation) runs at 21 per cent and is the sixth highest out of the 22 local authorities in Wales. Three quarters of the Council's 73 wards are in the 50 per cent most deprived areas of Wales, although the County does not have large concentrations of areas of very high deprivation compared with some other Welsh authorities.

The Council is Labour controlled with 73 members and operates on a cabinet system with 9 portfolio holders. The organisation is the largest employer in the area with approximately 9,500 staff providing approximately 93 services. The authority works with business and colleges to provide employment opportunities, such as basic skills or lone parent programmes and currently has several economic development and tourism programmes. The Authority has a combined gross revenue and capital budget of over £500 million per annum.

As a diverse organisation we work to many strategies and plans. Many of these plans are legal requirements as set by Welsh or Central Government. The Welsh Governments own plan is called the '**Programme for Government**' in which the high level priorities and how they will be delivered are outlined. This framework informs our work at a local level.

Following on from 'Programme for Government' we have '**Caerphilly Delivers**' which is also known as the Single Plan. This is the highest level plan for the borough, it sets out the vision for the improvements the whole community want to make from the Local Authority, local community, voluntary and private sector, health and police.

Following on from this we have the Councils own aspirations or values as they are sometimes known. These are our **longer-term priorities** (2013-17) that originated from the Political Party manifesto (section 5) and these aspirations show how we contribute towards the overarching Single Plan. Our aspirations are:

- Our communities are safe, green and clean places to live to **improve resident's quality of life.**
- We want to improve job opportunities in our County Borough, so **people can live better lives**
- Our goal is that every child should have the **best start in life**, and the opportunity to achieve success as a young person and as an adult
- We want to enable our communities to make healthy lifestyle choices to **improve citizens' quality of life.**
- We want to **improving accessibility** throughout the county borough, through a range of ways including better digital access
- We want to transform council homes and in doing so **transform lives and communities**

In order to move us closer to achieving our wider aspirations we developed more specific **medium term priorities**, which are shown in this plan, and our shorter-term priorities, called **Improvement objectives** (Part 2 of this document). Our Improvement Objectives are consulted on with the public to ensure they are relevant and what the public want us to focus on. We will report to you on a routine basis as to how we are performing against our mid term and short term priorities.

The Council is a diverse organisation providing a wide range of services but our priorities are not by any means the only activities that we carry out and changes we try to make, but it is important within these times of financial constraint that we focus on key areas to improve on and share with you what they are and how you can be involved in shaping these priorities.

The ways in which you can be involved in shaping our priorities for the future are on pages 61 and 62 of our Corporate Plan.

3. Medium term financial outlook

Over the next three to five years the financial landscape will continue to be extremely challenging for our authority and although we have been able to manage our finances well to date, the future financial pressures facing us are real, significant and challenging.

One of our main future pressures is that central government is cutting expenditure and this has, in turn, reduced the money Welsh Government has available to allocate to public services. For 2014/15 and 2015/16 Welsh Government has protected health and schools. This means there is less resource available from Welsh Government to give to local government. Since the Local Government (LG) provisional settlement announcement in October 2013, a significant amount of work has been undertaken within each directorate to identify further savings above those originally anticipated for 2014/15 to 2016/17. There were plans in place to cope with the lower savings already anticipated for 2014/15. However, the LG settlement is such that we will now have to make a further £7m savings for 2014/15. Furthermore, there is no indication of the period of austerity coming to an end after 2016/17. The Council needs to make savings of £14.53m in 2014/15, with further additional savings of £6.54m for 2015/16 and £7.06m for 2016/17. This amounts to £28.13m over the next three years, although there is still much uncertainty about future funding levels, so this saving target could increase.

As 70% of the Council's funding comes from Welsh Government (30% is raised from council tax and business rates) any reduction will have a significant impact. One of the main pressures is due to the 'pledge' where Welsh Government requires Local Government funding to protect Schools for 2014/15. This means that any cuts will fall to the services outside of these areas, namely the Environment, Corporate Services, Libraries, Leisure and non-schools education spend.

In preparing to make further savings our current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has been used to determine;

- Savings proposals that are deliverable in full for 2014/15;
- Savings proposals that are deliverable part way through the financial year 2014/15;
- Savings proposals that have a longer lead in time, require both further options appraisal, reports to Members and consultation, prior to making a final decision;
- The potential of further efficiency savings, without the need for either a fundamental review of service delivery or more than a marginal impact on services;
- A review of spend on discretionary services during the summer 2014.

In light of the extensive budgetary planning undertaken to date and the feedback from the consultation processes so far, a short list of potential savings proposals has been brought together. A summary of these proposals is set out in the table below;

	£M
Whole Authority	4.9
Corporate Services	2.2
Housing Revenue Account	1.3
Social Services	2.1
Education (excluding schools) & Life Long Learning	1.2
Environment	2.9
TOTAL	14.6

In preparation for the new financial year 2014/15, these proposals will be progressed, refined and amended to reflect responses from the ongoing consultation processes. They will form the basis of draft budget proposals for consideration. There will also be a need to ensure that eventual savings align themselves with Council priorities, Improvement Objectives and the Single Plan.

4. Caerphilly Delivers - The Single Integrated Plan 2013-17

We have a long-term partnership plan which is a collaborative plan together with our partners in the Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Gwent Police, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) and Welsh Government. We looked at a 'needs assessment' of the borough and defined our long-term vision for Caerphilly, which is for sustainable communities, supported by actions that enhance the quality of life for all. This means people who are healthy, fulfilled and feel safe, are well qualified and skilled within a vibrant economy and live, work or visit in a greener living environment. To realise our long-term vision we have identified **five key** outcomes listed below:

PROSPEROUS CAERPHILLY

SAFER CAERPHILLY

LEARNING CAERPHILLY

HEALTHIER CAERPHILLY

GREENER CAERPHILLY

The Caerphilly Delivers plan reflects the Welsh Government's strategic approach to developing our communities and is a challenge to the public, voluntary and private sector to work together with our communities, and sets out what working together will achieve. The plan has been developed based on the following principles of: sustainable development where we promote social justice and equality of opportunity and enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limits.

Our Local Service Board (LSB) is a body made up of the Police, the Local Authority, Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Welsh Government and GAVO. The LSB will be responsible for monitoring progress against Caerphilly Delivers' action plans.

The Council's own priorities contained within this Corporate Plan and its Improvement Objectives contribute towards the higher longer term goals contained in Caerphilly Delivers. The links between the 5 themes areas contained in Caerphilly Delivers are illustrated in the table on the following page.

For further information about *Caerphilly Delivers*, please visit the Caerphilly Local Service Board website at: [http://your.caerphilly.gov.uk/communityplanning/](http://your.caerphilly.gov.uk/communityplanning/content/caerphilly-local-service-board) content/caerphilly-local-service-board.

Caerphilly Delivers 2013-17 – Single Integrated Plan

Key Outcome Area	Priority	Corporate Priority 2013-17 contribution	Improvement Objective 2014/15 contribution	
Prosperous	P1	Improve local employment opportunities Including access to opportunities across a wider geographical area.	7	IO2
	P2	Improve standards of housing and communities, giving appropriate access to services across the county borough.	7	IO5 IO6
	P3	Provide support to enable local people to compete for all employment opportunities.		IO2 IO3 IO5
Safer	S1	Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and reduce fear of becoming a victim of anti-social behaviour for residents.	2	IO5
	S2	Reduce crime and the fear of crime for the residents of the county borough	2 & 5	IO5 IO6
	S3	Reduce the harm caused to communities through substance misuse	6	IO4
	S4	Ensure people are supported to live in their own homes and communities in safety.	1	IO1 IO6
Learning	L1	Improve the level of basic skills and the number of achieved qualifications (formal and non-formal) to improve the life opportunities for families.	3,4 & 5	IO1 IO3
	L2	Develop a multi-agency approach to address the impact of poverty on pupil attainment.	5	IO3
	L3	Children, young people and families have the skills and resources to access job opportunities.	2 & 3	IO2 IO3

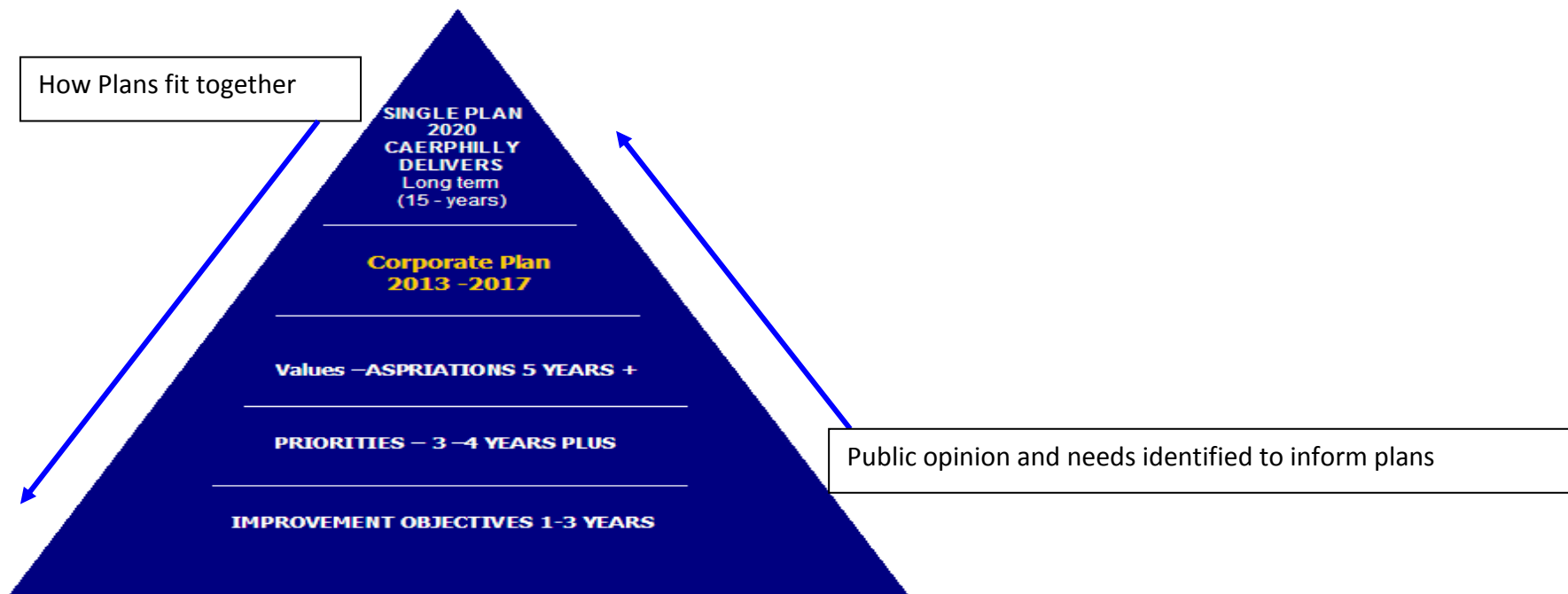
Caerphilly Delivers 2013-17 – Single Integrated Plan

Key Outcome Area	Priority	Corporate Priority 2013-17 contribution	Improvement Objective 2014/15 contribution	
Healthier	H1	H1 Address the inequities in the rate of low birth weight babies across the county borough.	No direct connection	
	H2	Improve lifestyles of the population in the county borough so that people recognise and take responsibility for their own health and well-being, and make use of the opportunities and support available to them.	4 & 5	IO1 to IO6
	H3	Reduce the variation in healthy life expectancy in the county borough so that the health and well-being of individuals experiencing disadvantage improves to the levels found among the advantaged.	6	IO4
	H4	Improve the education, information, early intervention, prevention and harm reduction in relation to substance misuse in the county borough.	6	IO4
	H5	Ensure people are supported to live in their own communities to lead safe, fulfilled and independent lives.	1 & 7	IO1 & IO6
Greener	G1	Improve local environmental quality.	1 & 6	IO4 IO5 IO6
	G2	Reduce the causes of and adapt to the effects of climate change.	6	IO5 IO6
	G3	Maximise the use of the environment for health benefits.	1 & 4	IO4

5. Our Longer term Priorities 2013-17

The Council has 6 aspirations and these are our aims for the next four years. From that we have set 8 specific priorities for 3 years or more starting from 2014-15 and we will review them on a yearly basis to be sure they are still relevant.

These priorities have been used as a basis for setting our Improvement Objectives. Having Improvement Objectives and Corporate Plan 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. The diagram below shows how our aspirations, priorities and objectives link together.



Below we have listed our Priorities and Improvement Objectives and how they connect together. Our Improvement Objectives have detailed action plans that will be monitored – PLEASE SEE PART 2 page 24 to read about our Improvement Objectives.

We have colour coded the priorities below to show which part of the Council is the owner of these priorities although many different services contribute to the delivery of our priority outcomes.

	Council Priorities (medium term priorities)	Improvement Objectives 2014/15 (short-term)
Social Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peoples social care needs are identified and met in a timely and appropriate way 2. Children and Adults are safeguarded from abuse 	IO1 Ensure children and young people who are looked after are supported to achieve their full potential.
Corporate Services		IO2. Improve job opportunities by implementing the Council's Passport Scheme
Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Improve standards across all year groups particularly key stage 3 and 4 4. Identify vulnerable groups of learners and develop interventions to ensure needs are met 5. Reduce the gap in attainment between pupils in advantaged and disadvantaged communities 	103. Develop an effective and accessible Youth Service that supports the personal and social development of young people
Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Promote the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle 	IO4. Improve awareness, access, variety and use of leisure, community and sporting facilities.
Corporate Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Invest in our Council Homes and their communities to transform lives 	IO5. Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities 106. Improve the availability of private and public sector housing to reduce the number of residents who may become homeless
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Affordability - Deliver a medium term Financial Plan aimed at ultimately providing a period of stability that helps the authority to have a range of services in the future that are sustainable 	

6. Our Priorities

1. Peoples social care needs are identified and met in a timely and appropriate way

Background

Timely assessment is an important element of meeting a client's needs and of service responsiveness and quality. We need to ensure that the time between initial enquiries and the completion of clients care plans is good so that people receive the service they require within a reasonable time. Timely delivery of services identified in the care plan is important in order to meet the client's needs and address any potential risks. If our service delivery fails or delays are prolonged, the client's needs will not be met and they will not get the service they require. We also have a duty of care to provide all adults in the social care system, with an acceptable level of service in a timely and appropriate manner.

What would success look like?

- The timeliness of assessments will improve; all Care Plans are current and reflect the needs of our service users.
- Users of our service will receive a more-timely and appropriate response.
- The number of assessments completed within the timescale will increase and the quality of assessments completed by our Social Workers will continue to be high.
- We will speed up how long a client has to wait from the time they were assessed to the time they receive the services agreed.
- The standards of care we provide will improve the quality of life for all service users.

We will know if we are doing well when:

- The number of adults waiting for an assessment outside of the timescale (28 days) has reduced.
- The percentage of assessments and reviews started on time has increased.
- The percentage of clients care plans have been reviewed has increased.
- There are no people awaiting personal care for more than 14 days.
- The percentage of adult clients who are supported in the community during the year has increased.
- The percentage of initial assessments that are completed within 7 working days.
- The average time taken to complete initial assessments, take no longer than 7 working days to complete

We get positive results from our post assessment customer survey:

- The percentage of service users who stated they were happy with the Service will increase.
- The percentage of assessments that were service user and outcome focused will increase.
- The percentage of assessments where the risks have been evaluated and managed will increase.

2. Children and adults are safeguarded from abuse

Background

Those who need safeguarding help are often elderly and frail, living on their own in the community, or without much family support in care homes. They are often people with physical or learning disabilities and people with mental health needs at risk of suffering harm both in institutions and in the community. Safeguarding encompasses six key concepts: empowerment, protection, prevention, proportionate responses, partnership and accountability. We play an important role in protecting members of the public from harm and are responsible for ensuring that services and support are delivered in ways that are of high quality and safe. The most in need of protection are; children, young people and vulnerable adults.

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 give to their child. Fostering, adoption and carer support processes are areas the Children's Services Directorate wanted to improve upon. The reforms to welfare benefits will put more pressure on vulnerable families and this is likely to lead to additional demands 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.

What would success look like?

- Our commitment to prevent abuse to vulnerable children and adults within the community will ensure a quick and effective response to allegations of abuse when they occur and our awareness raising will help.
- Increased awareness of safeguarding responsibilities by all partners and an increased community understanding of safeguarding.
- Residents of Caerphilly feel safe in their homes and out in the Community.
- Citizens are reassured that they will be listened to by community safety agencies and encouraged to report crime and disorder concerns.
- Public access to community safety agencies, their campaigns, education, training, mediation and victim support services will be secured and people who are affected by crime, disorder and environmental issues are supported and their concerns receive an efficient partnership response.

We will know if we are doing well when:

- There is a reduction in the number of children on the child protection register.
- There is a reduction in the number of protection of vulnerable adults (POVA) cases being received.
- The levels of crime and disorder in the Borough reduce.
- A reduction in the number of anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents occurs.
- The residents of Caerphilly experience a greater perception of feeling safe in their homes.

3. Improve standards across all year groups particularly key stage 3 and 4

Background

Whilst there have been improvements and an upward trend, improving standards remains a priority. Performance in Caerphilly is strongest in the Foundation Phase and key stages 2 and 3 where outcomes are above average in nearly all indicators when compared with similar schools based on free school meal entitlement. At key stages 3 and 4, the local authority met the Welsh Government's expected benchmarks in two out of three indicators in 2013. At key stage 4, performance of schools in Caerphilly compared to similar schools based on free school meal entitlement is above average for the indicators that include English or Welsh and Mathematics. However, performance in the indicators that include a wide range of qualifications, including level 1 and level 2 threshold indicators, is below average. Although we have a range of strategies in place overall, they have not yet impacted significantly on outcomes at key stage 4 and developing this is part of our priority.

What would success look like?

- Performance of pupils in vulnerable groups continues to improve
- Literacy will be raised for all but specifically for year 4 pupils.
- The gap between boys and girls achievements narrows
- There is improved level of performance across all key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils

We will know if we are doing well when:

- Improved levels of performance in all 5 indicators of performance at key stages 3 and 4 occurs
- The average points score for pupils increase
- Learners gain more nationally recognised qualifications as a result of increased opportunities being provided in non-formal and formal settings.
- The percentage gap between boys and girls achieving the Core Subject Indicator (CSI) at Key Stage 4 reduces

It is important to note that the Local Authority cannot directly control: Children and young people attainment outcomes, attendance in schools and exclusion levels for children and young people; but it can provide a framework within which this can be improved and monitored for effectiveness. We cannot control the well being of children and young people but we can work with other agencies and organisations, including schools, to enable pupil and family issues to be addressed and to protect those potentially at risk. The management or governance of schools or staff employed by the school are in the main not within our control but we can provide challenge, support and advice to governing bodies to ensure they are effective.

4. Identify vulnerable groups of learners and develop interventions to ensure needs are met

Background

Young people and adults in vulnerable groups are specifically at risk of not achieving their potential. We need to ensure that we provide early intervention support and have the ability to track the progress of young people and to ensure that structures and systems are in place to support them through their learning.

There are many and complex barriers to learning which affect young people at different period in their lives. We will provide the effective support needed to enable young people to reach their potential. Those who struggle to access and engage with learning may have low attainment, poor school attendance and limited basic skills all of which we hope to address through our targeted actions.

What would success look like?

- We will have created a wide range of learning opportunities, appropriate for all, to encourage young people to engage in learning.
- We will improve prevention by increasing the number of pupils who are identified as needing appropriate support earlier and in a timely manner.
- We aim to reduce the number of young people leaving compulsory education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification

We will know if we are doing well when:

- We have increased the numbers of young people benefitting from intervention within a school environment
- An early identification system is in place and fully operational at Key Stage 4
- The Percentage of 16 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) reduces
- The number of young people achieving local and national accreditations increases

5. Reduce the gap in attainment between pupils in advantaged and disadvantaged communities

Background

Education has the ability to empower people to make better life choices, be ambitious and confident about work, and contribute substantially to breaking the cycle of deprivation. The challenge is that we have the second highest percentage of pupils in Wales who are eligible for Free School Meals, and our figures demonstrate that these children are outperformed by children who are not in receipt of Free School Meals.

Poverty can have a negative effect particularly on the long-term opportunities and outcomes for children and young people throughout their life including education and employment opportunities. The choices that parents make can significantly influence their child's life opportunities and the multi-agency approach with Families First, Flying Start and other programmes recognises the support that families need to overcome the impact of poverty. Initiatives to tackle the wider areas of child poverty are included in our joint partnership document 'Caerphilly Delivers' as referred to earlier in this plan.

What would success look like?

- Parents will be supported to value what our schools do and encourage positive views about learning and achievement.
- Timely support will be provided to pupils who do not attend school regularly and we will help to raise aspirations by promoting and developing a mobile outreach provision for isolated communities.
- A Strategy will be developed to reduce the gap in attainment for children on Free School Meals to target resources appropriately so that ultimately regardless of the child or young persons social background they achieve their full potential.

We will know if we are doing well when:

- Improved levels of performance in all 5 indicators of performance at key stages 3 and 4.
- Learners gain more nationally recognised qualifications as a result of increased opportunities being provided in non-formal and formal settings.
- Reducing attainment gap between free school meals and non free school meals pupils
- Improved outcomes for pupils in receipt of Free School Meals.

6. Promote the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle

Background

Lifestyles of our local population (alcohol consumption, smoking, physical activity and diet) are generally unhealthy with 62% of our adult population overweight and above the Welsh average of 57%. We also have the second worst obesity rate in Wales at 26 % obese. Only 27% of adults report meeting the guidelines for daily fruit and vegetable consumption and this is significantly below the Welsh average. In terms of being physically active only 28% reported that they were active on five or more days a week, compared to 30% for Wales. Although life expectancy is increasing, there are inequalities within the borough where men living in the most deprived areas can expect to live over 19 years less healthy than those in the least deprived areas; for women the difference is 17 years.

What would success look like?

We will promote and improve Health and Well being to:

- Reduce the harm caused by alcohol
- Increase physical activity
- Reduce the prevalence of smoking
- Promote healthy eating
- Support Intergenerational schemes that promote community cohesion
- Carry out a consistent needs based approach across the authority for the use of intergenerational facilities
- Work in partnership with Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board to make sure that the services provided at the new Hospital at Ystrad Fawr are meeting local needs

It is important to note this is not an outcome that can be delivered by the Council alone and is very much a partnership with the health board, voluntary sector and other organisations. Lifestyle and individual choices play a large factor in improving quality of life and can be determined by environment and aspects of deprivation, which we are tackling through many initiatives.

We will know if we are doing well when:

- There is an increase in the percentage of adults physically active on 5 or more days a week *
- The number of adults who choose to eat healthily, measured by the % of adults eating at least 5 fruit and vegetables per day increases *
- The percentage of adults who are obese reduces * (*all derived from biennial Welsh Health Survey)

7. Invest in our council homes and their communities to transform lives

Background

We have an Improvement Objective which focuses specifically on improving the quality of homes as part of the Welsh Housing Quality standard (please see page 41 of Part 2) and preventing homelessness, however as this is a long term project (up to 2020) it is also appropriate for one of our medium term priority's, although the focus of this priority is on more ways we can help with energy saving to address the issue of fuel poverty.

What would success look like?

- The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) grant will run to provide energy saving improvements to properties. These will help Council homes be more efficient which will help reduce fuel poverty. This is one of our contributions towards tackling poverty so that fewer residents will be living in fuel poverty.
- Our homes will ultimately meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standards and will become more energy efficient with the installation of improvements such as new boilers and loft insulation.
- Tenants will be happy with their homes.
- Tenancy Support Officers provide advice to households to help them reduce their expenditure, this will include assessments and help with utilities such as water savings.
- Increase awareness of the Welsh Government Fuel Poverty Scheme to obtain greater take-up within CCBC.
- Bid for grant funding to qualifying areas within the new ECO Public and Private Sector grant.
- Raise the awareness of residents in the borough to the Green Deal and ECO grant.

We will know if we are doing well when:

- Fewer residents will be classed as living in fuel poverty
- Tenants will be more satisfied with their homes
- There will be financial savings' measured as a reduction in tenants outgoings as a direct result of a visit carried out by council staff, this will include water assist which is evidenced by a reduction in water rates (tenants can claim 'Water assist' if they are claiming benefits, have more than 3 children or certain medical conditions as named in the 'Water assist' form) and the installation of a water meter.
- There will be greater take up of Welsh Government Fuel Poverty Scheme and the Green Deal within CCBC
- Residents will receive improvements to their properties as result of the ECO grants, which provide energy saving measures.

8. Affordability - To deliver a medium term financial plan aimed at ultimately providing a period of stability that helps the authority to have a range of services in the future that are sustainable.

Background

Public services and Local Authorities are in unprecedented financial times as part of the overall austerity measures. The Welsh Government's Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for Caerphilly CBC for 2014/15 decreased by £8.13m. As a consequence of the financial settlement a package of savings totaling £14.2m was agreed to enable the Council to deliver a balanced budget for the 2014/15 financial year. However budgets for future years look set to reduce further, therefore it is important that we introduce **Affordability** as a new priority to ensure that full and proper consideration is given to future savings proposals in a way that protects and sustains our services.

What would success look like?

- The implementation of savings proposals at Council each year when the Budget is set in late February, will ensure that at the start of each financial year, a balanced budget is achievable
- Over a 2-3 year period, a reduction in expenditure that allows the services still retained by the Authority to have sufficient budgets to allow for service improvement

We will know if we are doing well when:-

- Council agreement to a total savings package that will deliver a balanced budget
- Budget monitoring reports followed by an outturn position at year-end that evidences that the savings have been achieved
- Services are maintained

PART 2 - Improvement Objectives 2014-2015



↑ PASSPORT TO EMPLOYMENT

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

CAERPHILLY Programme



ESF

Uywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ewrop & Cymru: Buddsoddi yn eich dyfodol
Cronfa Gyredolaethol Ewrop

Europe & Wales: Investing in your future
European Social Fund



**Our Shorter term priorities
2014/15**

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 13/14 consultation the public agreed. 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.

Improvement Objectives for 2014/15

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 1st 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 29 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:

- Create at least 150 work experience opportunities each year
- Create at least 25 apprenticeship opportunities each year
- Create at least 40 employment opportunities each year
- And contribute to the reduction of the number of people aged 18—24 claiming JSA and the number unemployed 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 have 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 1st April, 2013 and 31st 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

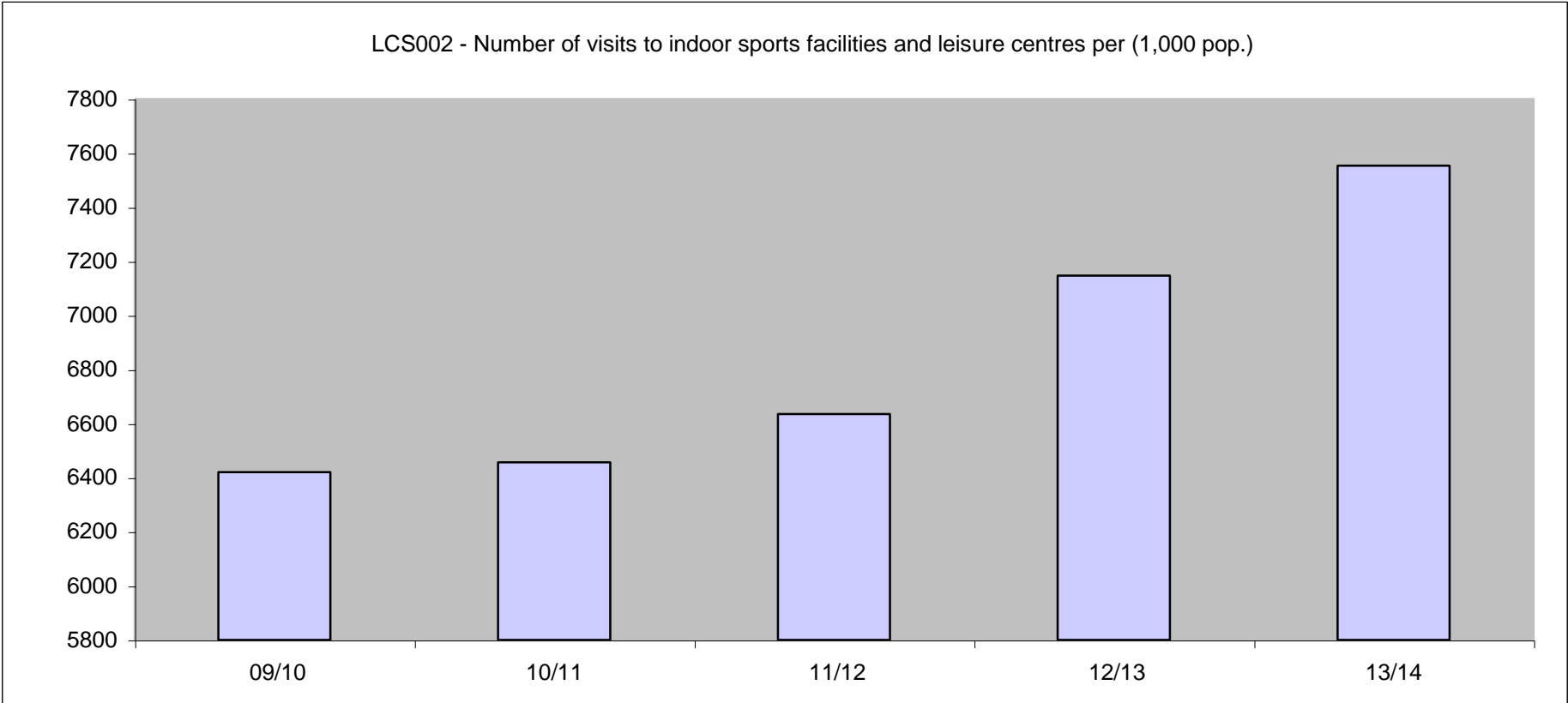
This improvement objective is concerned with improving the sporting and leisure facilities across our county borough. It's also about increasing the usage of our facilities. We want our borough to have excellent sporting and leisure facilities that encourage all parts of the community to be more active, 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, biennially, 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
- Safe and secure
- Adequately heated
- Fuel efficient and well insulated
- Contain up-to-date kitchens and bathrooms
- Well managed (for rented housing)
- 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 31st 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 now 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 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 Private Rented Sector (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
We will measure how much we are doing using the evidence below				
The Number of Foster Carers recruited.	18	25 (Over 2 years)	23	See previous years target
% Of children placed with Caerphilly Foster Carers.	44%	40%	47%	45%
% 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%
We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below				
% Of LAC achieving the Core Subject Indicator at KS2. (SCC/035)	58.33% (7/12)	64.28% (9/14)	71.40% (10/14)	78.57% (11/14)
% Of LAC achieving the Core Subject Indicator at KS3. (SCC/036)	34.62% (9/26)	33.33% (6/18)	42.90% (6/14)	41.66% (10/24)
The average external point score for 16yr olds looked after (SCC037) <i>*Target for 2014/15 is lower than 2013/14 result, as it is no longer a requirement for schools to set a target for the Average Points Score, which makes targets for this indicator difficult to set cumulatively across the authority. The level of performance can also be affected by the individual circumstances within each cohort, which can make predicting performance difficult due to the changeable nature of each situation.</i>	157	198	238	200*

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
We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below				
% 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%

IO 2 - Improve job opportunities by implementing the Council's Passport Scheme	2012/13 Result	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Result	2014/15 Target
We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below				
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%
We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below				
% Of positive outcomes achieved**	New	70%	77%	77%
**Positive outcomes mean participants who have gained employment or gone onto further Education following successful completion of the Passport Programme. Target cannot be set any higher as this is impacted by the future end of funding.				

** These are Jobs Growth Wales formal targets. Although we have exceeded our formal target requirements the Jobs Growth Wales funding element ends in DEC 14 so we have not set further local targets as this will impact what we can deliver.*

IO 3 - Develop an effective and accessible Youth Service that supports the personal and social development of young people	2012/13 Result	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Result	2014/15 Target
We will measure how much we are doing using the evidence below				
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
Number of young people engaged by Youth services – New for 14/15	New	8000	7848	8000
Increase the number of adult learners engaged in basic skills programme ①	New	800	804	To be deleted for 14/15
We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below				
% local inspections of selected youth service projects and clubs graded as adequate or above (wording revised from 13/14)	New for 2013/14	85%	75%	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	Results late June	90%
We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below				
% 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%	4%
% of New and Expectant Parents engaged by the service achieving a formal accreditation (Pre-16) ②	New Indicator 2013/14	80%	100%	Deleted for 14/15
% of New and Expectant Parents engaged by the service achieving a non-formal accreditation (Pre and Post 16) ②	New Indicator 2013/14	60%	100%	Deleted for 14/15

①Majority of learner user group did not come under the definition of youth (0-25) so removed for 14/15

②In 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
We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below				
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 *Performance for 13/14 was unusually high due to the Sport Relief Mile event, targets are increasing year on year	78,089	81,000	86,629	*83,000
Increase the number of Smartcard holders	101,211	112,000	112,797	122,000
Increase in the number of Free swims adults Ⓟ Provisional figure – still being validated	41,871	42,708 Ⓟ	45,412	46,320
Increase in the number of Free swims children (provisional) Ⓟ Provisional figure – still being validated	27,415	27,963Ⓟ	27,411	27,522
We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below				
The number of people participating in the health referral scheme <i>** Target is less than 13/14 performance due to an increase in the number of complex cases</i>	982	880	910	**840
% 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%
% 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%

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
% 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
We will measure how much we are doing using the evidence below				
Number of homes brought to WHQS as recorded on annual return to Welsh Government. <i>* The target published in 2013/14 was incorrect, the actual target should have been 80 homes</i>	63	Revised 80 (891*)	Figure available end of July 2014	80
NEW Number of homes compliant with WHQS in respect of their internal elements	N/A	N/A	657	1332
NEW Number of homes compliant with WHQS in respect of their external elements	N/A	N/A	23	2381
We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below				
NEW 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	85%	90%
The number of residents who want to volunteer to assist in the maintenance of environmental improvements to compliment quality housing * This indicator will be removed for 2014/15 as the environmental programme has been deferred to 2019/20. It is also difficult for us to measure the number of people who want to volunteer.	N/A	To increase the number of volunteers	1	
The number of local people that have received training as a result of a				

IO 5 – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities.	2012/13 Result	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Result	2014/15 Target
<p>contract containing a community benefit clause that will improve their skills and help them to gain employment</p> <p><i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15 because community benefits will be delivered over the period of the WHQS programme up to 2019/20, therefore it is difficult to set annual targets. The large contacts will have minimum requirement and monitoring of this will be part of the contact management, which will be a more appropriate mechanism to measure this than the Improvement Objective.</i></p>	N/A	5	5	
We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below				
<p>% of tenants whose homes have been improved internally through the WHQS programme are satisfied with the completed works</p> <p><i>(In 2013/14 this indicator was “Tenants who house meet the WHQS standard will be satisfied”)</i></p>	N/A	80%	92%	80%
<p>Number of organisations making successful applications to the Community Improvement Fund.</p> <p><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></p>	N/A	10	3	10
<p>The number of local people who gained employment as a result of a community benefit clause.</p>	N/A	N/A	1	

IO 5 – Investment in Council homes to transform lives and communities.	2012/13 Result	2013/14 Target	2013/14 Result	2014/15 Target
<p><i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15 because community benefits will be delivered over the period of the WHQS programme up to 2019/20, therefore it is difficult to set annual targets. The large contacts will have minimum requirement and monitoring of this will be part of the contact management, which will be a more appropriate mechanism to measure this than the Improvement Objective.</i></p>				

** 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
We will measure how much we are doing using the evidence below				
NEW Increase in the number of PRS accommodation units accessed by our service users through our social lettings agency which will be introduced within the current year	N/A	N/A	Not Available yet	30
NEW Produce and publicise Guidance on Equalities Act 2010 in housing	N/A	N/A	Not available yet	Guidance Produced
NEW Number of credit union rent accounts opened with Smart Money credit union which promotes access to the PRS by service users in receipt of benefits	N/A	N/A	56	100
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 <i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15</i>	Baselines not available, welfare reform changes not implemented until April 2013	1500	1666	N/A
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 <i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15</i>		120	335	N/A
We will measure how well we are doing using the evidence below				
NEW Reduction in the number of repeat homeless presentations	N/A	N/A	Estimate 20 repeat presentations per year	15

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
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) <i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15</i>	299	284	292.22	
The number of calendar days to deliver low cost adaption in private dwellings where the DFG process is not used (PSR006) <i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15</i>	42	40	39.37	
We will measure whether anyone is better off using the evidence below				
NEW % of cases who have had their risk of homelessness prevented by assistance to remain in their existing accommodation	N/A	N/A	New indicator for 2014/15	50%
NEW % of cases who have had their risk of homelessness prevented by accessing alternative accommodation available to them for a min of 6 months	N/A	N/A	New indicator for 2014/15	50%
NEW % 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	N/A	N/A	New indicator for 2014/15	50%
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) <i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15</i>	88.2%	85%	90.73%	
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) <i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15</i>	3.07%	3.6%	3.83%	

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
<p>The value of financial savings generated for tenants as a direct result of face to face support on the affect of welfare reforms</p> <p><i>* This indicator will be removed for 2014/15</i></p>	<p>Baseline not available, welfare reform changes not implemented until April 2013.</p>	<p>£150,000</p>	<p>£458,709.27</p>	

** The indicators referenced with a * will be removed from the Improvement Objective for 13/14 because the new indicators added to the 2014/15 objective are more focussed on prevention through collaboration than the previous objective and the PIs we have chosen more accurately reflective this focus.*

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

How you can contact us

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 OR by Web link:

https://eforms.caerphilly.gov.uk/AF3/an/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=FcP9x2bt_Eq&s=AZ/IXrNun6sq/im3fvK+tah14MvD+uS4Tlx2Ku3UPBZrfdauS1RHgg==&pg=site and follow the instructions on screen:



The screenshot shows the top of a web browser displaying the Caerphilly County Borough Council logo and name in both English and Welsh. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail for 'home'. The main content area is titled 'Improvement Objectives - feedback'. It includes a red warning that fields marked with an asterisk are mandatory. The first question asks for agreement with council priorities, with radio button options for Yes, Partly, and No. The second question asks for more information to be published, with a text input field. Below the form, there is explanatory text about the council's commitment to feedback and contact information for Ros Roberts. At the bottom, there are 'Submit' and 'Cancel' buttons.

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home

Improvement Objectives - feedback

Fields marked * are mandatory

Do you agree that the priorities the council has set are the right priorities? (these are called Improvement Objectives) * Yes Partly No

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?) *

It is important that we are working on the areas that are most important to you and your opinion helps us to gauge this.

Whilst we are not able to reply directly to your feedback from this questionnaire if you have specific ideas or questions about the councils priorities please contact Ros Roberts on 01443 864328 or email roberr@caerphilly.gov.uk.

You are also welcome to give your views on a range of issues by joining our [Viewpoint Panel](#) or by [following us on twitter and facebook](#).

Thank you for your time.

Alternatively, please contact:

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www.caerphilly.gov.uk