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Date: 1st December 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

A digital meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 8th December, 2021** at **10.30 am** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so.

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

Yours faithfully,

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

Christina Harrhy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A G E N D A

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

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

A greener place Man gwyrdach



To approve and sign the following minutes: -

3 Cabinet held on 24th November 2021. 1 - 4

To note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

4 Cabinet Forward Work Programme. 5 - 8

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

5 Welsh In Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032. 9 - 64

6 COVID-19 - Economic Recovery Framework. 65 - 110

7 Council Tax Base 2022-2023. 111 - 120

8 Implementation of a Hybrid Meeting Solution. 121 - 128

9 Grass Cutting Regimes. 129 - 142

Circulation:

Councillors S. Cook, N. George, C.J. Gordon, P.A. Marsden, J. Pritchard, Mrs E. Stenner, A. Whitcombe and R. Whiting

And Appropriate Officers

HOW WE WILL USE YOUR INFORMATION

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Agenda Item 3



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER 2021 AT 2:00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor P. Marsden (Leader) - Chair

Councillors:

S. Cook (Social Care and Housing), N. George (Waste, Public Protection and Street Scene), C. Gordon (Corporate Services), J. Pritchard (Infrastructure and Property) and R. Whiting (Learning and Leisure).

Together with:

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

Also in Attendance:

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer), S. Richards (Head of Education Planning and Strategy), R. Kyte (Head of Regeneration and Planning), A. Dallimore (Regeneration Services Manager), J. Carpenter (Finance Manager - Revenues), M. Afzal (Committee Services Officer) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Leader reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed but would not be live streamed, however a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here To View](#). She advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E. Stenner (Performance, Economy and Enterprise), A. Whitcombe (Sustainability, Planning and Fleet) and C. Harray (Chief Executive).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. CABINET – 10TH NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

4. CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – TO NOTE

Cabinet was provided with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme, which detailed the scheduled reports until the 23rd February 2022. Members were reminded that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme is a working document and therefore subject to change.

It was noted that Agenda Item 6 – Grass Cutting Regimes had been deferred to the Cabinet meeting to be held on 8th December 2021 and would not be considered at this meeting.

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

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme be noted.

5. TEAM CAERPHILLY-BETTER TOGETHER TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY – 6 MONTH UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report which updated Cabinet on the progress under the Team Caerphilly-Better Together Transformation Strategy in line with the programme management arrangements. Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 9th November 2021 and their comments were detailed in Section 10 of the Officer's report.

The report provided an update on the action taken to deliver the strategy to date and included a summary of progress against the strategic action, including the well-being and place-shaping framework and the current series of corporate reviews. It was also included the commercial and investment strategy and the continuing Caerphilly Conversation.

Reference was made to 5.2 of the report which detailed the summary of progress against each of the ten corporate reviews and the Head of Education Planning and Strategy outlined the strategies and policies that have been launched within the last six months. Cabinet also received an update on the progress made against some of the significant projects reported within the Place-shaping Framework.

Clarification was sought in relation to the Chartist Gardens Development and Cabinet was advised that planning has been approved subject to the signing of any necessary legal agreements.

The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services highlighted how the progress set out against the projects in the Place-shaping Framework include all the Council's wellbeing objectives. Cabinet was pleased to see the outcome of the six-monthly review and welcomed the suggestion to see the progress of the projects with before and after photographs.

Following consideration and discussion of the report and by way of electronic voting and verbal confirmation the report was noted.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report the content of the report and the views of Scrutiny be noted.

6. GRASS CUTTING REGIMES

As noted, this report had been deferred to the Cabinet meeting to be held on 8th December 2021.

7. REGIONAL EMPLOYABILITY PROPOSAL

Consideration was given to the report which sought endorsement for the principle of locally delivered, regionally coordinated approach to employability post-EU and also sought approval for the Framework for Future Employment (The Framework) in the Cardiff Capital Region as attached in Appendix A of the Officer's report.

Cabinet noted that the report had been compiled in partnership with colleagues representing employability across the Cardiff Capital Region. Local Authorities across the region had successfully delivered employability for over two decades which had supported tens of thousands of residents into employment, better paid employment or into further learning; helped our young NEET residents; and been a key pillar for early intervention and prevention.

The Regional Skills Partnership Local Authority Cluster Group have been working collaboratively to produce a new regional framework to guide how employability activities are delivered in the region in future. The key principles of the framework were outlined which would form the basis for regional applications for post-EU funding for employability including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund when it is launched.

The Head of Regeneration and Planning outlined the shared principles detailed in the report, which reflected on the lessons learnt from 20 years of employability projects.

The Head of Education Planning and Strategy and the Head of Regeneration and Planning provided clarification in relation to how the Framework fits in with other existing employability programmes run by the Welsh Government and the Department for Work and Pensions. Cabinet was advised that it is the impetus to get a really effective partnership approach within the region, working closely with partners to avoid any duplication of employability provision.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting and verbal confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report: -

- i. The principle of a locally delivered, regionally coordinated approach to employability post-EU be approved.
- ii. The Framework for Future Employability in the CCR as shown at Appendix A be approved.

8. BUSINESS RATE RELIEF – WG FUNDING

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval of a local discretionary rate relief scheme for the financial year 2021/22 using funding provided by the Welsh Government for this purpose.

Cabinet noted that the local discretionary rate relief scheme for the financial year 2021/22 using £452k funding provided by Welsh Government through the Local Government Financial Settlement. Business rate payers in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors are receiving 100% rate relief for the 2021/22 financial year under a separate WG scheme and so have no business rates to pay for this period. It is therefore proposed that this scheme targets those ratepayers which still have to pay business rates for this year. It was therefore proposed that certain criteria adopted by WG in their rate relief schemes will apply to this scheme to ensure the rate relief is targeted as effectively as possible. Cabinet was referred to the criteria at Point 5 of the Officer's report.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting and verbal confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for the reasons contained in the Officer's report the proposal for a local discretionary rate relief scheme for the financial year 2021/22 as detailed in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.9 be approved and adopted.

9. PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

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

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 14 and 16 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

10. EXEMPT ITEM – THE LAWNS RHYMNEY – CULVERT ISSUES AND SUBSEQUENT COST OVERRUN

Following consideration and discussion it was moved and seconded that recommendations contained in the Officer's report be approved and by way of electronic voting and verbal confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that for reasons contained in the Officer's report the recommendations at 3.1 (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) be approved.

The meeting closed at 2:40pm

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 8th December 2021.

CHAIR

Cabinet Forward Work Programme as at 1st December 2021

08/12/2021 10:30	Economic Recovery Framework Report	To update Cabinet on our strategic approach in relation to assisting businesses across the county borough to recover from the pandemic and to provide information on progress to date.	Hudson, Paul;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
08/12/2021 10:30	Council Tax base for 2022/23	For Cabinet to agree the calculation of the Council Tax base for 2022/23.	O'Donnell, Sean;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
08/12/2021 10:30	Procurement and Implementation of a Hybrid Meeting solution	To seek Cabinet approval to appoint a preferred supplier of a hybrid meeting solution for the Council.	Edmunds, Richard (Ed);	Cllr. Gordon, Colin J;
08/12/2021 10:30	Welsh Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032	For Cabinet to consider and approve the new 10- year plan.	Cole, Keri; Mutch, Sarah;	Cllr. Whiting, Ross;
08/12/2021 10:30	Grass Cutting Regimes	To seek the views of Cabinet in relation to grass cutting regimes across the county borough and proposals to enhance and promote bio-diversity following consultation with local members and presentation to Scrutiny Committee.	Headington, Mike;	Cllr. George, Nigel;
12/01/2022 10:30	Active Travel Network Map Review and Consultation	Review of the statutory consultation process/responses and approval of the ATNM prior to submission to WG by the 31st December 2021.	Lloyd, Marcus; Campbell, Clive;	Cllr. Pritchard, James;

Cabinet Forward Work Programme as at 1st December 2021

12/01/2022 10:30	Newbridge to Risca Regeneration Masterplan	To obtain approval to consult on the Draft Newbridge to Risca Corridor Masterplan, the 4th of the Masterplans aligned under the regeneration Strategy "A Foundation for Success", which sets out the regeneration aspiration for the area for the next five years and beyond.	Kyte, Rhian;	Cllr. Whitcombe, Andrew;
Special Cabinet 19/01/2022 10:30	Draft Budget Proposals for 2022/23	To present Cabinet with details of draft budget proposals for the 2022/23 financial year to allow for a period of consultation prior to final decision by Council on the 24th February 2022.	Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;
26/01/2022 10:30	21st Century Schools – Band B - Phase 2: Consultation Report / Statutory Notice	For Members to consider the contents of 21st Century Schools consultation report prior to determination to proceed to Statutory Notice by Cabinet in December 2021.	West, Andrea; Richards, Sue;	Cllr. Whiting, Ross;
09/02/2022 10:30	HRA Charges (rent increase) report	Members to agree the level of rent increase for council tenants effective from April 2022.	Harris, Stephen;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;
09/02/2022 10:30	Report from Task and Finish Group on Non-Residential Care Charges	This report outlines the findings and recommendations of the task and finish group established to review charges for non-residential care set by Caerphilly County Borough Council.	Jacques, Mark;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;

Cabinet Forward Work Programme as at 1st December 2021

09/02/2022 10:30	Pedestrian and Cycle Zones (School Streets)	To update Cabinet on the effectiveness and outcomes of the experimental pedestrian and cycle zone traffic regulation orders implemented outside three primary schools within the borough.	Lloyd, Marcus; Smith, Dean;	Cllr. Pritchard, James;
23/02/2022 10:30	Oakdale Housing Development	For Cabinet to consider the development options presented by Willmott Dixon on behalf of Caerphilly Homes, on the basis of need and viability with regard to the site of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School.	Roberts-Waite, Jane;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;
23/02/2022 10:30 Page 7	Low Cost Home Ownership	The LCHO (Low Cost Home Ownership) report will document the formulation, implementation and the publication of a new policy which governs the process by which the Council will sell homes to people living and/or working in the borough wanting to access homeownership but cannot afford to do so without some form of public subsidy.	Roberts-Waite, Jane;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;
23/02/2022 10:30	Ty Darren site in Risca	To discuss with Cabinet the proposed development plan and construction contract for the former Ty Darren site in Risca by Caerphilly Homes.	Roberts-Waite, Jane;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;

Cabinet Forward Work Programme as at 1st December 2021

23/02/2022 10:30	Welsh Government Lease Scheme Proposal	To discuss the WG lease scheme proposal in comparison to Caerphilly Keys and to seek a decision on which scheme we take forward for PRS option to assist in the discharge of statutory Homeless Duties.	Denman, Kerry;	Cllr. Cook, Shayne;
23/02/2022 10:30	Budget Proposals for 2022/23	To present Cabinet with details of draft budget proposals for the 2022/23 financial year to allow for a period of consultation prior to final decision by Council on the 24th February 2022.	Harris, Stephen R;	Cllr. Stenner, Eluned;



CABINET - 8TH DECEMBER 2021

SUBJECT: WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2032

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report for cabinet members, will present the proposed Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 and ask approval to submit to Welsh Government in January 2022 for publication and implementation by September 2022.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is made under Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and complies with The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019 and The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020. When setting targets, due regard has been given to the statutory guidance issued by Welsh Ministers.
- 2.2 The legal requirement with the new regulations is to draft the plan with consultation this term, submission in January 2022, publication in Summer 2022 following Welsh Government Ministerial approval of the plan, with the implementation from September 2022.
- 2.3 The minimum target of 26% for learners in year 1 by 2032 is set by Welsh Government in order to meet the 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 target. In order to meet this ambitious target, we will need to build a new Primary School and expand others to create the places. In addition, we will need a communication plan to increase the take up of those places and our starting point will need additional provision in Ti a Fi and Cylchoedd in the early years.
- 2.4 When we expand our Welsh medium provision, we will also need to expand our Welsh speaking workforce along with a substantial number of other actions highlighted at the end of each outcome area of the plan.
- 2.5 The Welsh Government recognises the need for capital investment and has created additional capital funding alongside the 21st century school Band B programme, which we have worked with the 21st century schools planning team to develop robust capital bids. We will need careful planning within Education teams to support the transition for

children and families to enable incremental transition over the coming 10 years and prevent a detrimental sudden unmanaged impact on English medium schools.

- 2.6 The Welsh Education Forum meets termly to monitor progress towards actions and has identified the need for an ongoing task group under the forum to drive forward and coordinate activities around communication and promotional work linking to the Welsh Language Strategy and forum. Part of this work will also include how we develop and promote latecomer immersion provision as well as increased Welsh speaking workforce.
- 2.7 The consultation is currently open and will be live until 5th December 2021 when comments will be considered for the final Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and can be discussed with Cabinet on 8th December 2021 ready for submission to Welsh Government January 2022.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet Members are asked to receive the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan as part of the consultation process and comment regarding sufficiency of information and targets to achieve the outcome areas and meet our minimum 26% target in year 1 cohort by 2032.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Compliance with The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019 and The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 This Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is made under Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and complies with The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019 and The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020. When setting targets, due regard has been given to the statutory guidance issued by Welsh Ministers.
- 5.2 This plan outlines how we intend to work with the Welsh Government and a wide range of stakeholders to work towards delivering the Cymraeg 2050 ambition of 1 million Welsh speakers as well as the Programme for Government 2021-2026. The funding will support our aspirations for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act for a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language regardless of your socio demographic context. This plan is intrinsically linked to delivering our integrated targets, using the sustainable development principles, across the Caerphilly county borough including Childcare Sufficiency Assessment plan 2022-2027, the Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 and our Caerphilly Corporate Plan 2018-2023 especially Objective 1 Improve Education Opportunities for All and the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 Objective 5 – Welsh Language. The plan demonstrates an importance of improving standards and enabling positive transition throughout education to positive education, training, and employment opportunities, as well as strong connections to A More Equal Caerphilly, A More Prosperous Caerphilly as well as A Caerphilly of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language.

- 5.3 It is clearly understood that to increase the number of children accessing Welsh medium education provision we need to focus on increasing opportunities for children and their families in the early years. Increasing the number of places in childcare and nursery education with a follow through to allow 100% transition throughout Welsh medium education will increase the numbers of Welsh speakers leaving school and entering employment, education, and training opportunities. There is a high demand across all roles in the workforce for Welsh speakers, so it is critical to increase the number of young people leaving school who speak Welsh as well as increasing the opportunities for adult learners.
- 5.4 Our 10year target over the lifespan of this plan is to increase the places in year 1 to between 26% (520) and 30% (600) of children in Welsh medium education by 2030/31. The Welsh Government guidance document, outlines the methodology in calculating the target, shows that in 2019/20 our percentage was 17.9% (we are in group 3). The other local authorities in Gwent are in group 4. This is a challenging target and needs to be considered across all aspects of our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.
- 5.5 Our current position is based on actual places in reception in 2020 and includes ongoing estimates for places available and being created through our current capital development programme. In 2020 there were 421 Welsh language places available which will increase to 466 places available in year 1 by 2031 through our current expansion capital programme. However, the current year 1 cohort actual take up is 366 Welsh language places, which is lower than those available. Based on current estimates for birth rate and applications the number in year 1 in 2031 the number is predicted to be 411. There is a clear need to develop a minimum additional 54 year 1 places which is likely to require a new Primary School and expansion of existing provision to achieve 26% (520) children in Welsh medium education in year 1 by 2032. Previously we have based our development on the parental demand survey which showed a demand of approx. 18% but we are moving towards setting a more stretching target of 26% by 2032 to direct future developments.
- 5.6 The analysis of the places in the borough show there are particular areas requiring development. The movement of Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon to Cwmcarn is anticipated to serve their catchment area more effectively from the more central location in the valley. The location should improve transition rates although it will possibly need development of Ti a Fi and Cylch in the north and south of the valley to serve the school's potential expansion. The site is also big enough to support the development of secondary provision in the future if needed. A pinch point for places in the Caerphilly basin area has been overcome initially by the expansion of Y Castell and YGG Caerffili but continues to necessitate the development of a Welsh medium primary in the Bedwas Machen area in line with the 21st century schools band B programme. Analysis of our school housing stock would show the need for development in Ysgol Trelyn and Ysgol y Lawnt to move towards 21st century schools in the areas alongside childcare provision. With all expansion or capital developments, we will consider how we can also develop childcare on site for 2-11year olds to improve transition and support our families who need the provision.
- 5.7 The actions within this Welsh in Education Strategic Plan fit with our strategic aims in the Caerphilly 5year Welsh Language Strategy:
1. Increase the number of families where the Welsh language is spoken with children

2. Increase the use of Welsh among children and young people, increase their awareness of the value of the Welsh language, and ensure better access to social activities and events through the medium of Welsh
3. Support community groups and help them to increase the use of Welsh within their localities.
4. Promote and improve availability of Welsh-medium services in the borough

5.8 There are seven outcome areas which each have specific requirements under the regulations and subsequent guidance met through the detailed information in each section and the high level 10year targets.

Outcome 1: More nursery children / 3year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 2: More reception class children / 5year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

Outcome 4: More learners study for their assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

Outcome 6: An increase in Welsh medium education provision for learners with additional learning needs (in accordance with the duties determined by the ALN Act)

Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff to be able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.

5.9 **Conclusion**

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 has updated information regarding the current position in each outcome area and has identified high level actions in order to meet the minimum 26% of the year 1 cohort taught through the medium of Welsh target by 2032.

The consultation period has opened and is being circulated to all required consultees as well as being available to the public via our council website.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 There are no specific assumptions.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan stimulates demand for Welsh medium provision and Welsh language Education to enable positive engagement across all communities with the Welsh language. There are substantive positive impacts for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan including promoting and supporting development of the Welsh language across communities through Welsh medium schools and Further Education as well wider community support for parents to develop their Welsh language skills. There are substantive links to the equalities, 21st Century Schools and CCBC Welsh Language strategies as well as the Welsh Governments strategy for 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 has updated information regarding the current position in each outcome area and has identified high level actions in order to meet the minimum 26% of the year 1 cohort taught

through the medium of Welsh target by 2032. The consultation period has opened and is being circulated to all required consultees as well as being available to the public via our council website

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications of this report as any resources required have been incorporated into existing resources, plans or future bids.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications of this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 All views in the consultation are contained within this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019 and The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020.

Author: Sarah Mutch, Early Years and Partnerships Manager,
mutchs@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Dave Street, Acting Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Councillor Ross Whiting, Cabinet Member for Learning and Leisure
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carol Andrews, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Steve Harris, Head of Corporate Services & Acting S151 Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion & ALN
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Officer.
Welsh Education Forum

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032
Appendix 2 Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 action plan
Appendix 3 Integrated Impact Assessment

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Caerphilly
Welsh in Education
Strategic Plan
2022-2032

Planning for the future of Welsh
Medium Education in Caerphilly
County Borough

Contents page

Contents	Page number
The vision for Welsh language	4
Introduction and aspirations	4
Outcome 1: More nursery children / 3year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh	7
What is our current position?	7
What was the impact of coronavirus?	12
Where do we want to be and how will we get there?	12
What are the high-level actions required to improve the number of children entering Welsh language nursery?	13
Outcome 2: More reception class children / 5year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh	14
What is our current position?	14
What was the impact of coronavirus?	15
Where do we want to be and how will we get there?	15
What are the high-level actions required to increase the number of children entering Welsh medium education at 5years?	16
Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another	16
What is our current position?	16
What was the impact of coronavirus?	18
Where do we want to be and how will we get there?	18
What are the high-level actions required to enable children to improve their Welsh language skills?	19
Outcome 4: More learners study for their assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh	19
What is our current position?	19
What was the impact of coronavirus?	22

Where do we want to be and how will we get there?	22
What are the high-level actions required to increase the number of learners studying qualifications in Welsh and through the medium of Welsh?	22
Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school	23
What is our current position?	23
What was the impact of coronavirus?	24
Where do we want to be and how will we get there?	24
What are the high-level actions required to increase the opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts?	25
Outcome 6: An increase in Welsh medium education provision for learners with additional learning needs (in accordance with the duties determined by the ALN Act)	25
What is our current position?	25
What was the impact of coronavirus?	26
Where do we want to be and how will we get there?	26
What are the high-level actions required to improve Welsh medium education provision for learners with additional learning needs?	27
Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff to be able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh	27
What is our current position?	27
What was the impact of coronavirus?	29
Where do we want to be and how will we get there?	30
What are the high-level actions required to increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh and through the medium of Welsh?	30

The Vision for Welsh language

The year 2050: The Welsh language is thriving, the number of speakers has reached a million, and it is used in every aspect of life. Among those who do not speak Welsh there is goodwill and a sense of ownership towards the language and a recognition by all of its contribution to the culture, society, and economy of Wales. Our vision is to secure favourable circumstances throughout the country that support language acquisition and use of Welsh language skills. We want to see an increase in language transmission in the family, early introduction of Welsh to every child, an education system that provides Welsh language skills for all

Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh speakers (Welsh Government, 2017)

Our vision for Education in our Shared Ambitions strategy for Caerphilly county borough is:

Raise standards and ensure our learners are healthy, confident, proud, and ambitious and can benefit from high quality learning opportunities, settings, and experiences.

Introduction and aspirations

Caerphilly County Borough Council has demonstrated its commitment to developing high quality inclusive Welsh medium education provision for children and young people over many years. The ongoing commitment to Welsh medium education development is evidenced through our ambitious 21st Century School Band B programme as well as our Welsh medium and Childcare capital programmes to provide quality infrastructure for children, young people, and their families.

This Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is made under Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and complies with The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019 and The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020. When setting targets, due regard has been given to the statutory guidance issued by Welsh Ministers.

This plan outlines how we intend to work with the Welsh Government and a wide range of stakeholders to work towards delivering the Cymraeg 2050 ambition of 1 million Welsh speakers as well as the Programme for Government 2021-2026. The funding will support our aspirations for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act for a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language regardless of your socio demographic context. This plan is intrinsically linked to delivering our integrated targets, using the sustainable development principles, across the Caerphilly county borough including Childcare Sufficiency Assessment plan 2022-2027, the Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 and our Caerphilly Corporate Plan 2018-2023 especially Objective 1 Improve Education Opportunities for All and the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 Objective 5 – Welsh Language. The plan demonstrates an importance of improving standards and enabling positive transition throughout education to positive education, training, and employment opportunities, as well as strong connections to

A More Equal Caerphilly, A More Prosperous Caerphilly as well as A Caerphilly of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language.

The plan will also reflect our Transformation Strategy #Team Caerphilly, Better Together, *“To create capacity and foresight to develop solutions to some of the County Borough’s biggest challenges, ensuring the Council understands and responds to the changing needs and priorities of our communities”*.

Involvement – there are many stakeholders critical to achieving our overarching targets of 26% Welsh medium education places in our year 1 by 2031. The Welsh Education Forum (WEF) involves various members from across Education teams, Policy, Senior Leadership Teams representing Schools, Councillors, Parent Network, Menter Iaith Caerffili, Mudiad Meithrin, Rhieni dros Addyg Gymraeg (RhAG), Cymraeg i Blant, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Coleg y Cymoedd, South East Wales Education Achievement Service, and Welsh Government. The old saying *‘it takes a village to raise a child’* holds true and the Welsh Education Forum is ever evolving to include new members who have an interest in delivering towards our targets in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and supporting our communication plan to promote the benefits of developing a bilingual community. There are good links between the Welsh Language forum and the Welsh Education Forum to ensure a consistent coordinated approach to promotional work.

Long term – this Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is over a ten-year period but also part of an ambitious longer-term commitment in the Education and Corporate Services directorate to develop our Education system to be of the highest quality to meet the progressive needs of our learners. The system recognises the importance of developing our school environments, embedding early years in education as well as opportunities outside of schools for young people and families to embed Welsh language in our communities.

Collaboration – there are a wide range of committed partners to delivering our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan starting with our children, young people, and families in our communities. There are many targets in our plan that will require different evolving collaborations to achieve. We have a long history of positive collaborations across the region to develop our early years Additional Learning Needs resources for the childcare sector, sharing good practice and resources across our school communities, as well as promotional activity through our Welsh policy officer’s group.

Integration – many outcomes are cross cutting over different plans and strategies with common integrated outcomes and indicators. It is essential to link across the various plans including Welsh Language Strategy, Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, Corporate Wellbeing Objective, and the Welsh Government programme for government to ensure we are effectively delivering on integrated outcome areas.

Prevention – the outcomes reach across all demographic contexts and family circumstances and are essential in preventing detrimental impacts for children and young people. The plan includes giving all children a best start in life, through to those who may follow a less traditional academic path and those who may wish to learn Welsh later in life. Over recent plans we have developed appropriate specialist provisions in Ysgol Cwm Derwen and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni to ensure a holistic inclusive approach for all children throughout Education. The specialist provision will

enable children regardless of their circumstances, developmental or medical needs to access Welsh language provision. Our communication plan will promote the provision we have available within the borough to families to support their Education choices and encourage children and young people to embrace opportunities offered in bilingual communities.

The 2011 Census results showed a decline in the number of Welsh speakers in Wales and the South East region since 2001, however, the percentage of Welsh speakers in the county borough has remained constant. While the Welsh Language Commissioner's Welsh Language Use in Wales Survey shows that people fluent in Welsh are more likely to speak Welsh in everyday life, and twice as likely to attend a social event in the medium of Welsh, the 2013-15 survey states that the number of people who say that they can speak Welsh in the Caerphilly county borough areas has fallen from 46% to 38%. This emphasises that the period when young people leave Welsh medium education as a crucial one, in terms of establishing patterns of language use.

Caerphilly Welsh Education Forum meets minimum termly with the main purpose to:

- Monitor the objectives and partner operational plans towards meeting the targets of the Welsh Education Strategic Plan
- Provide updates in relation to objectives within their organisational remit
- Progress collaborative and partnership opportunities as they arise to increase the Welsh medium provision and community opportunities available in Caerphilly
- Share best practice and innovation locally, regionally, and nationally

Local Authorities have a statutory duty under section 10 of the Learner Travel Measure (Wales) to promote access to education and training through the medium of Welsh. Currently Caerphilly Council provides transport to the relevant school (i.e. catchment or nearest school) of 1.5miles primary and 2miles secondary as well as post-16 transport to schools / colleges.

It is clearly understood that to increase the number of children accessing Welsh medium education provision we need to focus on increasing opportunities for children and their families in the early years. Increasing the number of places in childcare and nursery education with a follow through to allow 100% transition throughout Welsh medium education will increase the numbers of Welsh speakers leaving school and entering employment, education, and training opportunities. There is a high demand across all roles in the workforce for Welsh speakers, so it is critical to increase the number of young people leaving school who speak Welsh as well as increasing the opportunities for adult learners.

Our 10year target over the lifespan of this plan is to increase the places in year 1 to between 26% (520) and 30% (600) of children in Welsh medium education by 2030/31. The Welsh Government guidance document, outlines the methodology in calculating the target, shows that in 2019/20 our percentage was 17.9% (we are in group 3). The other local authorities in Gwent are in group 4. This is a challenging target and needs to be considered across all aspects of our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Our current position is based on actual places in reception in 2020 and includes ongoing estimates for places available and being created through our current capital

development programme. In 2020 there were 421 Welsh language places available which will increase to 466 places available in year 1 by 2031 through our current expansion capital programme. However, the current year 1 cohort actual take up is 366 Welsh language places, which is lower than those available. Based on current estimates for birth rate and applications the number in year 1 in 2031 the number is predicted to be 411. There is a clear need to develop a minimum additional 54 year 1 places which is likely to require a new Primary School and expansion of existing provision to achieve 26% (520) children in Welsh medium education in year 1 by 2032. Previously we have based our development on the parental demand survey which showed a demand of approx. 18% but we are moving towards setting a more stretching target of 26% by 2032 to direct future developments.

The analysis of the places in the borough show there are particular areas requiring development. The movement of Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon to Cwmcarn is anticipated to serve their catchment area more effectively from the more central location in the valley. The location should improve transition rates although it will possibly need development of Ti a Fi and Cylch in the north and south of the valley to serve the school's potential expansion. The site is also big enough to support the development of secondary provision in the future if needed. A pinch point for places in the Caerphilly basin area has been overcome initially by the expansion of Y Castell and YGG Caerffili but continues to necessitate the development of a Welsh medium primary in the Bedwas Machen area in line with the 21st century schools band B programme. Analysis of our school housing stock would show the need for development in Ysgol Trelyn and Ysgol y Lawnt to move towards 21st century schools in the areas alongside childcare provision. With all expansion or capital developments, we will consider how we can also develop childcare on site for 2-11 year olds to improve transition and support our families who need the provision.

The actions within this Welsh in Education Strategic Plan fit with our strategic aims in the Caerphilly 5year Welsh Language Strategy:

1. Increase the number of families where the Welsh language is spoken with children
2. Increase the use of Welsh among children and young people, increase their awareness of the value of the Welsh language, and ensure better access to social activities and events through the medium of Welsh
3. Support community groups and help them to increase the use of Welsh within their localities.
4. Promote and improve availability of Welsh-medium services in the borough

Outcome 1: More nursery children / 3year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

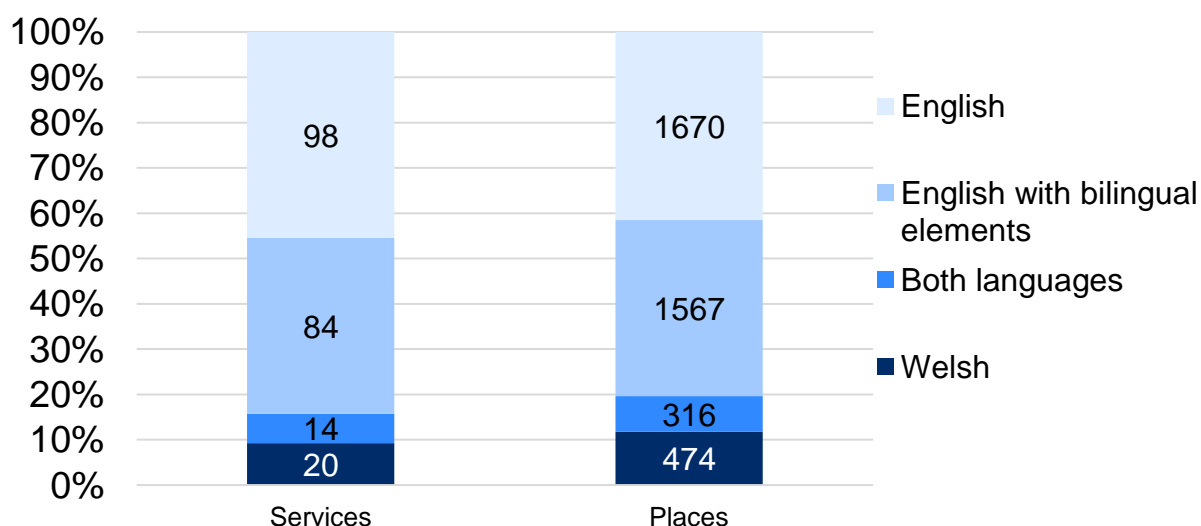
What is our current position?

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment data from the refresh 2020 has been analysed to understand our current position.

Childminder places fluctuate according to the age of children and registration number and so have been excluded from our calculation of percentage. However, the majority of our childminders state they are category 1 English language or English with some Welsh. There are 5 childminders who state they offer bilingual (category 2 English / Welsh language) places.

Group-based childcare provision includes a range of types of childcare including day nurseries, playgroup, wraparound, afterschool, breakfast, and holiday provision. All places have been counted based on their registered number and have only been counted once. The data shows in the 2019/20 data snapshot pre-covid, there were 4361 registered childcare places, of which 994 (22.8%) were category 3 Welsh language, and 128 (2.9%) were category 2 English / Welsh language based on the Caerphilly Childcare Sufficiency Assessment data refresh 2020. This is a positive position but still requires an increase in registered places by 2032. Analysis of the data shows areas where provision needs to be considered for development and which type of provision may be needed. Much of the current development has been on or near school sites to improve transition.

The graph below shows the number of childcare and play services and places according to the main working language of the service (Care Inspectorate Wales Data 2019-20)



Childcare continues to support more children to enter Welsh medium Primary as well as offer the wraparound services for working families.

Childcare Setting	Language Category	Registered places	Flying Start places	Childcare Offer	Early Years Education
Cylchoedd Meithrin	3 – Welsh	185	62	Yes	Yes
Clwb Meithrin, Carco a Gwyliau	3 – Welsh	233	0	Yes	No

Dechriau'n Deg Parc Y Felin	3 – Welsh	20	20	No	No
Broga Bach Day Nursery	2 – Welsh / English	12	0	Yes	No
Dewi Sant	2 – Welsh / English	24	40	Yes	Yes

The nursery cohort is primarily in Primary School in the September term and complemented by 14 contracted non-maintained settings who are registered to deliver Early Years Education in the Spring and Summer term each year. Of the 14 contracted settings, 7 are category 3 Welsh language and 1 is category 2 Welsh and English language. Based on our current capacity calculations there are 421 nursery places available in Category 3 Welsh language Primary Schools which will increase to 466 nursery places by 2032 with our current capital investment programme. However, the current numbers in Welsh language nursery in September 2020 were 344 which is below the capacity that could be available, although sometimes demand for places are not where there is surplus capacity. We understand the need to increase the number of children accessing Welsh language early years in Ti a Fi and Cylchoedd and good transition to Primary School in order to increase the number of children in Welsh language Nursery provision.

There is a long commitment to partnership working in the Caerphilly borough to develop early years provision. The Early Years Integration Transformation Programme is a pilot to bring services together for families removing the complexity of funding streams and enabling access to the right support at the right time by the right person. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will link closely with the Midwifery and Early Years Strategy which is being developed for Caerphilly borough as well as the regional Early Years Integration Transformation Programme plan, which sits under the Gwent Public Service Board, Best Start in Life. Developing a closer working relationship with midwifery will improve accessible information to families from the very beginning.

Our Family Information Service remains at the heart of early years providing information and support for families. This has gained increased importance as we move to an early years' hub (antenatal to 7years early intervention) model. The early years' website is currently under development to update all the information and make it easier for families and professionals to find the information they need. Our commitment to developing accessible Welsh language provision will show through our updated early years website, which will make information easy, attractive, social, and timely and have Welsh language information easily available without the need to search specifically for it. The website features strongly in our communication plan and will have the links to the variety of Welsh Government resources including www.gov.wales/cymraeg-for-kids, www.youtube.com/cymraeg as well as wider social media channels especially Facebook which is an established media channel for our families.

Parents need easily accessible information to be able to apply for nursery places. The 'Starting School' booklet and our school admission webpages are being updated to enable families to make informed choices regardless of their linguistic

background. The Bod yn Ddwieithog Becoming Bilingual booklet is hosted on relevant webpages to show the benefits of bilingualism. However, research has shown that families are influenced more by social lived experience stories and so this is where we need to develop our information moving forwards. The stories will be used in our communication plan which will link all resources together and target them appropriately to our target audiences. Previous parental demand surveys have shown an appetite for Welsh medium education across the borough, which will be built upon in our communication plan to enable accessible information to parents at the earliest opportunity.

Our admissions team have moved to online applications and are updating the information provided to parents and carers online. There needs to be information strategically placed throughout the online application system to ensure families are able to make informed decisions about the language of provision they want or able to contact the team directly for information and support.

Many families learn about the benefits of bilingualism through experiences. Cymraeg for kids, is a Mudiad Meithrin managed project which supports prospective and new parents when opting for Welsh medium childcare and Education. The Welsh Government project was set up in 2016 and was preceded by the Twf project which ran from 2002-2016 which focused on the importance of early language transmission in the home. The Cymraeg i Blant officer runs the following weekly Parent and baby sessions in each area: Welsh rhyme time & Sign group, Baby massage and yoga group, Cuppa & Chat Cymraeg (online group), Me and my baby sessions explaining in detail the bilingual journey (online group). The groups are advertised as being open to all; parents don't need to be able to speak Welsh. The officer will introduce simple Welsh rhymes and phrases on a weekly basis to help them acquire a basic knowledge as well as helping them to increase their confidence in using Welsh at home.

As we move out of the restrictions of coronavirus, community groups will reignite, and we will work with Cymraeg I Blant and Mudiad Meithrin officers to develop Ti a Fi to offer early Welsh language opportunities for very young children and families.

Mudiad Meithrin officers continue to work with the early years team to develop and expand Cylchoedd Meithrin across the borough especially through their Set up And Succeed programme. We will continue to encourage all new and existing Cylchoedd to tender to deliver on our early years' contracts including Flying Start, Early Years Education, Assisted and Supported Places as well as the Childcare Offer. This will ensure we have a Welsh language offer for families across the borough and work towards our minimum 26% target.

Flying Start offers an early intervention programme for children aged 0-3years living in disadvantaged communities. Within the programme there are funded part time childcare places for 2-3year olds prior to them starting school. The childcare supports child development and early identification of developmental delays. It is challenging to calculate a real term percentage of Flying Start places in Welsh or English language as many of our contracted non-maintained and maintained settings deliver a range of places and so using their registration number is not sufficient. Based on 2020/21 financial planning data based on trends of usage, there were 549 Flying Start childcare places per annum across our settings of which 82 (14.94%) were in category 3 Welsh language and 25 (4.55%) category 2 English/Welsh

language childcare settings equating to 19.49% for both categories. There are also other funded childcare places including Families First funded Assisted and Supported Places scheme which are not included in this number. The percentage for Flying Start childcare places is lower than the target percentage and so does need to be considered in the planning and development of places over the lifespan of this plan.

Menter Iaith Caerffili own and manage a number of category 3 Welsh language Clwb Meithrin, Clwb Carco, Clwb Gwyliau and a small number of Clwb Brecwast. They are based in or adjacent to the local Primary School to enable positive transition between provisions. Many of our Menter Iaith Caerffili registered childcare provisions also deliver on some of the contracts with Caerphilly Council allowing parents flexibility in their provision to meet their needs. Many of our Menter Iaith settings and Cylchoedd Meithrin deliver Childcare Offer places equating in July 2021 to 248 children in Welsh language provision out of 978 total children which is 25.36%.

While we are committed to the increase and development of Welsh language childcare provision, we also recognise that childcare providers are enthusiastic about offering more Welsh language opportunities in their setting which fits with our commitment to the linguistic continuum. We have contracted the voluntary sector organisation, Menter Iaith, to work with settings to improve the Welsh they offer through the Road to Bilingualism quality assurance scheme which includes access to training and drop-in Welsh language acquisition sessions. The change in categories may mean over time a move from category 1 English language settings to category 2 English / Welsh language settings.

We have had a significant commitment to Welsh language provision development in recent years with a number of ongoing capital projects in the 21st century schools' capital programme which includes the main scheme and subsidiary schemes under Welsh Language development and childcare development. The current capital programme will be completed during the life of this Welsh Education Strategic Plan and their contribution to the expansion of places has been factored in already to the projection of places by 2032. However, we still need increased development to meet our 26% (520 place) target.

Capital project	Brief outline of works	Estimated completion date
Ysgol Cwm Derwen	Increased classrooms and refurbish childcare	August 2022
Ysgol Penalltau	Increased nursery and reception unit	May 2022
Ysgol y Castell	New Nursery building, increased classrooms and increased childcare space	January 2022
Ysgol Bro Allta	Increased classrooms	June 2022
Ysgol Ifor Bach	Purpose built new childcare build increasing class space	January 2022
Ysgol Cwm Gwyddon	New Primary School and new childcare building	May 2023
New Welsh medium Primary School	Bedwas Trethomas Machen area	By the end of the Band B programme

Welsh medium day care provision	Purpose built extension to Pengam Library	February 2022
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Local Authorities have a statutory duty under section 10 of the Learner Travel Measure (Wales) to promote access to education and training through the medium of Welsh. Currently Caerphilly Council provides transport to the relevant school (i.e. catchment or nearest school) of 1.5miles primary and 2miles secondary as well as post-16 transport to schools / colleges.

What was the impact of Coronavirus?

During 2020/21 we have seen a substantial impact of coronavirus on early years and families. During the Summer term 2020 many Cylchoedd Meithrin and Clwbs closed for periods of time. Although many re-opened by September 2020 there was still a significant impact for Clwb Brecwast and Clwb Carco until summer 2021, with the challenge of not mixing bubbles on school sites for test trace and protect and compliance with the protective measures. The impact on out of school provision on school site was felt in both English and Welsh language settings. While sustainability grants have been used to help the whole sector to survive and revive in September 2021, we are yet to understand the full impact on demand for places and parental confidence. We will need to keep this under review as we move forward, so we do not lose ground on Welsh language places already developed and registered.

Where do we want to be by the end of our plan and how will we get there?

Our target in 2031/32 is to create 26% of childcare places in category 3 Welsh language childcare provision.

We will need to expand our Welsh language registered childcare places, including Flying Start childcare places, with a focus on any further school expansion to enable continuity for families as well as areas where there is currently no Welsh language childcare provision. Expansion of childcare provision will require a focus on capital developments submitted to Welsh Government, as well as workforce development to ensure sufficient staff to run high quality Welsh language childcare.

Increasing the places available is one aspect but we will also need to increase the take up of those places to make the provision sustainable and effective. Therefore, we will develop a promotional strategy that is innovative and relevant to our communities, building on the research around the use of effective language in publicity campaigns avoiding indirect negative messaging. In addition to promotional campaigns the admissions online application process and web presence will ensure there is sufficient information to support families to make informed decisions about the language of their child's education.

There has been a significant amount of collaborative work with Mentrau Iaith, Urdd, RhAG, Mudiad Meithrin and other WEF members previously in developing leaflets and booklets promoting the benefits of bilingualism, social media presence and campaigns as well as active involvement in consultations. The Grwp Deddf local authority officers are revising and updating their 5year Welsh Language Strategies and alongside the significant development and promotion for the Welsh in Education

Strategic Plan 2022-2032, there is an identified need for a regional Welsh medium promotion officer. The proposal has been developed and submitted by Grwp Deddf to Welsh Government to secure 3year initial funding for the post, to work across the 5 local authority's Welsh Education in Strategic Plan and Welsh Language Strategies in a coordinated approach to promotion of Welsh language education.

The Parent Network has been developing Parent Champions, who as volunteers undertake the required training to become accredited. The Parent Champions are linked to each other, Parent Network and early years to ensure consistency of messages and information to families across communities. Recently a number have undertaken Eiklan Lets Talk Under 5s training to become Language Champions and begin sharing and embedding the key speech and language messages in our communities. This concept will be expanded to develop Welsh language Champions who can embed the key messages around benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism in our communities. This is an area of work to explore and develop further during the life of this plan.

In the post recovery period following the pandemic, it has been noted that many previous community-based groups have stopped and there are challenges to restart volunteer led groups. We will work with Mudiad Meithrin, Parent Network, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations and Caerphilly Cares to support the rental of venues, while the volunteers are restarting and refinancing the community groups including Ti A Fi. We will work across grant funding streams to support the recovery of community groups.

What are the high-level actions required to improve the number of children entering Welsh language nursery?

- Use the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment data analysis when working with partners in the development of category 3 Welsh language childcare provision and keep under review annually. Work with Mudiad Meithrin officers to develop new provision under the Set up And Succeed scheme.
- Continue to work collaboratively across partners to maximise capital investment funding particularly focussed on category 3 Welsh language provision.
- Develop a 10year communication plan with annual promotional milestones/tasks, which will be supported by the regional publicity officer post. The plan will include capturing lived experiences to change the cultural conversation with communities, and development of Welsh language parent champions, children story books from Petra and learning materials, and timed to target the areas of the capital programme implementation. The promotional plan needs to look at how we use different tools or information for targeting different groups including late entry or transfers from English medium, children with emerging developmental needs or disabilities, and new births.
- Work with parents and carers to understand what information they need to inform their choices of language provision for education, including resources, web presence, activities, etc. building this into our communication plan.

- Work with Mudiad Meithrin, Cymraeg I Blant, Parent Network and Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations to support community-based peer support groups to be developed and run by volunteers.
- Work with the admissions team to consider the parent journey when applying for school places, ensuring parents have information about Welsh language education throughout the online process including benefits of bilingualism / multilingualism and the latecomers' policy.
- Support the Road to Bilingualism for English language childcare settings to progress through the continuum towards category 3 Welsh language childcare provision.
- The above actions will link with the Welsh language 5year strategy targets.

Outcome 2: More reception class children / 5year olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh

What is our current position?

When calculating the data for our current position we have used the actual places in reception in 2020 and included ongoing estimates for places available and being created through our current capital development programme. In 2020 there were 421 Welsh language places available which will increase to 466 places available in year 1 by 2031. However, the current year 1 cohort actual take up is 366 Welsh language places, which is lower than those available and based on current estimates for birth rate and applications the number in year 1 in 2031 is predicted to be 411.

The data shows a need for promotion of category 3 Welsh language places available, which may need to be targeted specifically to areas where the places are available as they are not uniform across the borough. This work will be built into our communication plan with specific targeted promotional milestones.

The data also shows that if we are to reach our target of minimum 26% children in Welsh language education, we will need 520 places in year 1 which is an additional 54 places and equates to approximately 2 classes per year group. This could equate to a new category 3 Welsh language Primary School plus expansion of existing provision. The development of a new Welsh language Primary School in Bedwas Trethomas Machen area during the Band B 21st century schools programme is essential to moving towards reaching our minimum 26% target alongside expansion of places in our current schools. We will work collaboratively across stakeholders and seek to maximise funding made available by Welsh Government to develop the Welsh language places needed.

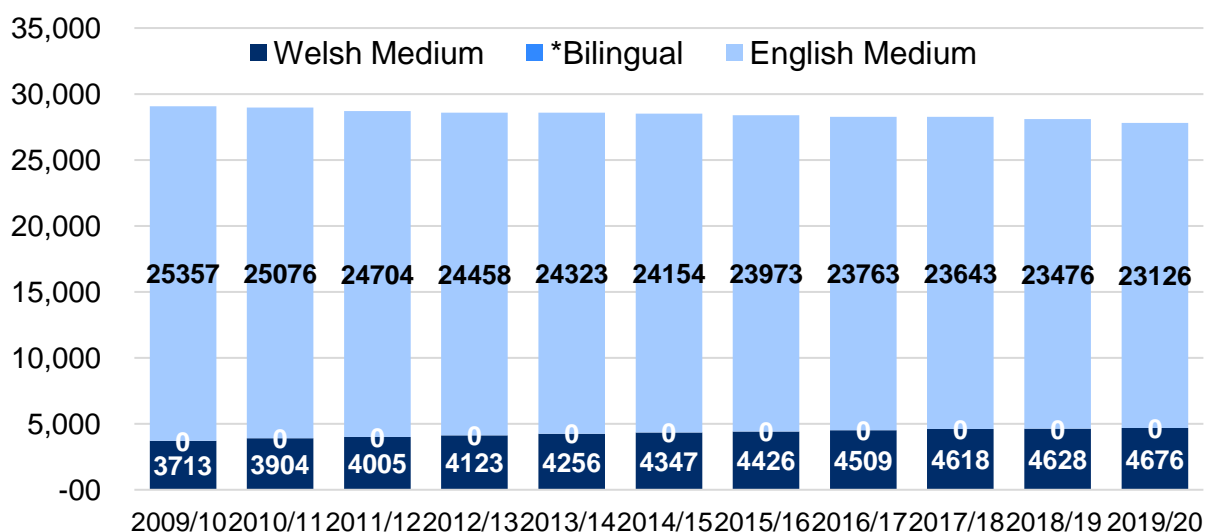
Currently our Primary Schools accept children into the Foundation Phase supporting their Welsh language acquisition through immersion techniques in the classroom. Children and young people are able to transfer to Welsh language at any point in their education, although there are few who do so, even though our Secondary School is well equipped to support transition. However, as promotion increases over

the life of this plan and attitudes positively seek Welsh language education, there is likely to be an increase in demand for Welsh language places and the need for a formal late comers policy as well as specific immersion provision to support this. This is a development need during the first five years of this plan.

In Caerphilly borough we currently have 2 main categories of school, either Category 1 English language school or Category 3 Welsh language school. We do not have any category 2 English / Welsh language schools delivering 50% English and 50% Welsh. During the review of school places and the requirement to increase the number of Welsh language school places there may be a need to consider a transition from category 1 to category 2 English / Welsh language school. However, this would need further development and integrated impact assessments to understand the implications for communities.

The latecomers' policy will need to be formalised to support transition of children and young people to Welsh language education. There will also be the need to develop specific provision to support Welsh language acquisition and immersion.

Number of learners by language medium of school, and by year. Source [Pupil Level Annual School Census, StatsWales](#)



What was the impact of coronavirus?

Coronavirus left its impact on all our communities. Parents and carers were worried that they were not able to support their children to use their Welsh language skills and so considered moving children out of Welsh language school to English language school. Our Primary and Secondary Schools, Urdd and Menter Iaith reached out to families to offer them support and relevant online resources to support them to support their children and reduce anxiety. This helped to maintain the numbers in Welsh language Primary and Secondary school on their return and has built support mechanisms that need to be retained for families moving forwards.

Where do we want to be and how will we get there?

According to the data in the PLASC returns and predicted estimates from the 21st schools planning team, there is a need to develop an additional 54 Welsh language

school places which equates to 2 classes or at least one new Welsh language Primary School and expansion of existing Primary School provision.

When we promote the benefits of bilingualism or multilingualism development there is an anticipation that children and young people may choose to move to Welsh language provision. We will need to ensure the children and young people who choose to transition to Welsh language are supported to do so through the latecomers' policy and the provision specific to support Welsh language acquisition.

We need to ensure there are sufficient places for children and young people entering Welsh language education to continue throughout their education lifetime. Data shows the need to have additional Welsh language Secondary school places by 2029.

What are the high-level actions required to increase the number of children entering Welsh medium education at 5years?

- Meeting the minimum target 26% to 30% of children in Welsh medium education by 2032 is a challenging ambition. We will need to apply for funding to Welsh Government as it becomes available and maximise funding for school and childcare places in order to meet the target number required to be available. This will necessitate 2 classes per year group and will require a new Primary School to be developed.
- We will formalise the latecomers' policy and publish this online alongside information on Welsh medium education and the application for school places to admissions. There is also a need to explore and develop specific provision to support latecomer immersion to enable children and young people to enter the appropriate cohort at a suitable linguistic stage.
- Ensure the 466 places are taken up or admissions monitored towards the take up of 466 places. If showing concerns in take up, we need to use the communication plan to support specific promotional work.

Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

What is our current position?

Our transition rate between key stages in statutory education is good and has improved over recent years to close to 100% and we aim to continue this ability for all children starting their Category 3 Welsh language education journey. Therefore, our task is to increase the number of children entering Welsh language provision at nursery 3year old age range, in order to increase the number transitioning through the education stages and completing qualifications through the Welsh language.

Year	Year 6 number	Year 7 number	Percentage transition to year 7
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2017	352	334	94.89%
2018	355	337	94.93%
2019	336	331	98.51%
2020	329	320	97.26%
2021	356	352	98.88%

All of our category 3 Welsh language schools offer all provision and qualifications through the Welsh language due to research showing the need for Welsh immersion where many children are from English language family homes.

We are planning expansion of our Welsh language Primary provision, but with a nearly 100% transition rate between statutory education stages, there will soon be the need to plan for additional secondary education places. By 2027 the capacity in secondary education will outstrip demand and so we will need to plan for additional secondary school places.

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rymni organises a series of transition activities to ensure that they continue to be innovative in attracting pupils back to the sixth form. e.g. hosting two virtual open evenings for year 11 pupils and their parents; introducing a comprehensive options handbook and website for all pupils; arranging for all departments to present information about their courses as well as opportunities to answer any questions that arise on a virtual basis. Support is further enriched by offering bespoke appointments with the welfare team in order to receive further advice. In addition, the school arranges a coffee morning and registration for pupils, from both sites, where they have the opportunity to meet informally with the key stage 5 team and ensure that transition arrangements are as smooth as possible before September.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>KS4</u>	<u>6th Form</u>	<u>Percentage transition</u>
2020	579	207	35.75
2021	640	270	42.19
2022	676	332	49.11
2023	660	369	55.91
2024	687	385	56.04
2025	715	376	53.00
2026	718	394	54.87
2027	744	407	54.70
2028	734	410	55.86
2029	729	425	58.30
2030	750	416	55.47
2031	744	417	56.05

Mudiad Meithrin officers measure the transition rates from Welsh language Cylchoedd Meithrin to Welsh language nursery school and this is an area of ongoing improvement needed. However, not all Welsh language provision in the borough are members of Mudiad Meithrin and so their transition rates, while a good indicator, are not reflective of the whole picture in the borough. There is a continued need to understand why parents may choose Welsh language childcare provision and not

continue to Welsh language nursery education. We anticipate that as more childcare provision is moved onto school sites this will improve transition rates. This will need to be monitored once these are operational.

Transition rates between the 11 Welsh language Primary schools remain high at 100% which is due to the close working relationships within the cluster. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni teams work closely with the 11 Primary schools to ensure all pupils are ready to build on the progress already made. There are clear transition plans with joint activities and events (activity days, science projects and music days as well as transition days and evenings to include their families) alongside joint mentoring plans for children who are vulnerable.

Caerphilly has always worked closely with regional partners to enable all to share resources and improve quality, for example, schools working closely on development of resources including ALN resources with the development of the new Act. Another example is the early year partnership steering group to develop ALN, integrated working with Aneurin Bevan Health Boards for the most vulnerable families, etc. We will continue to work with others to improve transition rates and access for families to Welsh language provision.

What was the impact of coronavirus?

Coronavirus had limited impact on transition rates between statutory education stages, but it did limit the transition and other activity events that happen throughout the school year.

Coronavirus impacted delivery of some childcare provisions in particular Clwb Carco and some Cylch Meithrin during lock down peaks. However, it is hoped that these provisions all remain sustainable to restart moving forwards.

We do not yet understand the impact coronavirus may have had on applications to Welsh language education nursery places as well as how it may impact those parents choosing to move children from Welsh language to English language education provision.

Where do we want to be and how will we get there?

Mudiad Meithrin support many of the Welsh language Cylchoedd provisions although not all Welsh language childcare provision in Caerphilly borough. We will work with Mudiad Meithrin officers and our own early years team to increase the transition rate towards 100% from Welsh language childcare to Welsh language nursery at 3years by 2032.

Transition rates for childcare provisions on school sites will be monitored to understand if alternative choices are made by parents for language of school.

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni will continue to work with the 11 cluster primary schools to continue to secure the 100% transition rate between stages of education.

We will work with families to understand the impact of coronavirus on transition rates and application rates and keep this under review over the coming years.

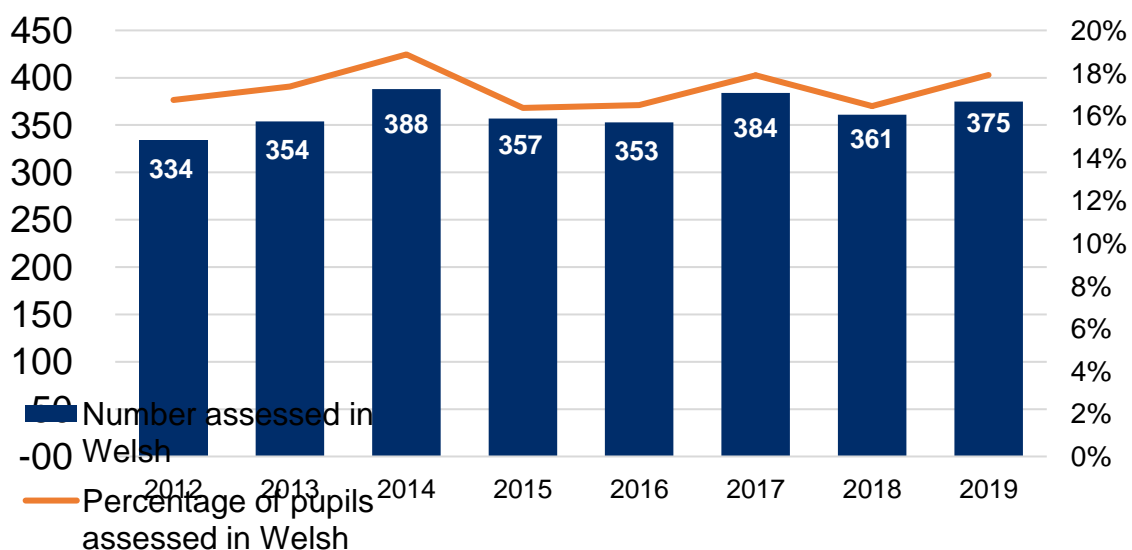
What are the high-level actions required to enable children to improve their Welsh language skills?

- We will monitor transition rates for all Welsh language childcare provision on school site to understand where parents do not wish to continue Welsh language education for their child.
- We will monitor transition rates where possible for those settings who are not members of Mudiad Meithrin to complete the picture of transition to Welsh language education. We will work with colleagues in other local authority areas with better transition rates to develop possible Caerphilly solutions.
- We will work with families to understand the impact of coronavirus on transition rates and application rates and keep this under review over the coming years.
- We will work with Welsh Government and the 21st century schools' team to plan childcare provision alongside primary school development as well as plan for secondary school places expansion to continue the 100% transition rate through statutory education.
- Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni will continue to work with the 11 Primary schools in the cluster to continue its 100% transition rate.

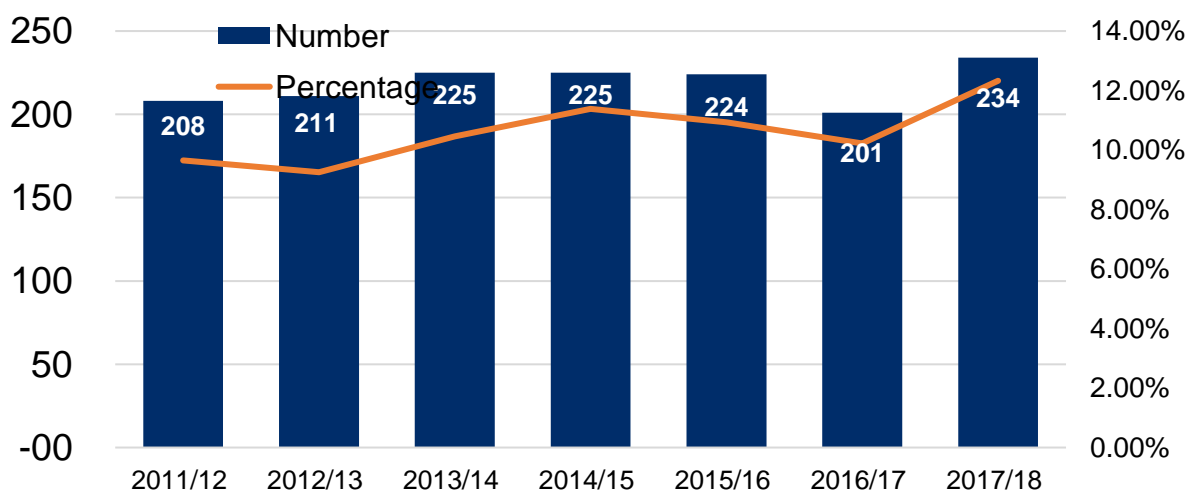
Outcome 4: More learners study for their assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

What is our current position?

Percentage of learners assessed in Welsh as a first language at the end of the Foundation Phase. Source [End of Key Stage 2 teacher assessments, StatsWales](#)



Number and percentage of Year 11 learners registered for GCSE in Welsh first language.
 Source [Welsh Examinations Database, StatsWales](#)



Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni is split over two sites: Gellihaf and Y Gwindy. The capacity of the two sites combined is 2318. From the projected numbers the capacity will be reached by 2029, and if we continue to fill spaces within our current Welsh language Primary schools the potential demand will increase to 3280 as the children move through Primary and transition to Secondary over future years. This will require development of more secondary school provision, which will also increase the number of learners assessed for qualifications in Welsh in the future.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>KS3</u>	<u>KS4</u>	<u>6th Form</u>	<u>Total</u>
2020	989	579	207	1775
2021	1006	640	270	1916
2022	1025	676	332	2032
2023	1065	660	369	2093
2024	1083	687	385	2155
2025	1083	715	376	2174
2026	1096	718	394	2208
2027	1094	744	407	2245
2028	1110	734	410	2254
2029	1144	729	425	2298
2030	1176	750	416	2342
2031	1219	744	417	2380

Pupils in key stage 4 and the sixth form at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni are offered a wide range of subject options, academic and vocational courses and the number of Welsh medium courses is higher than expected at both key stages (36 courses at key stage 4 and 32 courses at key stage 5). In this way, the school curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. This is done imaginatively through very effective collaboration with a key partner, e.g. specific courses such as hairdressing and construction at Coleg Cymoedd in Ystrad Mynach. However, the sixth form is delivered on one site (Gelli Haf) and may impact learners returning to sixth form in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni,

moving instead to Further Education colleges closer to home or easier travelling distance.

In 2020/21 Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni continued to teach an additional 'Pass' course with 52 pupils who did not succeed in some GCSE subjects. This enables the school to provide them with a tailored curriculum ensuring that they develop their skills and receive a recognized qualification that will help them in the future. However, it was not possible to offer a 'personal finance' qualification this year due to the lockdown period but firm plans are in place, including appropriate staffing, to deliver this along with Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) level 1/2 cookery skills courses, National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 1 / 2 woodwork, a Wales, Europe and the World level 2 certificate, and a work-related education level 2 certificate, for target pupils. The key stage 4 curriculum is thoughtfully designed in order that effective use is made of expertise and resources on both sites for practical subjects e.g. textiles and design and technology. Provision for pupils at risk of becoming Not engaged in Education Employment or Training (NEET) is seen as important element of the school's provision.

Provision at key stage 5 is a very strong feature of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni's work. The school succeeds in establishing a broad, rich and balanced curriculum that includes a wide range of AS, A Level and BTEC Level 3 courses. In addition, the school plans effective provision for the very few pupils who do not meet the entry threshold for level 3 courses of 5A*-C via the level 2 courses in the sixth form. This course offers an extra year of transition to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to fulfill their potential. Last year, half of these pupils took advantage of this transition route before moving on to study Level 3 subjects.

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni collaborates creatively with local Welsh language secondary schools and a nearby college (e.g. Coleg y Cymoedd, Gartholwg, Llanhari and St Woolos) to offer a wide range of courses including a full-time vocational Child Care (CACHE) course for pupils year 13.

Coleg y Cymoedd supports Welsh language learners to continue their use of Welsh in some of the courses through customer service modules being delivered in Welsh language. In 2019-20, Iaith ar Waith (Welsh-medium Customer Care) units were delivered in Childcare, Health and Social Care, Catering, Business, Travel and Tourism, The Creative Industries, Engineering, Construction, Hairdressing, Beauty, Public Services and Sport courses. Coleg y Cymoedd have also recently appointed a Welsh speaking lecturer in health and social care who will be able to deliver the Childcare Play Learning and Development and Health and Social care courses bilingually as needed moving forwards.

English language Secondary schools are supported by the Education Achievement Service to deliver Welsh GCSE courses as well as the commitment to supporting the Siarter Iaith.

While there are good connections between Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and Coleg y Cymoedd there is a need to improve connectivity with Coleg Gwent moving forward. There is also a concern that young people who may need to access Education Other Than At School may not be able to continue their education through Welsh language, although it is supported by Urdd to continue use of Welsh language while

they are not in school. This needs to be considered moving forward to ensure young people can continue their Welsh language while in alternate education provision.

What was the impact of coronavirus?

During 2020 the teaching teams developed a wide range of curriculum resources for children and families to support the continuation of Welsh language education and support transition through the statutory stages of education.

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and the 11 Primary Schools have developed a project to support children and young people to improve their Welsh language skills in September 2021 through arts and musical performance. During coronavirus children and young people from English language homes who attend Welsh language school were impacted by not being immersed in the language despite the best efforts of teaching teams and parents to maintain the language skills. This project will encourage children and young people to use the Welsh language in creative activities.

Where do we want to be and how will we get there?

We want all young people who access Welsh language education to study qualifications through the Welsh language in a broad range of subjects.

We want all children and young people who are accessing Education Other Than At School to continue to access subjects through the Welsh language if they have been in Welsh language education as well as offer opportunities to those who wish to transition from English language to Welsh language.

What are the high-level actions required to increase the number of learners studying qualifications in Welsh and through the medium of Welsh?

- Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni will continue their partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd and strengthen the relationship with Coleg Gwent to ensure all learners have a broad range of Welsh language qualifications available to them.
- Education Other Than At School teams will consider how the alternative education opportunities will continue to offer support for Welsh language to ensure young people can continue using Welsh language and access qualifications through Welsh language if they choose, for example, recruiting a Welsh speaking tutor or developing an innovative solution with the Welsh schools' cluster.
- School planning team will monitor take up of secondary places and plan for the expansion of secondary provision before the maximum capacity is reached in order to increase the number of pupils studying qualifications through Welsh language.
- Develop appropriate promotional materials in a range of media to encourage more young people to consider studying Welsh as a subject including taking Welsh at A level. This will link with the Welsh language 5year strategy targets.

Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

What is our current position?

In Caerphilly we have close working relationships with Urdd, Menter Iaith and the Youth Service. The partnership with Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni enables young people to use their Welsh language skills in social contexts within and outside of school.

Urdd offers a wide range of Welsh language experiences for children and young people across the borough including community arts clubs, a wide range of sports provisions including competitions at local to national level, digital resources and clubs as well as the residential Urdd camps which enable our children and young people to have immersive Welsh language social experiences. Urdd also deliver the Urdd Eisteddfod which is a wonderful Welsh language experience for the whole county and especially important in our borough where many homes are English speaking. Urdd have also developed Welsh language apprenticeships and encourage young people to take up volunteering opportunities within Caerphilly.

In Caerphilly we also have an Urdd Youth Officer linked to Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni who works very closely with Menter Iaith and the Youth Service to deliver extra-curricular activities in Welsh language, complementing the school provision. The Urdd and Menter Iaith also work closely with the Sports Caerphilly to ensure that all our school holiday activities also support children and young people in using Welsh language. The Urdd officer funded jointly by the Urdd, Menter Iaith and the Youth Service supports delivery of Welsh language activities outside school as well as within English language Secondary schools and at the Innovate project which is one of our Education Other Than At School provisions.

In Caerphilly our Menter Iaith work with a range of partners to deliver Welsh language activities after school and during school holidays. In addition, our Menter Iaith employ Welsh speaking qualified childcare and play staff to run registered after school and holiday childcare provision. This Welsh language childcare provision supports working families as well as enabling children and young people to have social experiences through the medium of Welsh.

Currently the Youth Service is working with Menter Iaith and Urdd to develop Welsh language youth provision in the newly developing Youth Hub in the Caerphilly basin. While this is planned to be one evening per week in the beginning, this may need to increase in the future. The need for any additional provision will be identified through the pilot project they are currently completing. The decision on introducing additional Welsh language sessions or integrating Welsh speakers into the existing sessions will need to be considered carefully. Current thoughts are Welsh speaking sessions encourage Welsh to be spoken during the sessions and not revert to substantive amounts of English as the home / peer friendship language which happens frequently in bilingual provisions locally.

The collaborative project between Menter Iaith, Urdd and Youth Service will include a mapping exercise completed with young people from September 2021 (including the percentage youth work delivered in Welsh language), assess the needs of young Welsh speakers across the borough, assess how these opportunities support the Welsh Language Charter, and use this information to develop Welsh language youth project moving forward. This project will identify what support or provision young people want to access and identify the gaps in this support or provision, which will need us to work collaboratively to address.

The Siarter Iaith or Language Charter (which is known as Cymraeg Campus in English language primary schools) is a framework for encouraging the use of the Welsh language. The Education Achievement Service has a primary role in supporting the Language Charter across all our schools, through facilitating professional learning for Charter Coordinators, sharing best practice and resources, offering bespoke support, as well as evaluating and validating progress towards the awards. 35 of 58 English language Primary Schools are working towards the awards in Cymraeg Campus, while all 11 Welsh language Primary Schools have achieved silver award in the Language Charter with Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni progressing to phase 3 (out of 5 phases).

What was the impact of coronavirus?

During 2020/21 there was significant disruption to our children and young people accessing school and out of school activities. Much of the provision and support went online. This was a positive development and there are many more resources now available to children, young people and families which can be easily accessed. However, there was a detrimental impact on children using the Welsh language when they predominantly came from English speaking homes and where families were not confident to try the Welsh language with the children and young people. Schools supported families as far as possible to increase their confidence in using Welsh but as a response to this impact on children's use of Welsh, the schools have developed an arts and drama literacy project which starts in September 2021. This will result in videos to be developed to showcase the pupil's experiences and Welsh language development. The videos may support us in the development of our promotional work.

Where do we want to be and how will we get there?

In Caerphilly we want all our Welsh speaking children and young people to have opportunities to use their language informally outside of school. We need to understand the percentage of Welsh language youth opportunities of the whole youth service offer and work to increase the percentage in line with the target 26% by 2031 to ensure parity of offer to all our young people.

We want all our children and young people to be able to access play experiences in the school holidays through the language of their choice. We will work collaboratively to identify more consistent funding streams

We want all our children and young people to have positive experiences of using the Welsh language in their school and outside of school. Therefore, the Education Achievement Service will continue to work towards all Primary schools becoming involved in Cymraeg Campus and progressing through the award stages.

What are the high-level actions required to increase the opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts?

- Continue to work in partnership with Yr Urdd, Menter Iaith, Youth Service and Sports Caerphilly to deliver Welsh language social extra-curricular opportunities within and outside of school and during school holidays.
- Continue to work with members of the Welsh language Strategy forum to ensure promotional work and targets are coordinated efficiently and effectively.
- Develop an action plan in response to the young people engagement project to ensure wider Welsh language opportunities for children and young people. There is likely to be a need to increase the Welsh language provision for young people aged 11years upwards. This will be taken forward in the partnership between Urdd, Menter Iaith and Youth Service.
- Work with Welsh Government and partners to identify ongoing funding streams for Welsh language opportunities outside of school moving from reactive or responsive grants to more strategically planned funded projects for consistency in delivery.
- Youth Service to work with Menter Iaith, Urdd and wider partners to map the percentage of youth provision delivered through Welsh language and work collaboratively to increase the offer to 26% target by 2032.
- The Education Achievement Service will work with all Primary Schools to get 100% of English language Primary Schools involved and progressing through the award stages by 2032.

Outcome 6: An increase in Welsh medium education provision for learners with additional learning needs (in accordance with the duties determined by the ALN Act)

What is our current position?

Our Caerphilly Corporate Objective is to improve Education opportunities for all. This has been a guiding principle and inclusion remains a top priority for our Education Strategy.

It is important to identify emerging developmental delays at the earliest opportunity. During the last few years, we have had a focus on ensuring all registered childcare providers have a suitable Additional Learning Needs (ALN) lead who has accessed the ALN modules to provide inclusive provision for children in their care. In early years we have worked with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to build a robust pathway of support for families from early identification in health visiting to support from early intervention teams to more specialist health support. ISCAN (Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs) remains our centralised coordination of professionals for children with complex needs.

There is a range of support for families to identify if the children can access mainstream learning provision with the right support / strategies in place or if there is a need for more specialist provision. The publicity of support for children, young people and their families is being developed currently and will be taken forward as an action to ensure support is available in Welsh and English.

The Education advisory teams have a range of professionals and a number of Welsh speaking staff to support children across our mainstream Welsh language Primary Schools. Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Derwen have a specialist resource base for children with complex needs who need more specific support to access the learning environment.

In recent years we have formalised the specialist support at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni to complement their Additional Learning Needs department with the Ganolfan and the Hafan. Y Ganolfan is a well-established complex needs unit at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni offering differentiated and individualised support for pupils to access as much of the curriculum as possible. The Hafan is a specifically designed room staffed by trained experienced teachers and assistants to support young people with complex social emotional behavioural difficulties. In addition, the Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni leads our Welsh medium ALN cluster development, supporting Primary Schools' ALNCo ensuring inclusive provision as well as upskilling of staff across all our Welsh language schools in the borough to be fully prepared for the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

There are very experienced ALN professionals across the region including in our regional Sensory and Communication service (SENCOM). The regional development work is developed in our regional South East Wales Consortia ALN group led by the Leads for Inclusion in each local authority.

What was the impact of coronavirus?

During 2020/21 there was significant disruption to our children and young people accessing school and out of school activities. Much of the provision and support went online. This was a positive development and there are many more resources now available to children, young people and families which can be easily accessed. However, for children with complex needs and their families, the impact of disruption in school was felt more acutely. While there was a range of support for our most vulnerable learners, the need for consistency in access to education moving forward is vital. Schools are focussed on innovative methods to catch up the time lost for all our children and young people.

Where do we want to be and how will we get there?

In Caerphilly we want all children and young people to be able to access the learning environment appropriate to their needs. We want to ensure we offer interventions at the earliest opportunity to ensure children are given the best start in life and identify the most appropriate provision to meet the child's educational needs.

We want to ensure there are sufficient skilled Welsh speaking staff to meet the needs of learners and build succession within our workforce.

What are the high-level actions required to improve Welsh medium education provision for learners with additional learning needs?

- Audit all early intervention to identify and address any gaps in support for Welsh speaking families.
- Develop appropriate accessible information for families to promote support available through Welsh language to remove concerns or perceived barriers.
- Work with the PETRA team to develop or use children’s books and learning materials to support parents in making choices for their child’s language of Education.
- Develop case studies and lived experiences of families with children with Additional learning needs who have thrived in Welsh language provision.
- Audit the capacity of the Welsh speaking workforce to identify and address any gaps in Additional Learning Needs support and develop sustainability within the model of support.
- Work across the region to share relevant resources that have been developed.

Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff to be able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

What is our current position?

The below table shows our current workforce for our 10 Welsh medium Primary Schools and our Secondary school according to the November 2020 Schools Workforce Annual Census data on the StatsWales.gov.uk website and Welsh Government website [School Workforce Census results: as at November 2020 | GOV.WALES](#)

Full person equivalent figures are used in the table which would be lower than full time equivalent but reflect whole roles that are term time only for more comparative numbers.

Staff types	Caerphilly borough	Welsh medium schools	Primary	Secondary
Total qualified teachers	1410	235	120	115
Executive head teachers	10	0	0	0
Head teachers	65	10	10	*
Deputy head teachers	80	10	10	*
Assistant head teachers	45	0	0	*
Qualified classroom teachers	1215	210	100	110
Total support staff	1310	180	140	40
Higher level teaching assistants	100	20	20	0
Teaching assistants	720	120	100	20

SEN support staff	150	*	*	0
School business manager	20	*	*	*
Pastoral support staff	40	*	0	*
ICT staff	20	*	0	*
Administration staff	175	20	15	10
Science and laboratory staff	20	*	0	*
Exam officer / invigilators	10	0	0	0
Other support staff	55	5	5	*

* this number is above zero but less than five

We will use this data to plan for the future needs of the workforce for Welsh medium schools planning in line with the development of new or expanded school provision through the 21st Century Schools team.

As a matter of course, Caerphilly Council always evaluates the potential for collaboration with another school when recruitment occurs. This is particularly applicable to schools with small student roll, decreasing finance budgets and/or schools that are not considered to be achieving their potential. Collaboration has proved a useful tool for sharing best practice across Caerphilly Council and the retention of effective and ambitious headteachers. At present there are seven collaborations across Caerphilly borough; one of which involves Ysgol Bro Sannan with Ysgol Gymraeg Gilfach Fargoed. Following a period of collaboration previously an additional four schools have federated; all of whom are English language schools.

Currently Caerphilly Council does not have concerning issues with headteacher recruitment. Out of the 86 schools, at present, only one Welsh medium has an acting headteacher (DHT acting up into role). Where we perceive that there may be an issue, we actively seek collaboration with an experienced head. However, we understand concerns from schools and Welsh Education Forum members regarding developing sufficient Welsh speaking staff entering the workforce and we will need to work with the Education Achievement Service, National Academy of Educational Leadership and initial teacher education to promote Education as a career to our young people leaving Secondary school.

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni has a proven track record of developing their own staff and leadership team through their vocational schemes and links with wider Education institutions supporting student placements. This needs to be expanded into our wider schools to encourage the ability to grow our education teams. Canolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Cenadlaethol has a play list to support professional learning. Similarly, Mudiad Meithrin and the early years team have supported vocational placements and qualifications to grow our childcare workforce. The Cam Wrth Gam scheme with Mudiad Meithrin has had some success in developing qualified childcare staff with placements in Cylchoedd Meithrin. The vocational qualification Children's Care Play Learning and Development has also been supported by Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and Coleg y Cymoedd to encourage our Welsh speaking young people to enter the childcare and education workforce. There is a concern that in order to be eligible for the level 2 or 3 childcare qualification, students need to be employed a minimum 16 hours per week but as they are unqualified they are not included in the ratio unless they have been in placement for

more than 12 weeks. Some sessional providers find this a challenge if they operate less than the required 16 hours. This needs consideration at Welsh Government level if it becomes a blockage for new people to enter the childcare workforce.

Mudiad Meithrin in partnership with Urdd Gobaith Cymru are offering a new apprenticeship opportunity to qualify as a Level 3 Child Care, Play, Learning and Development practitioner. This apprenticeship is suitable for staff who are employed (or who will be employed from the start date of the apprenticeship) by settings who are members of Mudiad Meithrin, Welsh medium private Day Nurseries, and Welsh medium schools. The duration of the course is 18 months, and learners will have to be employed in the setting for at least 16 hours per week.

The Education Achievement Service forms part of the University of South Wales Partnership. There is a dedicated model of support for Welsh medium schools and for the development of Welsh in English medium schools running as part of the Initial Teacher Training at the University.

On entering the workforce there are many mechanisms to support further development in their professional career. The early years team works with Mudiad Meithrin to promote further childcare qualifications and continuing professional development to provide quality childcare environments. The Education Achievement Service supports professional learning along the pathway through the medium of Welsh, in partnership with the other regions and accredited by NAEL, as appropriate. The courses delivered include Welsh medium provision for Higher Level teaching Assistants and Middle Leaders at both primary and secondary level as well as the senior leadership programme supported by a bespoke Welsh medium coaching model.

Menter Iaith work with settings to increase the use of Welsh language by staff with the children through the Road to Bilingualism. Caerphilly Council's equality team facilitates Welsh language courses to increase the Welsh speaking workforce across wider sectors which complement the education workforce in schools.

The Education Achievement Service support a regional professional learning and networking programme for practitioners in Welsh and English medium schools. In English medium schools there is support for staff to teach language patterns relevant to their teaching phase and to improve their language and language teaching methodology. The Welsh sabbatical scheme continues to be supported but there are limited places regionally circa 10-14 per course and a limited number of courses per year, which equates to approximately 3 per year for Caerphilly borough. During 2017-18 there were 2 staff who completed the Welsh in a Year scheme, 2018-19 there were 3 and for the last two years this has increased to 4 staff per year.

What was the impact of coronavirus?

During the coronavirus pandemic many courses went online in the virtual world and staff had some capacity to complete professional development. However, in many cases placements were static or paused which impacted vocational qualifications.

Where do we want to be and how will we get there?

We want to proactively work with our workforce to develop sufficient Welsh speakers to support children and young people in using the Welsh language both within school and their wider communities.

What are the high-level actions required to increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh and through the medium of Welsh?

- We will use our school places planning alongside our school workforce census data to plan the need for staff in new or expanded Welsh medium schools.
- We will work with the Education Achievement Service, National Academy of Educational Leadership, and initial teacher education providers to support the development of the education workforce.
- We will continue to work with our schools to explore opportunities for collaboration and federation as opportunities arise.
- We will work with our young people in secondary school and Careers Wales to promote careers in childcare, education, and wider workforce opportunities for Welsh speakers.
- We will work as an early years' team with Mudiad Meithrin and Menter Iaith along with secondary schools across the region, Coleg y Cymoedd and Coleg Gwent to develop our childcare workforce.
- We will raise our concerns for new entrants to the childcare workforce of sessional providers not being able to employ unqualified staff on 16 hours to be able to access the qualification course.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032

Action plan

Outcome 1

1. Use the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment data analysis when working with partners in the development of category 3 Welsh language childcare provision and keep under review annually. Work with Mudiad Meithrin officers to develop new provision under the Set up And Succeed scheme.
2. Continue to work collaboratively across partners to maximise capital investment funding particularly focussed on category 3 Welsh language provision.
3. Develop a 10year communication plan with annual promotional milestones/tasks, which will be supported by the regional publicity officer post. The plan will include capturing lived experiences to change the cultural conversation with communities, and development of Welsh language parent champions, children story books from Petra and learning materials, and timed to target the areas of the capital programme implementation. The promotional plan needs to look at how we use different tools or information for targeting different groups including late entry or transfers from English medium, children with emerging developmental needs or disabilities, and new births.
4. Work with parents and carers to understand what information they need to inform their choices of language provision for education, including resources, web presence, activities, etc. building this into our communication plan.
5. Work with Mudiad Meithrin, Cymraeg I Blant, Parent Network and Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations to support community-based peer support groups to be developed and run by volunteers.
6. Work with the admissions team to consider the parent journey when applying for school places, ensuring parents have information about Welsh language education throughout the online process including benefits of bilingualism / multilingualism and the latecomers' policy.
7. Support the Road to Bilingualism for English language childcare settings to progress through the continuum towards category 3 Welsh language childcare provision.
8. The above actions will link with the Welsh language 5year strategy targets.

Outcome 2

9. Meeting the minimum target 26% to 30% of children in Welsh medium education by 2032 is a challenging ambition. We will need to apply for funding to Welsh Government as it becomes available and maximise funding for school and childcare places in order to meet the target number required to be available. This will necessitate 2 classes per year group and will require a new Primary School to be developed.
10. We will formalise the latecomers' policy and publish this online alongside information on Welsh medium education and the application for school places

to admissions. There is also a need to explore and develop specific provision to support latecomer immersion to enable children and young people to enter the appropriate cohort at a suitable linguistic stage.

11. Ensure the 466 places are taken up or admissions monitored towards the take up of 466 places. If showing concerns in take up, we need to use the communication plan to support specific promotional work.

Outcome 3

12. We will monitor transition rates for all Welsh language childcare provision on school site to understand where parents do not wish to continue Welsh language education for their child.
13. We will monitor transition rates where possible for those settings who are not members of Mudiad Meithrin to complete the picture of transition to Welsh language education. We will work with colleagues in other local authority areas with better transition rates to develop possible Caerphilly solutions.
14. We will work with families to understand the impact of coronavirus on transition rates and application rates and keep this under review over the coming years.
15. We will work with Welsh Government and the 21st century schools' team to plan childcare provision alongside primary school development as well as plan for secondary school places expansion to continue the 100% transition rate through statutory education.
16. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni will continue to work with the 11 Primary schools in the cluster to continue its 100% transition rate.

Outcome 4

17. Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni will continue their partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd and strengthen the relationship with Coleg Gwent to ensure all learners have a broad range of Welsh language qualifications available to them.
18. Education Other Than At School teams will consider how the alternative education opportunities will continue to offer support for Welsh language to ensure young people can continue using Welsh language and access qualifications through Welsh language if they choose, for example, recruiting a Welsh speaking tutor or developing an innovative solution with the Welsh schools' cluster.
19. School planning team will monitor take up of secondary places and plan for the expansion of secondary provision before the maximum capacity is reached in order to increase the number of pupils studying qualifications through Welsh language.
20. Develop appropriate promotional materials in a range of media to encourage more young people to consider studying Welsh as a subject including taking Welsh at A level. This will link with the Welsh language 5year strategy targets.

Outcome 5

21. Continue to work in partnership with Yr Urdd, Menter Iaith, Youth Service and Sports Caerphilly to deliver Welsh language social extra-curricular opportunities within and outside of school and during school holidays.
22. Continue to work with members of the Welsh language Strategy forum to ensure promotional work and targets are coordinated efficiently and effectively.
23. Develop an action plan in response to the young people engagement project to ensure wider Welsh language opportunities for children and young people. There is likely to be a need to increase the Welsh language provision for young people aged 11 years upwards. This will be taken forward in the partnership between Urdd, Menter Iaith and Youth Service.
24. Work with Welsh Government and partners to identify ongoing funding streams for Welsh language opportunities outside of school moving from reactive or responsive grants to more strategically planned funded projects for consistency in delivery.
25. Youth Service to work with Menter Iaith, Urdd and wider partners to map the percentage of youth provision delivered through Welsh language and work collaboratively to increase the offer to 26% target by 2032.
26. The Education Achievement Service will work with all Primary Schools to get 100% of English language Primary Schools involved and progressing through the award stages by 2032.

Outcome 6

27. Audit all early intervention to identify and address any gaps in support for Welsh speaking families.
28. Develop appropriate accessible information for families to promote support available through Welsh language to remove concerns or perceived barriers.
29. Work with the PETRA team to develop or use children's books and learning materials to support parents in making choices for their child's language of Education.
30. Develop case studies and lived experiences of families with children with Additional learning needs who have thrived in Welsh language provision.
31. Audit the capacity of the Welsh speaking workforce to identify and address any gaps in Additional Learning Needs support and develop sustainability within the model of support.
32. Work across the region to share relevant resources that have been developed.

Outcome 7

33. We will use our school places planning alongside our school workforce census data to plan the need for staff in new or expanded Welsh medium schools.

34. We will work with the Education Achievement Service, National Academy of Educational Leadership, and initial teacher education providers to support the development of the education workforce.
35. We will continue to work with our schools to explore opportunities for collaboration and federation as opportunities arise.
36. We will work with our young people in secondary school and Careers Wales to promote careers in childcare, education, and wider workforce opportunities for Welsh speakers.
37. We will work as an early years' team with Mudiad Meithrin and Menter Iaith along with secondary schools across the region, Coleg y Cymoedd and Coleg Gwent to develop our childcare workforce.
38. We will raise our concerns for new entrants to the childcare workforce of sessional providers not being able to employ unqualified staff on 16 hours to be able to access the qualification course.

Caerphilly County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment

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

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

PLEASE NOTE: Section 3 Socio-economic Duty only needs to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. See page 6 of the Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance.

1. Proposal Details

Lead Officer	Head of Service	Service Area & Department	Date
Sarah Mutch	Keri Cole	Education and Corporate Services	14/9/2021

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

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032

We have an ambitious target to increase the number of pupils taught through the medium of Welsh by 2032 and have developed high level actions through all aspects of our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to achieve this.

This plan outlines how we intend to work with the Welsh Government and a wide range of stakeholders to work towards delivering the Cymraeg 2050 ambition of 1 million Welsh speakers as well as the Programme for Government 2021-2026. The funding will support our aspirations for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act for a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language regardless of your socio demographic context. This plan is intrinsically linked to delivering our integrated targets, using the sustainable development principles, across the Caerphilly county borough including Childcare Sufficiency Assessment plan 2022-2027, the Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 and our Caerphilly Corporate Plan 2018-2023 especially Objective 1 Improve Education Opportunities for All and the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 Objective 5 – Welsh Language.

Our 10year target over the lifespan of this plan is to increase the places in year 1 to between 26% (520) and 30% (600) of children in Welsh medium education by 2030/31.

The minimum target of 26% for learners in year 1 by 2032 is set by Welsh Government in order to meet the 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 target. In order to meet this ambitious target, we will need to build a new Primary School and expand others to create the places. In addition, we will need a communication plan to increase the take up of those places and our starting point will need additional provision in Ti a Fi and Cylchoedd in the early years.

When we expand our Welsh medium provision, we will also need to expand our Welsh speaking workforce along with a substantial number of other actions highlighted at the end of each outcome area of the plan.

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

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

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?	If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Page 50 Age (people of all ages)	The WESP proposes to increase the number of Welsh medium Education places so will positively affect children and young people who wish to access Welsh medium Education. There is a focus on increasing the size of the Welsh speaking workforce and so there is a positive impact for the working age population.	There is a recognition in the WESP that increasing the numbers in Welsh medium Education needs planned incremental transition to manage the potential negative impact on English medium primary schools.	The Welsh Government target for us of a minimum 26% learners in Welsh medium Education in the year 1 cohort by 2032. This will require an additional primary school as well as expansion of existing schools to create the spaces.
Disability (people with disabilities/ long term conditions)	Outcome area 6 has a specific focus on provision for learners with Additional Learning Needs to ensure inclusive and specialist Welsh medium Education provision.		Over recent plans we have developed appropriate specialist provisions in Ysgol Cwm Derwen and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni to ensure a holistic inclusive approach for all children throughout Education. The specialist provision will enable children regardless of their circumstances, developmental or medical needs to access Welsh language provision.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?	If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth)</i>	Neutral impact		
Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i>	Neutral impact		
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave)</i>	Neutral impact		
Race <i>(people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds)</i>	Neutral impact		
Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i>	Neutral impact		
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender)</i>	Neutral impact		
Sexual Orientation <i>(lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other)</i>	Neutral impact		

3. Socio-economic Duty (Strategic Decisions Only)

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

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

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

<u>Socio-economic Disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?	If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Low Income / Income Poverty (<i>cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.</i>)</p>	<p>Additional Welsh medium Primary School will potentially support improved transport times for children to their school. The transport policy will still support those from low income households who require transport to school to access it, so is likely to have slightly positive or a neutral impact.</p>		
<p>Low and/or No Wealth (<i>enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future</i>)</p>	<p>Neutral impact</p>		
<p>Material Deprivation (<i>unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.</i>)</p>	<p>Neutral impact</p>		

<u>Socio-economic Disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?	If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Area Deprivation (where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?)	Neutral impact		
Socio-economic Background (social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)	Neutral impact		
Socio-economic Disadvantage (What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)	Neutral impact		

3053

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

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

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all	The WESP addresses many aspects of Objective 1 improving education opportunities for all positively impacting learning in Welsh language provision including development of school buildings, childcare, and outcomes for learners.
Objective 2 - Enabling employment	The WESP recognises the importance of and need for developing the Welsh speaking workforce and as such will deliver on some aspects within Objective 2.
Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people’s well-being	No impact

Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impact on the environment	No impact
Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports healthy lifestyle in accordance with the Sustainable Development principle with in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	No impact
Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being	No impact

4a. Links to any other relevant Council Policy

(How does your proposal deliver against any other relevant Council Policy?)





The WESP is linked closely with the Welsh Language Strategy and the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, which are both currently being updated and reviewed for the next five-year plans.

In addition there are close links to:

- CCBC Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024
- CCBC Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027
- Welsh Government Cymraeg 2050 Strategy
- CCBC Corporate Wellbeing Plan
- Education Shared Ambitions Strategy
- 21st Century schools programme Band B
- Welsh medium capital programme
- Childcare capital programme
- ALN Act and ALN transformation regional plan

5. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Five Ways of Working (ICLIP)

(Also known as the sustainable development principles. The Act requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline)

<u>Ways of Working</u>	How have you used the Sustainable Development Principles in forming the proposal?
<p>Long Term</p> 	<p>Long term – this Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is over a ten-year period but also part of an ambitious longer-term commitment in the Education and Corporate Services directorate to develop our Education system to be of the highest quality to meet the progressive needs of our learners. The system recognises the importance of developing our school environments, embedding early years in education as well as opportunities outside of schools for young people and families to embed Welsh language in our communities.</p>
<p>Prevention</p> 	<p>Prevention – the outcomes reach across all demographic contexts and family circumstances and are essential in preventing detrimental impacts for children and young people. The plan includes giving all children a best start in life, through to those who may follow a less traditional academic path and those who may wish to learn Welsh later in life. Over recent plans we have developed appropriate specialist provisions in Ysgol Cwm Derwen and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni to ensure a holistic inclusive approach for all children throughout Education. The specialist provision will enable children regardless of their circumstances, developmental or medical needs to access Welsh language provision. Our communication plan will promote the provision we have available within the borough to families to support their Education choices and encourage children and young people to embrace opportunities offered in bilingual communities.</p>
<p>Integration</p> 	<p>Integration – many outcomes are cross cutting over different plans and strategies with common integrated outcomes and indicators. It is essential to link across the various plans including Welsh Language Strategy, Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, Corporate Wellbeing Objective, and the Welsh Government programme for government to ensure we are effectively delivering on integrated outcome areas.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> 	<p>Collaboration – there are a wide range of committed partners to delivering our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan starting with our children, young people, and families in our communities. There are many targets in our plan that will require different evolving collaborations to achieve. We have a long history of positive collaborations across the region to develop our early years Additional Learning Needs resources for the childcare sector, sharing good practice and resources across our school communities, as well as promotional activity through our Welsh policy officer’s group.</p>

Involvement



Consider the **Involvement** – there are many stakeholders critical to achieving our overarching targets of 26% Welsh medium education places in our year 1 by 2031. The Welsh Education Forum (WEF) involves various members from across Education teams, Policy, Senior Leadership Teams representing Schools, Councillors, Parent Network, Menter Iaith Caerffili, Mudiad Meithrin, Rhieni dros Addyg Gymraeg (RhAG), Cymraeg i Blant, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Coleg y Cymoedd, South East Wales Education Achievement Service, and Welsh Government. The old saying ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ holds true and the Welsh Education Forum is ever evolving to include new members who have an interest in delivering towards our targets in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and supporting our communication plan to promote the benefits of developing a bilingual community. There are good links between the Welsh Language forum and the Welsh Education Forum to ensure a consistent coordinated approach to promotional work.

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

<u>Well-being Goals</u>	Does the proposal maximise our contribution to the Well-being Goal and how?
<p>A Prosperous Wales <i>An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work</i></p>	<p>The WESP aims to develop appropriately skilled children, young people and adults for a bilingual workforce.</p>
<p>A Resilient Wales <i>A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for climate change)</i></p>	<p>Any Primary School development will include environmental impact surveys and build conditions on the build to ensure high quality capital schemes.</p>
<p>A Healthier Wales <i>A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood</i></p>	<p>The WESP will support the development of appropriate learning environments to support the wellbeing of all learners</p>
<p>A More Equal Wales <i>A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances)</i></p>	<p>The WESP will support the development of appropriate provision for all learners including those most able or more vulnerable</p>

<u>Well-being Goals</u>	Does the proposal maximise our contribution to the Well-being Goal and how?
<p>A Wales of Cohesive Communities <i>Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities</i></p>	<p>All Welsh medium capital projects will support the development of attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.</p>
<p>A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language <i>A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation</i></p>	<p>The WESP shows our commitment to supporting the Welsh culture as well as increasing the places available in Welsh medium provision to support the Welsh Government's commitment to 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.</p>
<p>A Globally Responsible Wales <i>A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being</i></p>	<p>All capital projects will consider the environmental impact of any proposals.</p>

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

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



Requirement	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?	If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?	What evidence has been used to support this view? <i>e.g the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Annual School Census</i>
<p>Links with Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy and CCBC's Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022 and the Language Profile</p>	<p>Positive impacts as detailed in the WESP</p>		<p>The WESP describes many actions required to meet our minimum 26% target for year 1 cohort by 2032 which will support the Cymraeg 2050 strategy, develop a skilled workforce for the future.</p>
<p>Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. <i>Specifically Standards 88 - 93</i></p>	<p>Positive impact.</p>		<p>The draft WESP has been developed in partnership with the Welsh Education Forum and the Fforwm Iaith, ensuring key stakeholders for delivering on the actions are responsible for its delivery and success. There is a bilingual consultation process and it remains interlinked with a number of key CCBC strategies including the Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027</p>
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language <i>e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community</i></p>	<p>The WESP will actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>		
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language <i>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</i></p>	<p>The WESP will support the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when accessing Education and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>		
<p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language</p>	<p>Positive intended impact on increasing the use of Welsh</p>		

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

The WESP demonstrates our commitment to increasing the number of Welsh speakers throughout the borough by 2032 towards the national 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. The WESP has sections focussed on Education provision as well as early years and community provision and the opportunities for Welsh speaking workforce moving forward.

8. Data and Information

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

Data/evidence <i>(Please provide link to report if appropriate)</i>	Key relevant findings	How has the data/evidence informed this proposal?
Welsh Government guidance containing the 26% target calculation alongside current data sets within the body of the WESP with the data set hyperlinks.	The data shows where high level actions are required which are included in each of the 7 outcome areas	The data shows what actions were needed to meet the 26% target for year 1 learners taught through the medium of Welsh by 2032.

Were there any gaps identified in the evidence and data used to develop this proposal and how will these gaps be filled?

Details of further consultation can be included in Section 9.

The census data is 2011 and so may need consideration once 2021 data is released to understand language trends in the borough.

9. Consultation

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

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

Consultation will open from October to December for an 8 week period and has a mix of statutory required stakeholders via direct consultation email as well as members of the public via the Council consultation webpage. Statutory Stakeholders are: neighbouring local authorities, head teachers and governing bodies of schools maintained by the authority, further education sector institutions within the area, the Welsh Language Commissioner, Early Years Development Childcare Partnership, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, providers of initial school teacher training, and appropriate organisations providing services to children and young people.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan contains all the information and targets to enable consultees to raise aspects needing more information or additional actions.

Yet to be known from wider stakeholders. However, all Welsh Education Forum members shaped the draft WESP for consultation.

Aiming to consider comments for amendments to the WESP prior to submission to Welsh Government in January 2022.

10. Monitoring and Review

How will the implementation and the impact of the proposal be monitored, including implementation of any amendments?	Annual reports will be submitted to Welsh Government and uploaded to website. The Welsh Education Forum will monitor updates from members against action areas termly.
What are the practical arrangements for monitoring?	The WESP is required to start implementation from September 2022 and will be monitored termly with annual reports submitted to Welsh Government.
How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?	At year five there is the opportunity to review the actions and targets and amend if progress and data shows it to be necessary.
When is the proposal due to be reviewed?	Reviewed annually and at year 5
Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?	Lead officer and Welsh Education Forum

11. Recommendation and Reasoning

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Implement proposal with no amendments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Implement proposal taking account of the mitigating actions outlined
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reject the proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality, poverty and socio-economic disadvantage

Have you contacted relevant officers for advice and guidance?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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12. Reason(s) for Recommendation

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

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan stimulates demand for Welsh medium provision and Welsh language Education to enable positive engagement across all communities with the Welsh language. There are substantive positive impacts for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan including promoting and supporting development of the Welsh language across communities through Welsh medium schools and Further Education as well wider community support for parents to develop their Welsh language skills. There are substantive links to the equalities, 21st Century Schools and CCBC Welsh Language strategies as well as the Welsh Governments strategy for 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 has updated information regarding the current position in each outcome area and has identified high level actions in order to meet the minimum 26% of the year 1 cohort taught through the medium of Welsh target by 2032. The consultation period has opened and is being circulated to all required consultees as well as being available to the public via our council website.

13. Version Control

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

Version No.	Author	Brief description of the amendments/update	Revision Date
01.	Sarah Mutch	Final version to accompany the WESP and committee services report although does not yet include consultation comments which is live currently	15/10/2021
02.	Sarah Mutch	Updated version following feedback	19/10/2021

Integrated Impact Assessment Author

Name:	Sarah Mutch
Job Title:	Early Years and Partnerships Manager
Date:	14/9/2021

Head of Service Approval

Name:	Keri Cole
Job Title:	Chief Education Officer

Signature:		Date:	
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CABINET – 8TH DECEMBER 2021

SUBJECT: COVID 19 – ECONOMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

REPORT BY: COPORATE DIRECTOR, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an update on our economic recovery framework which comprises three distinct phases as follows:

- The Restart phase.
- The Revive phase.
- The Renew phase.

The focus of this report is the Revive and Renew phases following an initial 'Government led' restart phase that delivered financial and employer support at pace in response to the pandemic.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The Covid-19 pandemic is causing unprecedented disruption to our communities and the local economy. In response the Council prepared a framework for recovery which aims to support the Council and the wider county borough to recover. The economic recovery framework, 'Delivering Prosperity after Covid' has been prepared to deliver our strategic objective of Supporting Business.

2.2 Welsh Government emergency financial support effectively ended during August 2021 and their response has now moved to a growth phase for which the economic recovery framework will complement based on the following key objectives:

- To build a more resilient and diversified economy for the county borough.
- To support economic growth, innovation and enterprise.
- To create an environment that nurtures business.
- To enhance the competitiveness of the county borough.
- To boost business support.
- To identify key business investment sites.
- To improve the links between business, schools and training providers.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To agree the Strategic Direction, Objectives and action plan proposed for the Revive and Renew Phases.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To provide a cohesive framework and action plan for economic recovery.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to our communities and the local economy that has been exacerbated by the transition from being a part of the European Union during this period and combined have created logistical challenges and supply chain disruption for local businesses. In response the Council prepared a framework for recovery which aims to support the Council and the wider county borough to recover. The economic recovery framework, 'Delivering Prosperity after Covid' has been prepared to deliver our strategic objective of Supporting Business and builds on the Councils 2018 – 2023 regeneration strategy, A Foundation for Success' which sets out 7 key objectives to support business.
- 5.2 On 7 August this year, the country moved to Alert level 0 which allowed a number of remaining business sectors and premises that were affected by the regulations to open but there is still a requirement for businesses and employers to undertake coronavirus specific risk assessments and take reasonable measures to minimise exposure to, and reduce the spread of coronavirus. Some businesses are starting to recover but at the end of July 2021 there were still around 3,000 employees furloughed in the county borough which is around 3% of the workforce.
- 5.3 The Covid crisis has reinforced the fundamental role of the foundational economy to the well-being of our citizens. It provides the infrastructure of everyday life, serving our essential daily household needs, keeping us all safe and civilised, and provides jobs at the heart of our communities in healthcare, childcare, food, housing, energy, construction, waste and recycling.
- 5.4 The impact of Coronavirus on the local economy is becoming clearer since the restart phase response, with industries that rely on personal interactions suffering more than others, such as the hospitality and leisure industries. The longer-term impacts on structural changes to industry and the service economy are still to be understood but it is evident that we will be living with Coronavirus and its effects for some time.
- 5.5 Research carried out during the height of the pandemic confirmed that the majority of businesses in the county borough were negatively impacted by coronavirus through operational limitations to their business, loss of staff and reductions in turnover. 31% of businesses surveyed felt their staffing requirements would decrease in the long term but on a more positive note, 12% of businesses surveyed had been able to diversify their offer bringing new services or products to the market and to communities in the county borough.
- 5.6 The research identified that 42% of firms felt they needed specific business support to help with the challenges presented by Brexit. In response to this research, the Regeneration Service will be employing an International Trade Support Officer for a fixed period to work with businesses across the county borough to support their overseas trading requirements and aspirations.

- 5.7 This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the revive and renew phases of our economic recovery framework, 'Delivering Prosperity after Covid' following the restart phase which focussed on reopening town centres safely in the early stages of the pandemic and the targeting of businesses in the county borough to distribute over £55m of emergency phase business support funding on behalf of the Welsh Government.

The Revive phase

- 5.8 Using the Council's regeneration strategy, A Foundation for Success, and the suite of area-based masterplans as a basis for addressing structural and strategic improvement, the Revive phase will include policy interventions, financial support and the delivery of major construction projects to create opportunities to provide a diverse range of employment and training opportunities and opportunities to local business supply chains, and will include:

- Securing funds to overcome high-level public sector challenges, working closely with business to utilise innovative solutions.
- Understanding future industrial growth as influenced by Brexit and the pandemic, and work with business to strengthen Caerphilly's place in the regional economy.
- Expediting delivery of major construction projects as a catalyst for growth.
- Renewing policy interventions through the Second Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) – working from home, reducing the need to travel, provision of suitable land for development, diversification of town centres, facilitating Active Travel and modal shift.
- Accelerating Caerphilly Town 2035 and the Place Shaping Framework projects.
- Ensuring maximum social impact and social value from public sector investment.

- 5.9 Critical to the delivery of the objectives of the economic recovery framework are the following areas identified in the regeneration strategy: Implementation of strategic masterplans, innovation, cluster networks and skills that will be addressed through the following priority areas with each priority having a series of actions identified in the framework:

- Development of the Foundational Economy.
- Homes for the Future.
- Development of cluster and innovation opportunities.
- Improving resilience through education training and careers advice.
- Transport Infrastructure and connectivity.
- Town Centre Regeneration & Diversification.
- Tourism Recovery.
- Reconfiguration of existing employment sites and identifying new sites.

The Renew Phase

- 5.10 Building on the Revive Phase the Council-approved Wellbeing and Place Shaping Framework provides a list of potential civic investments across Caerphilly in excess of £231m that align explicitly with the Council's adopted Wellbeing Objectives which are due to be delivered in the next 5 years.

Long-term investments in infrastructure such as that proposed within the Place Shaping Framework, holds the potential to rebalance the local economy, enhance productivity and create jobs and opportunities across Caerphilly County Borough. This is of great importance as we support our communities to rebuild a sustainable and resilient future post Covid. The opportunity exists to work together to create a better and more prosperous Caerphilly for everyone, further embedding the Council's "TeamCaerphilly" collective community and civic leadership model of delivery

Strategic improvements that are necessary to drive local economic growth in the Renew Phase for example are:

- Improve access to the digital front door and addressing digital poverty as a barrier to employment.
- Influence regional and Welsh policy and programme development as a member of CCR Regeneration Group, WG regional town centre group etc. through a continued dialogue with the WLGA.
- Build on developing relationship with WG Business Wales, WG Regeneration Team and WG Task & Finish Groups so we can dovetail support packages.
- Developing a coherent marketing strategy for the county borough to attract in new investment.
- Prepare the Final Masterplans for:
 - Newbridge to Risca Corridor; and
 - Greater Blackwood.

Conclusion

5.11 The Council, in partnership with the Welsh Government, has been at the forefront of responding to the immediate and short-term needs of local businesses as both coronavirus and Brexit have unfolded. There is now a pressing need to support and strengthen the local economy and in order to do this a renewed strategic approach is required to address this unprecedented period of economic turbulence and lay the ground to enable the county borough to build back better.

5.12 This report gives an overview of the framework for economic recovery and provides an overview of the work that is being undertaken to aid economic recovery. The detailed actions to be undertaken over the period of the framework are included in the appendix section of the report, a number of which will require financial support to deliver and staff within the service are looking ahead to the opportunities presented by the Levelling Up and UK Shared Prosperity Funds.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 At the time of writing it is assumed that there will be no further emergency government support through both UK and Welsh Government.

6.2 Wales will be at alert level zero for the immediate future.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The document 'Delivering prosperity after covid' sets a framework for economic recovery for the Council to work within and outlines a number of actions that will

support the Council to contribute to a prosperous Wales for the benefit of our citizens. The primary evidence for the direction of the framework is based on the work undertaken for the Council's Regeneration Strategy which covers the period 2018 – 2023 and has been supported by business research carried out during the early part of covid to assess the impact of both covid and Brexit on our business community. The actions identified within framework are positioned to impact positively on our residents and include actions in areas that are socio-economically disadvantaged within our community.

[Link to full Integrated Impact Assessment](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The report sets the framework for supporting economic growth aligned to the Council's previously agreed Regeneration Strategy and taking account of the impact of the pandemic. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report in the context of the framework. Projects and work streams that require financial input linked to the framework for economic recovery will be brought forward where required.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The report sets the framework for officers working to support economic growth and prosperity and there are no direct personnel implications arising from this report in the context of the framework. Projects and work streams that require changes to staff resources will be brought forward where required.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 All consultation responses are reflected in the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Local Government Acts 1998 and 2003.

12. URGENCY

- 12.1 This report is subject to the 'call-in' procedure.

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Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services & Housing
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Economy and the Environment
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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Recovery from Covid – A Foundation For Success

Foundation for *Success* Delivering Prosperity After Covid

Page 71

October 2021





Background

The Strategic Vision for the Regeneration of the County Borough has been clouded throughout 2020 by 2 significant events Covid-19 and Brexit and the significant economic impact of both continues to persist. In addition to the well-documented impact of the pandemic on public health, its effect combined with the impact of BREXIT on the economy is profound.

The Council, in partnership with the Welsh Government, has been at the forefront of responding to the immediate and short-term needs of local businesses as both events have unfolded. There is now a pressing need to support and strengthen the local economy and in order to do this a renewed strategic approach is required to address this unprecedented period of economic turbulence and lay the ground to enable the county borough to build back better.

Response

In response the Council has established a Strategic Recovery Framework to support the Council and the wider County Borough

to recover whilst continuing to support the Wellbeing Objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2018 - 23. The economic recovery framework Delivering Prosperity after Covid has been prepared to deliver our strategic objective of Supporting Business and this framework has three, distinct phases as follows:

- The Restart phase;
- The Revive phase; and
- The Renew phase.

The Restart Phase

An initial 'led by Government' phase, the Welsh Government and Council responded at pace implementing the following measures swiftly:

- Establishment of an Emergency Business Support Team;
- Communication and signposting to Business Wales and other forms of government relief, including the creation of a dedicated e-newsletter for business;
- Financial business support through a multitude of grant schemes;

- Supplier relief (supplier risk analysis, targeted support to supply chain companies, intervention for companies at risk, monitoring of business needs);
- Employer Support (training regarding new employment positions with local companies, creation of a Redundancy Response Team, relaunch of Caerphilly Business Club);
- Reopening towns (consideration of physical intervention such as street widening, business survey to determine business requirements, grant aid for physical intervention and modifications required by businesses);
- Tourism Recovery Group & Recovery Plan;
- Economic Recovery Plan (research to understand the implications for business);
- Identification of major construction projects (Caerphilly Town 2035, social procurement, working with WLGA on financial support for schemes).

The Revive Phase

The Revive phase is tied to testing, potential vaccine availability and public confidence and behaviour. Research commissioned in 2020 identified how the pandemic and Brexit were impacting on the business community in the County Borough and provided quantitative and qualitative evidence on that impact on different sectors of the economy. This document provides an Action Plan to serve to address and respond to those impacts.

Using the Council's regeneration strategy, **A Foundation for Success**, and the suite of masterplans as a basis for addressing structural and strategic improvement, the Renew phase will include policy interventions, financial support and the delivery of major construction projects to create opportunities to provide a diverse range employment and training opportunities and opportunities to local business supply chains, and will include:

- Securing funds to overcome high-level public sector challenges, working closely with business to utilise innovative solutions;

- Understanding future industrial growth as influenced by the Brexit and the pandemic, and work with business to strengthen Caerphilly's place in the regional economy;
- Expediting delivery of major construction projects as a catalyst for growth;
- Renewing policy interventions through the Second Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) – working from home, reducing the need to travel, provision of suitable land for development, diversification of town centres, facilitating Active Travel and modal shift;
- Accelerating Caerphilly Placemaking Plan projects;
- Ensuring maximum social impact and social value from public sector investment.

Foundation for Success

'A Foundation for Success' is the Council's overarching regeneration strategy for the 5 year period 2018 - 2023 which was adopted by Council in July 2018. The Strategy identified 7 key objectives for Supporting Business and these remain even more

relevant post Brexit and as a response to the economic impact of the pandemic. They are:

- To build a more resilient and diversified economy for the county borough;
- To support economic growth, innovation and enterprise;
- To create an environment that nurtures business;
- To enhance the competitiveness of the county borough;
- To boost business support;
- To identify key business investment sites; and
- To improve the links between business, schools and training providers.

It further identified the following key areas are critical to its delivery:

- Implementation of strategic masterplans;
- Innovation;
- Cluster networks;
- Skills.

These will continue to be addressed through the following priorities:

- Development of the Foundational Economy;

- Homes for the Future;
- Development of cluster and innovation opportunities;
- Digital Connectivity;
- Improving resilience through education training and careers advice;
- Transport Infrastructure and connectivity;
- Town Centre Regeneration & Diversification;
- Tourism Recovery;
- Reconfiguration of existing employment sites and identifying new sites;

Covid-19 has made a massive impact on people's working, commuting and living habits and it is conceivable that some aspects of society will be permanently altered and this will undoubtedly impact on decarbonisation. Opportunity exists to maximise the potential of these changes, for example through agile working, increased active travel and reduction in travel by car. We must recognise that our approach to the economic recovery that will follow provides us with a unique opportunity to sustainably rebuild our economy and make greener investments and climate positive decisions that set us on a pathway to achieve our climate target.

The Council's Decarbonisation Strategy entitled 'Reduce, Produce, Offset, Buy' prepared during the pandemic focuses on reducing the Council's own carbon footprint and sets out the overarching objective of being a net carbon neutral authority by 2030.

By becoming net carbon neutral by 2030, the Authority will help to create a more robust county borough by stimulating jobs in the "Low Carbon" Sector and green economy. This will not only make our environment greener and more stable, but will help local residents into work and out of poverty, making communities more resilient to change

The Renew Phase

Building on the Revive Phase the **Council approved Wellbeing and Place Shaping Framework** provides a list of potential civic investments across Caerphilly in excess of £231m that align explicitly with the Council's adopted Wellbeing Objectives which will be delivered in the next 5 years.

The Place Shaping Framework provides the opportunity to build, repair and renew key infrastructure and assets across the length and breadth of Caerphilly county borough, as well as explicitly further the aims

and policy direction previously set within strategies such as the Council's Corporate plan, the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (SARS), the Council's Regeneration Strategy "A Foundation for Success 2018-2023" as well as the exciting proposals set out within the 21st Century Schools Band B Programme.

The Place Shaping Framework is of paramount importance at this time, as it offers an important element of the Council's Covid recovery plan, which aims to support our communities as they begin to emerge from the Covid pandemic.

Long-term investments in infrastructure such as that proposed within the Place Shaping Framework, hold the potential to rebalance the local economy, enhance productivity and create jobs and opportunities across Caerphilly County Borough, which is of great importance as we support our communities to rebuild a sustainable and resilient future post Covid. The opportunity exists to work together to create a better and more prosperous Caerphilly for everyone, further embedding the Council's "TeamCaerphilly" collective community and civic leadership model of delivery.



Priority Theme: Improve Resilience through the Development of the Foundational Economy

The Covid crisis has removed any doubt about the fundamental role of the foundational economy to the well-being of our citizens. This is the part of the economy which could not be shut down during the pandemic as it provided the infrastructure of everyday life, serving our essential daily household needs, and keeping us all safe and civilised, providing jobs at the heart of our communities in healthcare, childcare, food, housing, energy, construction, waste and recycling. The Foundational Economy also makes a substantial contribution to GVA in Wales. The Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change estimated that that the foundational economy accounts for approximately four jobs in every ten and approximately £1 in every £3 spent by households in Wales and Caerphilly County Borough is no exception.

Why is this a priority?

- The health of our local economy is broader than simply GVA and jobs growth, supporting the foundational economy

ensures that economic growth accrues more equitably and spreads social justice.

- Resources can be usefully spent shoring up indigenous businesses where profit and spend is more likely to remain or recirculate within the local economy.
- Building capacity within communities and establishing networks of collaboration is fundamental to supporting and growing the Foundational Economy within the County Borough.

The opportunities this presents are:

- Enabling economic value to be re-invested and recirculated within the local economy whilst creating employment opportunities closer to home.
- To spatially redistribute economic activity throughout the County Borough to achieve greater equality.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Strengthening local supply chains through cultivational procurement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Business Support to help local SMEs register with procurement. • Map supply chain voids to ensure that local companies are used where practicable. • Develop the capabilities of indigenous business to compete for contracts and fill supply chain voids. • Work with partners to support local jobs through the use of procurement measures that support local supply chains. 		
Improve support for business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider bespoke support for services targeted at micro and small businesses, business start-up and self-employment within the County Borough by reinvigorating and resourcing local business support to coordinate and maximise the opportunities arising at the Regional level through City Deal. • Work with partners to provide training and support for citizens to become self-employed. • Re-configure grant spend to ensure that it is more effective and targeted more closely at supporting economic outputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and develop town centre enterprise incubator hub targeting young entrepreneurs – Fab Lab. 	

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Exploit funding opportunities to ensure premises are available for business development and growth for SMEs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target key premises within the strategic hubs of Caerphilly and Ystrad Mynach in addition to Principal Town Centres throughout the County Borough in order to ensure that there are suitable premises available to facilitate commercial growth (retail & business). • Work with the ICE Regional Enterprise Hub to identify new opportunities for business hubs in other parts of the County Borough. • Exploit opportunities to bring employment back to the centre of our towns as part of a wider offer of activities and uses and re-purpose buildings to create co-working spaces and encouraging new green skills and opportunities such as repair cafes, reuse and refill retail and remanufacturing innovation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that potential new sites are incorporated within the emerging Local Development Plan. • Review Town Centre Policies through the work on the 2nd Replacement LDP to diversify the offer in town centres and apply the town centre first principle for development with high footfall. 	
Work with local Businesses to progress innovation in the Foundational Economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with the private sector to develop foundational economy challenge bid schemes. 		

What will this achieve?

- To spatially redistribute economic growth throughout the County Borough.
- To create the appropriate support and conditions to enable the Foundational Economy to grow and flourish.

Priority Theme: Zero Carbon Homes for the Future

Caerphilly County Borough Council remains one of the few local authorities that have retained its housing stock, with over 10,000 properties and 13,000 tenants. The Council has invested over £260m in bringing all these homes up to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and this should be complete by December 2021. This ambitious investment programme is not just to improve homes, but to also transform people's lives and the communities in which people live.

The Council is also progressing significant work to deliver new homes and is considering the delivery of housing more widely, including our commitments to work collaboratively and share knowledge and resources with our RSL partners to work towards delivering more energy efficient housing, progressing innovative housing schemes and delivery mechanisms which offer potential solutions to housing demand not being met by volume housebuilders and exploring mechanisms to deliver specialised housing such as housing to support an ageing population.

Alongside this the Council's ambitious house building programme is to deliver 400 new Council homes by 2025. The Council will invest and incentivise modern methods of construction and off-site manufacturing capability and supply chains to deliver high quality, energy efficient and low carbon Council housing. The Council's procurement strategy for social housing will be critical in this respect as we seek to also deliver an element of off-site manufactured in Wales innovative homes across our development sites. This has the potential to create scale, developing a stronger pipeline of development, so we can secure more modular off site construction, that will make a locally based factory commercially viable using Welsh suppliers for example which will provide employment, shorten supply chains and further reduce carbon usage. During the lifetime of the strategy further opportunities will be explored to further reduce energy consumption and options that create heat and power by using photovoltaics, ground source and air source energy and heating.

Why is this a priority?

- The Council is committed to improving the quality of its housing stock and will ensure it is maintained to up-to-date quality standards.
- There is an urgent requirement to deliver new housing to meet the needs of all residents of the County Borough.
- Unlocking stalled housing sites is critical to achieving social justice and providing housing in areas less favourable to volume builders.

The opportunities this presents are:

- The house building industry can drive economic growth and generate employment and supply chain demands that benefit the local economy.
- Piloting the construction of innovative housing increases the supply of energy efficient homes within the County Borough whilst showcasing innovative construction methods and technologies that can provide a learning opportunity for the wider construction industry.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Welsh Housing Quality Standard Investment to upgrade 10,822 homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently 10448 properties out of our total stock of 10654 have been upgraded and are fully compliant with WHQS standard. It is anticipated that the majority of those remaining will be upgraded within the next 12 months with many only awaiting external works. Target to complete all internal and external works by December 2021. • Explore opportunities to work with other housing partners on a Challenge Fund to retrofit existing dwellings to facilitate decarbonisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The successful Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme has sought to address fuel poverty and enhanced energy efficiency in all of our Council homes, the next iteration of WHQS, due in January 2022, is expected to challenge us to meet EPC A using the Optimised Retrofit approach to Council housing stock. This will require the upskilling of our construction sector and provide opportunities for our business partners and local supply chains 	
Unlocking public sector land for self-build development, through a 'Plot Shop' initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify plots of land in Council ownership that are suitable for self-build development; apply for outline planning permission and ensure infrastructure is in place (where appropriate) to ensure sites are 'oven ready.' Facilitate the sale of plots to eligible applicants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate demand for the scheme and identify additional sites in appropriate areas through a rolling programme of re-investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate demand for the scheme and identify additional sites in appropriate areas through a rolling programme of re-investment. The scheme is intended to run for 15 years.
Construction of new council housing stock.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and develop energy efficient housing that reduces energy costs significantly and / or generates energy that can be supplied into the grid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and develop energy efficient housing that reduces energy costs significantly and / or generates energy that can be supplied into the grid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and develop energy efficient housing that reduces energy costs significantly and / or generates energy that can be supplied into the grid.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure planning permission on Council owned sites identified within the Council's Programme Development Plan (PDP). Seek opportunities to secure additional Council stock through Section 106 agreements. Set up partnership agreements with developer partners including where appropriate RSLs for the delivery of Council units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure planning permission on Council owned sites identified within the Council's Programme Development Plan (PDP). Seek opportunities to secure additional Council stock through Section 106 agreements and/or selected purchase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure planning permission on Council owned sites identified within the Council's Programme Development Plan (PDP). Seek opportunities to secure additional Council stock through Section 106 agreements and / or selected purchase.
Examine the potential to pilot initiatives through the Housing Investment Fund as part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal workstream.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding to unlock 2 problematic stalled sites at Maesycwmmmer and Abertridwr through the City Deal Housing Investment Fund. Secure funding to unlock 1 problematic site in the Heads of the Valleys through the City Deal Housing Investment Fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of older persons housing. Encourage the delivery of innovative technologies in new housing development. Secure funding to unlock problematic stalled sites through the City Deal Investment Fund. Work with Development Bank for Wales to unlock stalled sites within the County Borough. Work with RSL's to deliver schemes at Maesycwmmmer and Abertridwr through the City Deal Housing Investment Fund by end of 2024. 	

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Utilise Welsh Government loans / funding to bring vacant properties and sites back into beneficial use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate and assist owner occupiers and landlords to access Welsh Government loans to upgrade and bring properties back into beneficial use. Secure Welsh Government Land to bring 1 brownfield site back into beneficial use for a mixed-use development including mixed tenure housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate and assist owner occupiers and landlords to access Welsh Government loans to upgrade and bring properties back into beneficial use. Secure planning permission on Council owned sites. Bring 1 problematic brownfield site into Council ownership to unlock its development potential through a partnership agreement with Welsh Government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate and assist owner occupiers and landlords to access Welsh Government loans to upgrade and bring properties back into beneficial use. Secure planning permission on Council owned sites.
Secure money through the Innovative Housing Fund to deliver innovative homes suitable for the future (i.e., carbon neutral, zero carbon).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pentrebane Street Caerphilly, funding secured for the development of a mixed-use scheme on this site. Ty Pontllanfraith, funding secured from the Innovative Housing Fund for the redevelopment of this site and the creation of a 'Garden Village'. Ty Du, funding secured from the Innovative Housing Fund for the development of this site. Work with our RSL partners to deliver new carbon neutral homes to meet housing need across the county borough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to deliver innovative homes in partnership with developers / RSLs on key development site within Risca. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to deliver innovative homes in partnership with developers / RSLs on key development sites across the county borough.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Set up empty homes team to target empty town centre properties and empty residential properties to bring them back in to beneficial use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an Enforcement Action Plan for Vacant Town Centre Properties and act using relevant statutory powers to bring premises back into beneficial use. • Provide grant support via the Transforming Towns Initiative to bring town centre properties back into beneficial use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Enforcement Action on Vacant Town Centre Properties and act using relevant statutory powers to bring premises back into beneficial use. • Use WG Placemaking for Towns funds to support residential / commercial development where applicable such as 'Store 21' scheme in Blackwood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Enforcement Action on Vacant Town Centre Properties and act using relevant statutory powers to bring premises back into beneficial use.

What will this achieve?

- Higher quality Council Housing throughout the County Borough to meet identified housing need.
- Housing in areas of need that have traditionally been less favourable to volume house builders.
- Innovative, energy efficient homes and the showcasing of new construction techniques that could benefit the housebuilding industry more widely.
- Housing that meets the needs of an ageing population in a sustainable manner.
- Provide housing in town centre locations to diversify towns and increase footfall.

Priority Theme: Develop Cluster and Innovation Opportunities

The County Borough has a diverse and varied economic base, featuring companies and sectors that exhibit the area's capability to attract and foster higher value-added jobs. The Baseline Economic Analysis for South East Wales, identifies 3 main sectors within Caerphilly County Borough, where location quotients were at their strongest, these include:

- Life Sciences – one of Welsh Government's nine key sectors.
- Advanced Materials and manufacturing; and
- Food

Examples of some of the companies that are already located within the County Borough include:

Pharmaceutical / life sciences, of which there are numerous examples already operating within the County Borough including:

- Norgine (Tir-y-berth);

- Convatec, Sharp Clinical Solutions, Carey Medical and Williams Medical (Rhymney);
- Biotage (Dyffryn Business Park);
- PCI Services and BBI Group (Penyfan Industrial Estate);
- Frontier Medical and IMP Pharmaceuticals (Pontllanfraith);
- Biometrics Ltd (Nine Mile Point);
- Biological Preparations (Pantglas Industrial Estate).

Advanced Materials and Manufacturing

- General Dynamics UK – a prime contractor and complex systems generator based at Oakdale Business Park;
- BRUSH eu - supply industry leading turbogenerators and power management systems around the world, and design and manufacture high quality transformers and switch gear. (Pontllanfraith);
- Nuair Ltd – a designer and manufacturer

of domestic and commercial ventilation products available in over 40 countries (Western Industrial Estate, Caerphilly);

- IG Doors – Leading UK Door manufacturer (Oakdale Business Park);
- Transcend Packaging – Duffryn Industrial Estate;
- Deregella – manufacture of prototype battery and supercapacitor devices (Pontygwindy Industrial Estate).

Food

- Braces Bakery – Oakdale Business Park;
- Peters Foods – Bedwas;
- Castle Dairies – Pontygwindy Industrial Estate;
- Unilever Best Foods – Oakdale Business Park.

As illustrated Caerphilly is home to several prestigious companies a number of which have diversified during the pandemic to

aid the national call for the manufacture and provision of PPE. Significantly a number of the county borough's Med Tech companies have also experienced growth as a consequence of their ability to manufacture and package pharmaceutical products in response to the Covid pandemic creating hundreds of high value new jobs within the local economy.

In addition, the wider region is home to the world's first compound semiconductor cluster in South Wales. The Compound Semiconductor Centre in Was formed in Cardiff in 2015 as a joint venture between IQE Plc, a leading supplier of advanced compound semiconductor wafer products, and Cardiff University. In 2017, the Cardiff Capital Region through its City Deal invested £38M with IQE co-investing £375M in the Newport CS-mega Foundry at Imperial Park, Newport. The Foundry, is also home to the £50M CSA Catapult, which produces wafer chips that are exported the world over and are embedded in all major developing technologies from smart-phones to wearable technology and from advanced energy

systems to next generative automotive. This has led to several firms locating in and operating along the M4 Corridor in Newport and Monmouthshire however supply chain activity is taking place throughout the region, including in Caerphilly.

Why is this a priority?

- Caerphilly is ideally located within the Cardiff Capital Region to capture opportunities associated with emerging technologies and cluster developments;
- There are already emerging clusters within the County Borough e.g., life sciences which potentially can be developed further;
- Both local and regional cluster developments require networking and collaboration in order to maximise economic benefit.

The opportunities this presents are:

- To develop regional clusters linked to emerging key areas including compound semiconductors, artificial intelligence and electric automation;

- To develop the skills base required to meet business needs and to drive our green economic recovery;
- To create higher value jobs.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Develop cluster opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with City Deal/Welsh Government to deliver key sites including Capital Valley, Rhymney, Ty Du Nelson, Caerphilly Business Park and Oakdale Business Park (plateau 1,2 and 4). • Work with WG to secure £3m investment for the provision of infrastructure at Oakdale Business Park. • Work with the private sector to facilitate their growth plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment of Capital Valley – establish the physical needs of potential occupiers. • Ensure the provision of sufficient land through the planning system for new businesses and expansion opportunities for key sectors to establish and grow. • Develop business case for development of commercial development to support Llanbradach park and ride scheme. 	
Create and strengthen official lines of communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Caerphilly Business Club to programme business networking opportunities at a local level and make connections to enhance local supply chain activity. • Continue to work closely with businesses in the county borough to address their training needs in association with Further and higher Education partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with relevant firms and education/training providers to minimise skills shortages and skills mismatches. 	
Target innovation and business set up.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain a better understanding of the skills requirements in respect of the compound semiconductor, life sciences sectors and electric automotive sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help establish links between Innovate UK and existing life science businesses identified within the County Borough. (Innovate UK provide support and challenge funding to the health and life sciences sector). 	

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to roll out the Caerphilly Business Productivity Enhancement Programme to encourage SMEs with more than 10 employees to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future proof business through becoming more efficient, Introduce new technology, Diversify and broaden the customer base, Develop new products. Following a productivity diagnostic of the company, a comprehensive support package will provide implementation support, skills development, research & development, export, GRANT SUPPORT for capital expenditure and any other specialist interventions that are required. Bring together public, private and third sector organisations in the County Borough to respond to societal challenges and drive positive change through innovation via the CCR Challenge Fund Programme and Innovate UK. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring together public, private and third sector organisations in the County Borough to respond to societal challenges and drive positive change through innovation via the CCR and other Challenge Fund Programmes. Develop entrepreneurship action plan with Caerphilly Business Club. 	

What will this achieve?

- Build upon existing, prominent economic sectors within the County Borough creating strong innovative and resilient clusters.
- Stronger business networks.
- Encourage new participants within prominent economic sectors and establish Caerphilly County Borough as a strong business destination.

Priority Theme: Digital Connectivity

Digital connectivity is critical to a well-functioning, modern economy and the pandemic has highlighted the significant role digital inclusion has played during lockdown. From the ability to engage with health services to maintaining contact with friends and families during periods of lockdown, there has never been a greater need for digital confidence. Digital connectivity and confidence are essential in terms of the delivery and consumption of many, varied services (both public and private) for individuals and households and importantly for business. It is also essential for all sectors of the economy to help to drive growth and create jobs.

Why is this a priority?

- Digital connectivity increases productivity and growth.
- Clear benefits to the economy if small businesses further increase their use of broadband and mobile services.
- Businesses benefit from growth by

accessing broader markets and increased productivity from engaging with the digital economy.

- Business optimisation with the time and cost savings an internet connection can bring to business operations including access to cloud services.
- Increasing digital skills within both the business community and wider communities within the County Borough.

The opportunities this presents are:

- To provide a strategic direction for the 'Digital' strand at both a regional level through CCR and at a local authority level.
- Increase digital connectivity within Caerphilly County Borough and across the wider CCR and beyond.
- Enable the County Borough to benefit from new forms of artificial intelligence (driverless cars, wearable devices), many of which will rely on 5G networks.

- Enable the County Borough to benefit from new forms of technological advances linked to care home provision.
- To enable the Council to provide and offer digitally enabled services 24/7.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Work with Partners to Increase broadband speed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote initiatives to increase the availability of SFBB (Super Fast Broad Band) and UFBB (Ultra-Fast Broadband). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote initiatives to increase the availability of SFBB and UFBB. 	
Provide digital support and advice to business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with WG to offer digital infrastructure support services to local businesses / enhance digital connectivity / promote the role of artificial intelligence in business. 		
Promote the concept of Regional / Community Wi-Fi as the potential for enabling a functional and connected future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out Free Wi Fi in all Principal Towns and Rhymney and Newbridge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities through CCR investment and Welsh Government Funding opportunities. 	
Explore the opportunity to roll-out a 5G Network across the CCR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the work of the CCR Digital Strategy Continue to work with private sector providers engaged in rolling out their 5G network across the CCR and County Borough. 		
Ensure innovative technologies through the use of broadband are incorporated within new housing developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with developers to ensure the incorporation of innovative technologies within new housing developments in line with national planning policy. 		
Improve Broadband Speeds in Schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of SuperFast Broadband Installations in Schools in line with the Learning in Digital Wales Programme. Seek funding opportunities through WG and work with schools to improve network infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek funding opportunities through WG to increase broadband speeds for schools to Ultra-Fast Broadband to support future digital provision. 	

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Coding for Younger People to enable young people to have the relevant skills for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners in WG & Consortia to promote the use of coding in line with the Digital Competence Framework. 		
Assess the potential development of Wi-Fi analytics and digital towns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise Wi Fi analytics to inform Town Centre Strategies. 		
Assess the ability of town centre traders to offer increasingly popular digital services such as click and collect and look to share best practice where this has worked well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with 'Near Me Now' to pilot a new digital platform for use by business in Principal Towns throughout the County Borough. 		

What will this achieve?

- Enable the County Borough to keep pace with technological advancement and realise the economic benefits associated with digital connectivity.
- Increasing social justice by providing an environment where everyone has equal access to all the digital necessities required for modern living.

Priority Theme: Improving Resilience through Education, Training & Careers Advice

Education, Training, Employability and Skills support is vital in times of economic uncertainty, and it is clear that the pandemic threatens to reverse progress made in reducing unemployment and economic inactivity over the last decade. There is an urgent need to boost enterprise and employment within the County Borough and to link people with business and create a stimulating environment for both people and business. There are different economic challenges faced in different parts of the County Borough, and the pandemic has accentuated these differences further.

Notwithstanding this the key principles of protecting jobs, developing the economy, and increasing skills and business growth applies equally across the whole of the County Borough. Working in partnership with training providers and business and industry, the Council will seek to increase the availability of skilled workers, quality jobs and identify opportunities to enhance access for residents to high value jobs.

The availability of a workforce with a wide range of skills and education levels can

help business grow and also attract new business. Ways need to be found to improve confidence & build a culture of learning in the workforce with a particular focus on workers who may have few, if any, qualifications and yet who have valuable, transferable skills and experience.

Why is this a priority?

- Children and adults need to be given appropriate career support to aid their understanding of the type of employment available to them in the county borough and the wider region and help them make the right choices to lead them into the world of work.
- To ensure that the appropriate soft skills and technical skills are provided to undertake the work that is available, and to give people the confidence and skills to encourage entrepreneurship.
- To address the mismatch between the skills needed to access jobs in the region (digital, technical and soft) and the

training provided through the curriculum and by training providers.

- Ensure that there are opportunities for upskilling the current workforce and to upskill for new jobs in the green economy.
- Improve links between schools and local businesses.

The opportunities this presents are:

- The creation of an appropriately skilled workforce within the region.
- Reduce worklessness by aligning interventions in the provision of employment support services.
- Development of skills in key growth areas and in areas where there are skills shortages as a consequence of the pandemic & Brexit.
- Creation of employment opportunities through an effective apprenticeship and the CCR graduate programme.
- Support mechanisms that employ pathways into work and improve employability by removing barriers to employment.

What we will do:

Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Develop a skilled workforce and tackle unemployment to respond to the needs of business both locally and regionally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver the Caerphilly Academy - training, work placement and apprenticeship programme to support the needs of business. Assist the CCR project team in the delivery of its "graduate" programme by working with the Caerphilly Business Club to identify opportunities for business to take part & benefit. Engage with the DWP Kickstart scheme and Restart Scheme at an authority-wide level, with a commitment to host 10 Kickstart work placements across various service areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and where beneficial maintain or extend the apprenticeship programme in partnership with Local Businesses. Continue to engage with the DWP Restart Scheme. 	
Work with partners, in the private, public and third sector, utilising labour market intelligence to identify future growth demand and skill requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align skills and employment support provision to meet the needs of future employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align skills and employment support provision to meet the needs of future employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align skills and employment support provision to meet the needs of future employment.
Explore opportunities for targeted career advice aligned to current and future job opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Welsh Government and CCR to pilot career advice initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out new career advice initiative. 	
Formalise links between businesses, schools, FE and HE establishments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek funding opportunities through WG and work with schools to improve network infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek funding opportunities through WG and work with schools to improve network infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek funding opportunities through WG and work with schools to improve network infrastructure.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Ensure training and skills provision enables those currently in employment to upskill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local business and training providers to support those in employment to have access to in work training and progression opportunities. 		
Work with partners to upskill the workforce and expand the workforce in green sectors. Investment in low carbon housing at scale and upgrading housing stock particularly Council housing, is likely to be a central plank of recovery to increase energy efficiency of Council homes, reduce fuel poverty and create jobs in the green economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local business and training providers and developers to support those in the construction sector to have the necessary training and skills to meet the decarbonisation ambitions of the Council and Welsh Government. 		
Continue to provide crucial assistance to people who might have lost their job or training opportunity because of the pandemic or Brexit, and help people develop new skills fit for the future and to find new employment opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with individuals to provide appropriate employment support through the existing employment support programmes including CfW, CfW+, CfW++, Inspire 2 Work, Inspire 2 achieve, Bridges into Work and Nurture Equip and Thrive to ensure participants are given the support that is required to support them into employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and roll out a regional Employment Support Programme for the CCR to succeed the current EU/WG funded programmes. 	

What will this achieve?

- Create an appropriately skilled workforce.
- Improve career choices and life opportunities.
- Facilitate access to employment.

Priority Theme: Transport Infrastructure & Connectivity

Regeneration and investment should address both physical and social exclusion and to this extent, "Delivering Prosperity after Covid" should identify the immediate infrastructure needed to increase connectivity between people and places. This section addresses connectivity in terms of the physical accessibility to services, facilities, employment and places and infrastructure required to deliver the priority themes identified within this document.

Why is this a priority?

- There is a need to identify major infrastructure projects that would significantly improve connectivity.
- Regeneration success of key strategic sites depends upon public transport integration and connectivity.
- There is a need to promote place-making development around key transport hubs and nodes.
- To unlock and actively promoting rail

improvements and the reinstatement of new links.

- There is a need to roll out a comprehensive network of electric vehicle charging points to actively promote the decarbonisation of our transport system.

The opportunities this presents are:

- Making strategic sites more attractive to investors.
- Improving connectivity and access to employment opportunities.
- Improving access to employment opportunities outside the County Borough.
- Re-inforcing Metro hubs.
- Ensure that active travel funding proposals align with emerging Transforming Towns projects.
- To maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits and opportunities the electric vehicle agenda will provide, and enable electric vehicles to be a fundamental part of our fleet.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Improve the resilience of the strategic highway network of the A469 to Rhymney.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress Design and Feasibility stage in preparedness for Levelling Up Fund Submission in 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Levelling Up Fund Bid to UK Government to fund the strategic highway improvements. 	
Improvement to the strategic highway network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake initial feasibility and design for Bedwas Bridge Highway Improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding and all relevant consents for the Bedwas Bridge Highway Improvement Scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-valley link between Crumlin, Ystrad Mynach and Nelson, involving new bus interchange at Maesycwmmmer to facilitate east-west and north-south services.
Implementation of METRO proposals in relation to Capital Valley, the wider Rhymney area and the A465.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake Options appraisal and feasibility work to establish the optimum location for a new A465 interchange. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a new bus interchange on the A465 Heads of the Valleys Road to facilitate transition between east-west A465 bus services and north-south bus routes and the Rhymney Rail Station. Work with Transport for Wales to provide a new METRO stabling facility at Rhymney Station. 	
Implement further key transport improvements including park and ride.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and prepare a business case for a park and ride in Twyn Carno ward for 100 spaces. Design and prepare a business case for a new park and ride in Llanbradach ward for 250/500 spaces (Phase 1). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of park and ride spaces at Ystrad Mynach park and ride. Hengoed park and ride. 	
Improve connectivity along the A472 Corridor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding for a feasibility study to identify how connectivity can be enhanced along the A472 Corridor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include proposal for enhancing the A472 in the Local Development Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop detailed designs, secure funding and secure planning permission for proposed enhancement scheme.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Caerphilly Metro Transport and Investment Hub.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the Caerphilly Interchange to Weltag stage 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the Caerphilly Interchange / Metro scheme to Weltag stage 4. Submit Levelling Up Fund Bid to UK Government to fund the Caerphilly interchange. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress scheme. Weltag stage 5. Reinstatement of Cwmbargoed freight line for passenger provision. Provide new metro hubs at Nelson and Tredomen and maximise park and ride opportunities at proposed new stations.
Electric hub.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out Electric Vehicle Charge Points at key locations across the County Borough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the opportunities and funding sources for establishing Caerphilly Town Centre as the first 'all electric' transport hub. 	
Implementation of key infrastructure projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of cycle facilities at all transport hubs together with key employment and retail destinations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus development at Caerphilly Business Park / Ness Tar centred on a new METRO Hub (residential, B1 offices, live / work units and leisure). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinstatement of the former Newport to Caerphilly rail line for passenger transport.

What will this achieve?

- A better-connected County Borough, with improved connectivity within the County Borough as well as being better connected to the opportunities within the wider Cardiff Capital Region.
- Progress on the Decarbonisation of our transport network.
- Make active travel a real option for the transport mode of choice.
- Greater investment within the County Borough and the development of key strategic infrastructure.

Priority Theme: Town Centre Regeneration and Diversification

Prolonged lockdown has fundamentally changed consumer behavior, as people have become dependent on having products delivered to their home. Town centres are not only at risk of being obsolescent to shoppers. People who are now used to exercising in their immediate locality or front room, may not go back to the gym; employees who like working from home may not return to the office; and friends accustomed to socialising online may no longer pop down the pub. It is not just the everyday functions of towns that are likely to be affected. The impact of travel bans is already evident on destination retailing such as out of town shopping centres and City Centres and on our tourism destinations. Many town centres and high streets may not manage to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, unless we act swiftly to develop the necessary capacity for recovery and then longer-term transformation.

Why is this a priority?

- The shift towards online retail has accelerated as a result of the Covid pandemic and town centres are at risk of becoming obsolete if this short-term trend cannot be reversed.
- The rise in retail vacancy rates and the resultant reduced footfall will undermine the viability of other businesses in our towns such as those in the hospitality sector.
- There is a need to promote place-making development around key transport hubs and nodes.

The opportunities this presents are:

- The opportunity to apply the Town Centre First Principle for uses that drive footfall e.g. Health Centres, Schools to act as a catalyst to breathe new life and purpose into Town Centres.

- Improved connectivity and access to employment opportunities in Town Centres.
- Reinforcing Town Centre locations as a focus for active travel and strategic Metro hubs.
- Reinforcing Town Centres as convenient places to live.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Assess the suitability of Local Development Orders / Town Centre Enterprise zones in South East area towns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake initial Assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Local Development Orders if the Assessment indicates this is an appropriate way forward. 	
Consider the Strategic Acquisition of key sites and premises in our prioritised town centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure Funding to acquire key sites and premises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire as appropriate and bring property and key sites back into beneficial use. 	
Prepare an enforcement action plan for town centres - targeting statutory action on target properties where necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target problematic premises with statutory action to encourage property owners to invest in their premises. • Take action in default if necessary. Initial focus on Bargood Town Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target problematic premises with statutory action to encourage property owners to invest in their premises. • Take action in default if necessary. 	
Investigate and encourage all opportunities to locate public sector / third sector commercial occupation in town centres. To include service hubs, health and well-being provision etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Health Board to establish their requirements for facilities in town centres. • Work with other public sector and third sector bodies to locate in town centres. 		
Undertake a review of the current town centre offer for incubation space, start up space, managed space, live work space and graded office space and an assessment of future demand in light of changing ways of working accelerated by the Covid pandemic.			

What we will do:

Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Assess need and potential for housing provision in town centres, to include standards, tenure mix, access arrangements, client groups etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the Acquisition of Pentrebane Street, Caerphilly for mixed use development including mixed tenure housing. Work with the private sector to secure new residential accommodation above retail units in town centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of sites for residential development through the Local Development Plan preparation process. 	
Establish a meanwhile use programme to encourage community use and pop-up provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify town centre premises suitable for meanwhile uses and pop-up provision. 		

What will this achieve?

- Diversification of the uses in the Principal Town Centres.
- Reinvigorate our town centres and improve investor confidence.
- Provide housing in town centre locations.
- Provide support to town centre businesses to adapt and survive.
- Bring empty Premises back into beneficial use and increase occupancy levels.
- A shop local marketing strategy to encourage the return of shoppers to the high street.
- Provision of cultural and service offer that maintains the relevance of town centres in an age of online shopping and remote working.
- Build a more resilient, sustainable economy.
- Increase footfall and increase dwell time to make our towns more vibrant.
- Provide the creative industries with opportunities to hold events for the sports and music sectors within key town centre venues.
- Reintroduction of our Programme of Events to attract visitors and increase footfall.

Priority Theme: Tourism Recovery

Prior to the pandemic, jobs, visitors and spend were all on an upward trend and tourism was worth an estimated £122m for the local economy and responsible for an estimated 1632 jobs in Caerphilly and 68,700 jobs within the Cardiff Capital Region. However, the Tourism sector has been one of the sectors hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic and the outlook remains highly uncertain.

Encouraging news on the roll out of the vaccines has boosted hopes for recovery but challenges remain, and the sector is expected to remain in survival mode until well into the Autumn of 2021.

Domestic tourism has restarted and is helping to mitigate the impact on jobs and businesses in some destinations. However, the survival of businesses throughout the tourism ecosystem is at risk without continued government support and although UK and Welsh Governments have taken impressive action to cushion the blow to tourism, to minimise job losses and to build recovery in 2021 and beyond, more needs to be done.

Why is this a priority?

- Tourism is an important area in terms of ongoing, long-term economic growth providing much needed jobs in the County Borough.
- There is a need to restore visitor confidence.
- Tourism connects people to our unique Welsh culture, heritage and natural landscapes and maintaining the sector is also good for our citizens well-being providing valued attractions in the heart of our communities.
- Tourism contributes to the enhancement and conservation of our cultural, natural and historic heritage and is fundamental in terms of sustaining accommodation and hospitality businesses.

The opportunities this presents are:

- To make full use of digital, technology and data to engage new audiences, enhance the visitor experience and provide an

offer that continues to meet consumer expectations.

- To develop the tourism industry to contribute to the further enhancement and conservation of Caerphilly's cultural, natural and historic heritage and minimise damage to the natural and built environment.
- To provide an inclusive and accessible offer that is open to all.
- To promote our tourism attractions to the creative industries for use by the UK's film, heritage, sports and music sectors.
- To build back a resilient, future-proof tourism sector, further efforts will be needed to ensure the industry is employing more UK nationals in year-round, quality jobs and that this workforce is adequately and appropriately skilled.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Develop a positive narrative/ reputation for tourism in Caerphilly County Borough as a go to destination for Activity and Heritage holidays focusing on those areas of competitive advantage such as mountain biking, cycling, walking, heritage and activity tourism all of which are particular strengths in Caerphilly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with virtual and digital travel trade to identify opportunities for Activity and Heritage trips / holidays in Caerphilly with UK and international tour operators. Develop a marketing plan to reinvigorate and reinforce the attractiveness of the county borough to domestic tourism and increase awareness of what is on offer in the county borough to encourage visitors to Visit Caerphilly when they are visiting other attractions in the region. Update the Visit Caerphilly Webpage and utilise social media platforms to ensure that the Visit Caerphilly Brand is effective and recognised by prospective visitors to the region. Promote the Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateways at Caerphilly Castle, Cwmcarn Forest and Penallta Parc in partnership with the VRP/WG and CCR. 		
Work with partners to develop new high-quality attractions and activity products, particularly those providing distinctive and unique experiences that can attract visitors all year round.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage – Work with Cadw on proposals to elevate Caerphilly Castle from a Tier 1 tourism attraction to a Tier 2 tourism attraction. Heritage – Expand the events and tourism offer at Llancaiach Fawr Manor and explore the feasibility of developing accommodation at the site. 		

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Work with partners to develop new high-quality attractions and activity products, particularly those providing distinctive and unique experiences that can attract visitors all year round.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage – Expand the cultural events on offer at the New Tredegar Winding House. • Activity – Work with NRW to promote and develop Cwmcarn Forest Drive as a destination activity and explore opportunities to expand the network of legal bike trails within the Forest. • Activity – Work with Tomorrow Tourism to prepare a long-term plan to develop Cwmcarn as a national visitor attraction through the provision of new activities and attractions to complement the existing offer. 		
Work with accommodation providers to diversify the range and type of accommodation provided in the county borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Council's preferred developer partner to develop proposals for a new boutique hotel in Park Lane, Caerphilly. • Undertake a feasibility study to ascertain what type of accommodation should be provided at Llancaiach Fawr Manor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of new sites for development through the Local Development Plan preparation process. 	
Work with partners to maximise existing assets and further develop new leisure establishments to drive the night-time economy and increase dwell time in the Principal Town Centres to encourage visitors to take weekend breaks in the county borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackwood Miners' Institute and the Caerphilly Workmens' Hall are both important historic assets in their respective town centres. Vibrant and successful theatres play an important role as an economic driver for developing employment and for the night-time economy. Officers will work with the management of both venues to build on their existing offer and encourage both venues to harness opportunities for greater networking with, and involvement of local businesses in their activities particularly those that operate in the 'experience' and evening and night time economy. 		

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Ensure that there is a sufficient variety of quality food and drink, leisure, entertainment, cultural activities and accommodation in our Principal Towns to attract and hold visitor/customers in town centres to develop their Night Time economy and make them more successful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Council's preferred developer partner to develop proposals for a new boutique hotel in Park Lane, Caerphilly. • Provide financial support (Transforming Towns Grant) to businesses looking to locate in Caerphilly and Blackwood Town Centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the developer partner to secure Planning Permission for a new hotel in Caerphilly. 	
Reintroduce local and major events when restrictions permit to encourage people to visit town centres and to showcase and encourage the development of the towns' night time economy and encourage visitors to experience the towns' food, drink, entertainment and accommodation businesses alongside each event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and agree a programme of Covid safe events for the Autumn of 2021. 		
Develop the leisure offer in Town Centres to bridge the transition from the day into the evening economy and help retain day time visitors, shop workers and employees in town into the evening.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of new sites for development through the Local Development Plan preparation process. 	



What will this achieve?

- Provide job and training opportunities for local residents and help to diversify the local economy.
- Increase visitor numbers and town centre footfall and drive economic recovery and growth.
- Provide a wide range of high-quality attractions and activities that can attract visitors to the county borough all year round.
- Enhance the night-time economy in Caerphilly and Blackwood and increase dwell time.
- Sustain local services such as shops, restaurants and pubs and support a broader and more vibrant and active community by attracting arts, sports or cultural events to the county borough.
- Restore Visitor confidence.
- The return of tourism activity in a safe environment for staff, community and visitors alike.
- Help tourism businesses to adapt and survive.
- Safe return of domestic tourism through an up to date marketing strategy.
- Provision of clear information to visitors and limit uncertainty (to the extent possible) in terms of Covid restrictions through the Visit Caerphilly Website.
- Strengthened co-operation within the region to promote the Cardiff Capital Region as a safe Visitor Destination.
- Build a more resilient, sustainable tourism economy.
- Promotion of our tourism attractions to the creative industries for use by the UK's film, heritage, sports and music sectors.
- Reintroduction of our Programme of Events to attract visitors and increase footfall.

Re-Configuration of Existing Employment Sites & Identification of New Employment Sites

The County Borough has over 400 hectares of functioning employment land spread across 36 sites, housing four 'anchor companies' (those identified by Welsh Government as being of global or international importance) and many others which provide important local employment.

The anchor companies identified by Welsh Government include:

- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water – based at Nelson;
- General Dynamics UK – prime contractor and complex systems generator with a base at Oakdale Business Park;
- Norgine Ltd – pharmaceutical company with a base at Tiryberth;
- Nuaire Ltd – ventilation product manufacturer headquartered at Western Industrial Estate, Caerphilly.

There are many other important employers within the County Borough, which together account for thousands of jobs, some of these include:

- BBI Group – Oakdale Business Park;
- Abingdon Flooring – Penyfan Industrial Estate;
- Unilever UK – Croespenmaen Industrial Estate;
- Nordam Europe – Hawtin Park;
- Seda UK Ltd – Hawtin Park;
- International Greetings – Penallta Industrial Estate;
- Orangebox Ltd – Penallta Industrial Estate;
- Kautex Textron – Dyffryn Business Park;
- Mollertech (UK) Ltd – Nine Mile Point;
- Peter's Foods – Bedwas House Industrial Estate;
- MII Engineering – Pantglas Industrial Est.
- RF Brookes – Rogerstone (500+ jobs);
- PHS – Western Industrial Estate;
- IG Doors – Oakdale Business Park.

Why is this a priority?

- Some estates have issues in terms of:
 - Quality of business premises in terms of size and standards;
 - Suitability of business premises;
 - Vacancy rates reflect the quality and standard of the business premises.
- There is a need to enhance and expand the employment base within the County Borough.
- There is a need to identify new sites for employment use to accommodate the expansion plans of businesses within the county borough.

The opportunities this presents are:

- Provision of new employment land and premises which meets the demands of business:
 - Seeking to invest within the area from outside;
 - Already within the area and looking to expand.

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Establish sites with scope for redevelopment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a key list of sites that offer an opportunity for redevelopment / reconfiguration, having regard to vacancy rate trends, quality / type of existing premises, size and location e.g. Capital Valley, Rhymney. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that schemes are able to make best use of infrastructure improvements brought about by investment in Metro. Consider the need for start-up units in the redevelopment/reconfiguration of sites. Produce masterplans for key employment sites. Ensure that funding for the redevelopment of particular sites can be secured, through landowners, City Deal, Welsh Government and other stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelopment of relevant sites
Establish more robust links with industrial property agents, landowners & existing occupiers to ensure redevelopment meets the needs of business and other stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify willing partners and funding opportunities to take forward sites for redevelopment e.g., Capital Valley, Rhymney. 		

What we will do:			
Project	12 Months	3 Years	5 Years
Prioritise the redevelopment of sites that would be beneficial in terms of promoting the growth of key sectors within the County Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with CCR on a pipeline of strategic sites and premises to attract funding to facilitate employment growth. • Work with WG to unlock employment land at Oakdale Business Park through the provision on the necessary infrastructure to access the land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw up masterplans for relevant sites in conjunction with key stakeholders and support developers looking to submit planning applications to facilitate development. 	
Oakdale Plateaus' 2 and 4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oakdale Plateaus' 2 and 4 – secure a private sector partner to redevelop vacant land for private sector-led employment use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the private sector to conclude the redevelopment of Oakdale Plateaus' 2 and 4. 	
Identify new sites for Business and Employment use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a robust assessment of land availability to inform the type and location of employment land and premises to be provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of new employment sites for development through the Local Development Plan preparation process. • Consider land availability and access to transport network as key considerations. 	
Invest in new Council owned start up units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify willing partners and funding opportunities to take forward sites for redevelopment for start-units. • Prepare up to date Masterplan to guide the provision of new units at Caerphilly Business Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain planning permission and commence development. 	

What will this achieve?

- Redevelopment opportunities that will maximise the financial return for estate holders.
- Provide opportunities for inward investors and indigenous SMEs.
- Address existing infrastructure issues which are hindering redevelopment.
- The reconfiguration and redevelopment of existing employment sites to provide modern, energy-efficient units to replace older, larger underutilised or vacant ones.
- Provision of land suitable for employment use and encourage clusters in key sectors.
- Provision of a diversity of land and premises suitable to enable the growth of indigenous SMEs.
- Restore investor confidence.
- Support for businesses to adapt and survive through the Caerphilly Enterprise Fund.
- Continue to provide clear information, advice and support to business through the Caerphilly Business Club and the Caerphilly Business E Newsletter.
- Strengthen co-operation within the region to promote the Cardiff Capital Region as a great place to do business.
- Build a more resilient, sustainable green economy.

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CABINET – 8TH DECEMBER 2021

SUBJECT: COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022-2023

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION & CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 For Cabinet to agree the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the 2022/23 financial year.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The report provides details of the Council Tax base for 2022/23 for tax setting purposes and the collection percentage to be applied.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that: -

- The Council Tax collection rate is maintained at 97.50% for the 2022/23 financial year.
- The Council Tax Base for 2022/23 be **61,062.71**, with the Council Tax Base for each community council area being as outlined in paragraph 5.6.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To determine the Council Tax base for 2022/23.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 1995 as amended set out the rules for the calculation of the Council Tax base. This is the amount required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to be used in the calculation of the Council Tax.

5.2 The Council Tax Base is the measure of the relative taxable capacity of different areas within the County Borough and is calculated in accordance with prescribed rules. The Tax Base represents the number of chargeable dwellings in the area expressed as Band D equivalents, taking into account the total number of exemptions, disablement reductions and discounts, with the net Tax Base calculated by taking account of the Council's estimated collection rate.

5.3 The gross Council Tax base for discounted chargeable dwellings expressed as Band D equivalents has been calculated at 62,628.42 for 2022/23. This figure is used by Welsh Government as part of the process for calculating the Revenue Support Grant.

5.4 The in-year collection rate for Council Tax had been maintained at between 96% and 97%

prior to the breakout of the Covid-19 pandemic. Last year however, it was only 94.5%. This was representative across all 22 Welsh authorities, who all reported a lower in-year collection rate due to the impact of the pandemic.

- 5.5 The Authority actively pursues all Council Tax arrears which results in the collection rate of 97.5% being regularly exceeded over time. This year the Authority has targeted the collection of previous years arrears, although this has been impacted by the restrictions in place limiting the number of defaulters we can summons to Magistrates' court
- 5.5 As the collection rate is regularly exceeded over time, it is proposed that the budgeted collection rate be maintained at 97.50% for 2022/23.
- 5.6 The Council Tax base for 2022/23 is 62,628.42 x 97.50%, which equates to **61,062.71**. Members are advised that increases in Band D equivalents can result in a reduced Revenue Support Grant when the final settlement announcement is made later this year. The Council Tax base analysed over community council areas is as follows: -

Community Councils Tax Base 2022/23

Community Council	Band D
Aber Valley	2,016.21
Argoed	871.94
Bargoed	3,694.09
Bedwas, Trethomas & Machen	3,948.40
Blackwood	2,972.91
Caerphilly	6,293.38
Darran Valley	714.21
Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry	619.91
Gelligaer	6,285.34
Llanbradach & Pwllpant	1,501.97
Maesycwmmmer	905.37
Nelson	1,595.45
New Tredegar	1,338.76
Penyrheol, Trecenydd & Energlyn	4,516.18
Rhymney	2,551.88
Risca East	2,040.30
Risca West	1,813.84
Van	1,652.77
Areas without Community Councils	15,729.80
Total	61,062.71

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 It is assumed that although the council tax collection rate of 97.50% is unlikely to be reached by the end of the financial year, it will be met over a period of time.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The calculation of the Council Tax base is a statement of fact and as such an Integrated Impact Assessment is not required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 As identified throughout this report.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none in respect of this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 There are no consultation responses which have not been reflected in this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Finance Act 1992 and regulations made under the Act.

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Consultees: David Street, Acting Chief Executive
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(Email: stenne@caerphilly.gov.uk)
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Andrew Southcombe, Finance Manager (Corporate Finance)
(Email: southak@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Council Tax Dwellings Return for 2022-23

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English / Saesneg

Caerphilly County Borough Council



Stephen Harris
HARRISR@CAERPHILLY.GOV.UK
Penallta House
Tredomen Park
Ystrad Mynach

Please select your authority and if necessary, amend any incorrect details

Name: CF82 7PG

E-mail (please enter N/A if unavailable): Sean O'Donnell

Telephone: STD code: (1443) (864013)

Authorities are required to calculate the council tax base for 2022-23 with reference to dwellings shown on the valuation list for the authority as at 31 October 2021 supplied to the authority under section 22B(7) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The figures should also take account of changes to the valuation list that appear likely to occur during 2022-23.

The information requested on this return must be submitted to the Welsh Government under section 68 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Forms should be returned to the address below, according to the following timetable:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| (i) certified signed copy and spreadsheet | 12 November 2021 |
| (ii) final ratified taxbase | 4 January 2022 |

Please check the validation sheet before sending the form.

Any queries on completion of the form or spreadsheet should be directed in the first instance, via telephone or e-mail, as directed below:

It is a Welsh Government audit requirement that all cells are completed. Please ensure that all blank cells are populated with zeros, those that are not will be assumed to be zero.

Local Government Financial Statistics Unit,
Welsh Government,
CP2
Cathays Park,
CARDIFF,
CF10 3NQ.

Email: lgfs.transfer@gov.wales

Telephone: 0300 025 9169 or 0300 025 5673



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		A*	Valuation band									Total (= sum of band figures)
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
Part A: Chargeable dwellings												
A1	All chargeable dwellings		14,738	26,121	18,339	9,293	6,552	2,308	807	89	70	78,317
A2	Dwellings subject to disability reduction (included in line A1)		71	192	182	107	74	39	16	3	16	700
A3	Adjusted chargeable dwellings (taking into account disability reductions)	71	14,859	26,111	18,264	9,260	6,517	2,285	794	102	54	78,317
Part B: Dwellings with discounts and premiums												
B1	Dwellings with no discount or premium (including long term empty properties and second homes with no discount)	32	6,882	15,770	11,852	6,624	5,285	1,943	682	71	46	49,187
B2a	Dwellings with a 25% discount (excluding long term empty properties and second homes)	39	7,961	10,293	6,387	2,617	1,216	333	108	15	3	28,972
B2b	Dwellings with a 50% discount (excluding long term empty properties and second homes)	0	16	48	25	19	16	9	4	16	5	158
B3a	Dwellings with a variable discount other than 25% or 50% (Part G, line 11)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B3b	Dwellings with long term empty property or second homes discount		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B3c	Dwellings with long term empty property or second homes premium		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B4	Total adjusted chargeable dwellings (sum of B1 to B3c=A3)	71	14,859	26,111	18,264	9,260	6,517	2,285	794	102	54	78,317
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part C: Discounts and premium adjustments												
B5	Total variable discounts (=Part G, line 12)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B6	Long term empty property and second homes discount adjustment (Part H, line 9g, 11g)		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
B7	Long term empty property and second homes premium adjustment (Part H, line 10g, 12g)		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Part D: Calculation of chargeable dwellings with discounts and premiums												
C2	Total dwellings including discounts and premiums (=A3-(B2ax0.25)-(B2bx0.5)-B5-B6+B7)	61	12,861	23,514	16,655	8,596	6,205	2,197	765	90	51	
C3	Ratio to band D	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	21/9	
C4	Band D equivalents (=C2xC3) (rounded to 2 decimal places)	34.03	8,573.83	18,288.47	14,804.22	8,596.25	7,583.89	3,173.81	1,275.00	180.50	118.42	62,628.42
C7	Total discounted dwellings excluding long term empty and second homes adjustment	61	12,861	23,514	16,655	8,596	6,205	2,197	765	90	51	
C8	Band D equivalents excluding long term empty and second homes adjustment	34.03	8,573.83	18,288.47	14,804.22	8,596.25	7,583.89	3,173.81	1,275.00	180.50	118.42	62,628.42
Part D: Memorandum items												
D1	Exempt dwellings Classes A to N and P to W (not included in sections A to C above)		625	739	430	217	100	54	25	2	7	2,199
D2	Exempt dwellings Class O (not included in sections A to C above)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D3	Dwellings subject to a reduction under section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992		2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6

(sum of individual bands - carry to E1)

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BKAOARMACYBF

Part E: Calculation of council tax base

22	E1	Chargeable dwellings: band D equivalents (=C4 total)	62,628.42
23	E2	Collection rate (please enter to 2 decimal places)	97.50 %
24	E3	= E1 x E2 (rounded to 2 decimal places)	61,062.71
25	E4	Class O exempt dwellings: band D equivalents (please enter to 2 decimal places)	0.00
26	E5	Council tax base for tax-setting purposes (=E3+E4)	61,062.71
26.2	E5b	Discounted chargeable dwellings excluding long term empty and second homes adjustment	62,628.42
27	E6	100% council tax base for calculating revenue support grant (=E5b+E4)	62,628.42

Part F: Exempt dwellings by class of exemption

28 to 51.5	Class A	281	Class I	15	Class Q	6	
	Class B	0	Class J	4	Class R	0	
	Class C	678	Class K	1	Class S	14	
	Class D	8	Class L	5	Class T	21	
	Class E	111	Class M	0	Class U	407	
	Class F	421	Class N	115	Class V	0	
	Class G	32	Class O	0	Class W	24	
	Class H	5	Class P	0	Class X	51	
		For Welsh Government Administration only		PQBKLBWBOBW		Total all classes	2,199.00
						Total of lines D1	2,199.00
						Total of lines D2	0.00

Part G : Variable discounts

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
				Valuation band										
	Area	Discount percentage applied	Properties / Discounts	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
52	G1	Enter the name of area 1*	0% Number of properties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
53	G2		Discounts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
54	G3	Enter the name of area 2*	0% Number of properties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
55	G4		Discounts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
56	G5	Enter the name of area 3*	0% Number of properties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
57	G6		Discounts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
58	G7	Enter the name of area 4*	0% Number of properties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
59	G8		Discounts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
60	G9	Enter the name of area 5*	0% Number of properties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
61	G10		Discounts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
62	G11		Total number of properties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
63	G12	Total discounts (G2+G4+G6+G8+G10) (see note 11)		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

* this may be 'whole authority', a single community area or a number of community areas


CERTIFICATE OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

I certify that the council tax base shown in sections A to E above has been calculated by my authority in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1995 (Wales) (SI 1995/2561) as amended. Where indicated below, the figures have been approved, in accordance with section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by section 84 of the Local Government Act 2003.

The figures have not yet been approved;
 or
 the figures have been approved by executive decision;
 or
 the figures have been approved by the full council.

For Welsh Government Administration only	BKAOARMACYBF	A-D
	PQBKLBWBOBW	E-F
	ALBVBVBOHCFCF	H
	CACSCDZZBTAP	Total

Chief Financial Officer:



Date:

09/11/2021

Part H: Long term empty and second homes - chargeable only - exclude exemptions

If the value of percentage discount/premium is not shown in the table please add the percentage value to the bottom row of the "Percentage discount" or "Percentage premium" column.

12 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Please enter actual dwelling numbers

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total	
64	H1	Chargeable long term empty properties with no discount or premium	416	308	166	73	40	5	11	2	2	1023
65	H2	Chargeable second homes with no discount or premium	71	70	48	22	13	5	2	2	1	234

Long term empty property discount

Please enter by band and percentage discount, the number of dwellings that are long term empty as at 31 October 2019.

	Percentage discount	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
66	H3a	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
67	H3b	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
68	H3c	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
69	H3d	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
70	H3e	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
71	H3f		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
72	H3g	Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Long term empty property premium

Please enter by band and percentage the premium your authority charges for long term empty properties and not included in table above.

	Percentage premium	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
73	H4a	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
74	H4b	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
75	H4c	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
76	H4d	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
77	H4e	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
78	H4f		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
79	H4g	Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Second homes discount

Please enter by band and percentage the discount your authority awards for dwellings registered as second homes

	Percentage discount	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
80	H5a	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
81	H5b	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
82	H5c	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
83	H5d	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
84	H5e	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
85	H5f		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
86	H5g	Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Second homes premium

Please enter by band and percentage the premium your authority charges for dwellings registered as second homes and not included in table above.

	Percentage premium	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
87	H6a	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
88	H6b	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
89	H6c	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
90	H6d	75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
91	H6e	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
92	H6f		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
93	H6g	Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Part H: Long term empty and second homes - chargeable only - exclude exemptions

If the value of percentage discount/premium is not shown in the table please add the percentage value to the bottom row of the "Percentage discount" or "Percentage premium" column.

		12	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
94	H7	Total chargeable long term empty properties	416	308	166	73	40	5	11	2	2	1,023
95	H8	Total chargeable second homes	71	70	48	22	13	5	2	2	1	234

Dwelling equivalents

Reduction due to long term empty property discount

		Percentage discount	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
96	H9a	10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
97	H9b	25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
98	H9c	50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
99	H9d	75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
100	H9e	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
101	H9f	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
102	H9g	Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Increase due to long term empty property premium

		Percentage premium	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
103	H10a	10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
104	H10b	25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
105	H10c	50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
106	H10d	75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
107	H10e	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
108	H10f	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
109	H10g	Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Reduction due to second homes discount

		Percentage discount	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
110	H11a	10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
111	H11b	25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
112	H11c	50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
113	H11d	75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
114	H11e	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
115	H11f	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
116	H11g	Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Increase due second homes premium

		Percentage premium	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
117	H12a	10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
118	H12b	25	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
119	H12c	50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
120	H12d	75	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
121	H12e	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
122	H12f	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
123	H12g	Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

For Welsh Government
Administration only

ALBVBVBOHCFCF



CABINET – 8TH DECEMBER 2021

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF A HYBRID MEETING SOLUTION

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

--

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to procure and implement a hybrid meeting solution in Ty Penallta that will enable meeting attendees to fully and seamlessly participate in meeting proceedings either in person (physically) or from a range of remote locations (virtually).

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Since June 2020, the vast majority of public meetings carried out by Caerphilly Council have been held remotely. This has enabled members and officers to participate in the democratic process while also aligning with WG guidance to work from home wherever it is possible.
- 2.2 While the practice has now become fully embedded, it is inevitable that at some point in the future, greater numbers of elected members and officers will choose to physically participate in meetings. It is also conceivable that some members and officers will choose to, or need to, engage in those same meetings remotely.
- 2.3 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires local authorities to “make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that local authority meetings are able to be held by means of any equipment or other facility which - (a) enables persons who are not in the same place to attend the meetings”. This essentially brings in to law the concept of ‘multi-location’ or ‘hybrid’ meetings and the Council’s responsibility to support both physical and virtual attendance. The Act also requires that Councils live stream public meetings along with the existing requirement to simultaneously translate meetings into Welsh. This is not something that the existing platform can currently provide.
- 2.4 Caerphilly’s Members have also made it clear that when returning to the chamber in person, they wish to engage in the democratic process in the same way they were able to do so prior to the pandemic. This would mean standing, speaking to the room and voting as they have done previously, something that the current platform cannot offer at this time.

- 2.5 Furthermore, the Welsh Local Government Associations Diversity in Democracy Programme has seen many Councils, Caerphilly included sign a pledge that provides a clear, public commitment to increase diversity; demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all and to consider different ways of supporting councillors with other commitments. Clearly, a platform that would enable participation in the democratic process for individuals who could not easily attend Council meetings in person, would support this pledge.
- 2.6 Two suppliers have provided compliant project costs against the stated specification and the recommendations below seek to move forward with the chosen provider for the work.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Cabinet agree to:

- 1) Award the contract for the implementation of a Hybrid Meeting solution and associated hardware to Supplier B for an initial period of 3 years with an option to extend for up to a further period of 3 years
- 2) Meet the £124,899 one off capital costs of the solution and the associated electrical infrastructure upgrades of circa £7k from the Member Services Earmarked Reserve.
- 3) Meet the total ongoing costs of £126,841 for the software platform and associated support and maintenance for the initial three-year term of the contract by establishing a specific earmarked reserve from the 2021/22 Miscellaneous Finance Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO) budget.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Over the next six months it is likely that there will be greater numbers of members and officers returning to the building and wishing to participate in meetings in person. There will also be officers and members who, for differing reasons, wish to participate in the same meetings remotely.
- 4.2 At present, the Council's existing platform would not provide an optimal solution to support hybrid meetings and so an alternative solution that provides a seamless experience for physical and remote participants has been sought.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The vast majority of public meetings carried out by the Council have been held virtually since the beginning of the pandemic. This has enabled members and officers to fully participate in the democratic process while also aligning with WG guidance to work from home wherever it is possible.
- 5.2 Over the coming months, it is likely that there will be at least a gradual increase in the number of elected members and officers who wish to travel to the Council's offices to participate physically in public meetings. The public themselves may also wish to begin observing public meetings either in person or virtually.

- 5.3 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires local authorities to “make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that local authority meetings are able to be held by means of any equipment or other facility which - (a) enables persons who are not in the same place to attend the meetings”. This essentially brings in to law the concept of ‘multi-location’ or ‘hybrid’ meetings and the Council’s responsibility to support both physical and virtual attendance.
- 5.4 The Act requires participants in those multi-location or hybrid meetings to have access to the necessary equipment or facilities that enable attendees to “speak to and be heard by each other and to see and be seen by each other”.
- 5.5 At present, the majority of participants currently join meetings remotely and, in this instance, the product that currently supports virtual meetings can more than meet the needs of those participants. Should that position change, however, and the majority of participants join meetings physically, the current platform requires the use of microphones and headsets for all individuals that are sat in close physical proximity to one another, making the use of the existing platform more problematic.
- 5.6 There are also a number of additional requirements being placed upon principal councils, such as the need to simultaneously live stream public meetings so that they can be seen as they occur rather than via a delayed recording published after the meeting has concluded. Again, this is not something that the existing platform can currently provide.
- 5.7 Aside from the legislative requirements for multi-location or hybrid meetings to take place, Caerphilly’s Members have also made it clear that when returning to the chamber or other meeting rooms in person, they wish to engage in the democratic process in the same way they were able to do so prior to the pandemic. This would mean standing, speaking to the room and voting as they have done previously, something that the current platform cannot offer at this time.
- 5.8 Furthermore, the Welsh Local Government Associations Diversity in Democracy Programme has seen many Councils, Caerphilly included sign a pledge that provides a clear, public commitment to increase diversity; demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all and to consider different ways of supporting councillors with other commitments. Clearly a platform that would enable participation in the democratic process for individuals who could not easily attend Council meetings in person which would support this pledge.
- 5.9 Over the last eighteen months or so elected officials and officers have become used to meeting remotely. More recently, a small number of individuals have chosen to attend the Council offices in person and engage in those remote meetings using the existing platform. A lot of compromise and a significant amount of learning has been generated during this time with feedback directly shaping the specification sent out to market and detailed below:
- 5.10 System Specification

The following paragraphs were included as the systems specifications (or requirements) against which suppliers could base their system proposals:

- a) In order to ensure a solution that is transparent, accountable, democratic and compliant with recent legislation, the ability to hold multi location meetings, where participants can be both seen and heard, regardless of their location, will be a critical component of the solution delivered.

- b) Full Council and Committee meetings are currently held over Microsoft Teams, with meetings recorded and uploaded to the Authorities dedicated You Tube channel. It is envisaged that attendees will be required to bring their own assigned laptops to the meetings to facilitate the use of some of the functionality provided with Teams such as voting, but will still benefit from the in room technology as far as possible – for example in-room cameras and microphones.
- c) These meetings can be held within the main Council chamber or on occasions the 3 large core meeting rooms within the Ty Penallta building. These are identified as:
- Sirhowy Room
 - Ebbw Room
 - Rhymney Room
- d) Moving forward, under the Local Government and Elections Wales Act 2021, the Authority must make arrangements to broadcast certain meetings live with a requirement for participants to see and hear each other at these specified meetings.
- e) Arrangements must also be made for multi-location meetings which is a meeting of the Authority whose participants are not all in the same physical place. Examples of such meetings could include the following scenarios.
- Meetings of a committee where all participants are in the same physical location except one individual who joins from another location, with a physical public gallery being provided.
 - Meetings of a committee where a roughly equal number of councillors are present in a physical space and joining through remote means; those joining through remote means may include the Chair.
 - Meetings of a committee where all members are joining through remote means but nonetheless a physical public gallery has been made available in council premises.
 - Meetings of a committee taking place wholly through remote means where no physical arrangements have been made.
- f) There may also be occasions where a separate meeting room is utilised as an overspill room if the number of attendees exceed thresholds deemed safe to enable appropriate social distancing, or purely due to the usual capacity of the meeting room. The ability to invite this separate room into the meeting, either as an active participant or in a “viewing only” capacity must be included in the solution.
- g) The proposed cameras for the Chamber and large core meeting rooms must be able to display a view of the whole room so that all participants can be seen, and capable of being distributed to all television screens located within those rooms and the Atrium.
- h) The proposed microphones for the Chamber and large core meeting rooms must be capable of capturing the voice all delegates within the room, so that all delegates can be heard.
- i) Once a meeting attendee is speaking the cameras must be able to automatically detect and zoom, so that individual delegates can also be seen.

- j) The solution to be capable of integrating with the speakers, televisions and drop-down screens, and all other appropriate equipment currently within the Chamber and large core meetings rooms. Where this is not possible any additional hardware required must be clearly identified, costed, and included within the final solution.
- k) The ability to either record or webcast meetings live to the authorities YouTube channel or similar platforms is also an essential requirement of the solution.
- l) It is also imperative that provision for a simultaneous translation service is considered and integrated, in order to comply with Welsh Language Standards. For your information a copy of the Welsh Language Standards issued by the Welsh Commissioner
- m) Bidders were required to itemise all hardware required for their solution, including, but not limited to, industry standard audio equipment, professional broadcast video cameras, equipment to connect these video and audio sources, and hardware and software to broadcast meetings live via the Authorities YouTube channel or similar platforms.
- n) All materials and equipment were costed and provided by the suppliers and they are solely responsible for all elements of the entire installation. An exception to this is any electrical requirements, which will be carried out by the Authorities current electrical contractor and is deemed out of scope for this tender. Specific Risk Assessments and Method Statements should be submitted for approval prior to any installation works. Installation technicians will be CHAS registered and PASMA Certified
- o) Bidders should also, as part of their tender, include full installation and cabling costs associated with their final solution.
- p) The Council will require the successful tenderer to provide full training to staff on how to operate the solution where required, and if any equipment is required to be changed.

5.11 Tender Submission and Pricing

Tenders were invited for this requirement in July 2021 via a mini competition tender process undertaken from the Council's existing Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) arrangement for the Provision of Education Technology and Associated Services. Following the closing date for tender responses to be received, no bids had been returned.

Officers therefore sought other compliant routes to market and identified an alternative arrangement that could be used on a direct award basis along with the above DPS e.g. NHS Shared Services Partnership framework.

Both routes to market included Microsoft preferred suppliers that have significant experience dealing with Microsoft Teams platforms and both suppliers were contacted directly to price against the specification detailed above.

Site meetings were held with both companies to review the scope and scale of the project with Officers from Democratic Services, Procurement Services, IT Services and Facilities Management and all attended the meetings to ensure a consistent message was delivered regarding the requirement.

Suppliers submitted detailed costs against the specification set out by the project team and a price comparison of the two submissions has been undertaken and is set out in the table below:

	Supplier A (£)	Supplier B (£)
Hardware	236,575.00	63,361.01
Optional Additional Encoder	4,000.00	3,500.00
Optional 85" Surface Hub	25,700.00	22,648.43
Software	0.00	105,960.00
Maintenance / Support	14,000.00	20,881.17
PS & Prelims	7,300.00	35,389.47
	287,575.00	251,740.08

The lowest cost submission was submitted by Supplier B and, subject to Cabinet approval for the funding, the Council will award a contract to Supplier B and subsequently begin the process of implementing the new system.

5.12 Conclusion

The introduction of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act combined with the new working practices that have emerged through the COVID-19 response has created the requirement for the Council to introduce a hybrid meeting solution.

Following the pricing exercise being carried out by the Council a supplier has been identified who can meet the emerging needs of the organisation and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) act and permission is sought to implement the solution.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 That the solution will be implemented and fully functional ahead of the 2022 Local Government Elections in May.
- 6.2 That the necessary training and development be delivered to meeting participants ahead of the system being made live.
- 6.3 That the solution can seamlessly integrate with the existing audio and voting equipment in the Council Chamber.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment can be accessed via the link below:

[IJA Hybrid Solution](#)

- 7.2 In summary, the IJA has shown that there are a mixture of positive and neutral benefits attached to this proposal but has not identified and negative benefits. This is primarily a result of the proposal providing enhanced choice and additional options for democratic participation than are currently available. With greater choice, the potential for broader democratic engagement and the ability to broadcast live and in two languages, the solution appears to be a positive step in the right direction for the Council.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The capital cost of awarding the contract to Supplier B and for carrying out the associated works is £124,899. This will cover the hardware, additional encoder, 85” Surface Hub and the PS and Prelim work. It is recommended that this cost should be funded from the Member Services Earmarked Reserve, which currently has an uncommitted balance of £313,641.
- 8.2 There will also be a requirement to upgrade the electrical infrastructure within the Council Chamber to support device charging. These costs are estimated at circa £7k and are again one off in nature. It is proposed that this cost is also met from the Member Services Earmarked Reserve.
- 8.3 The ongoing costs of the software platform and associated support and maintenance for the initial three-year term of the contract total £126,841. It is recommended that this cost should be met by establishing a specific earmarked reserve from the 2021/22 Miscellaneous Finance Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO) budget.
- 8.4 Any costs associated with training and developing officers and elected members in the use of the system will be carried out in house by colleagues from Democratic Services, and Digital Services utilising existing budgets.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 All consultation responses received have been included in the body of this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Author: Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director Education & Corporate Services

Consultees: Philippa Marsden, Leader of the Council
Cllr Colin Gordon, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Dave Street, Acting Chief Executive
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Gareth Jenkins, Head of Children’s Services
Robert Tranter Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services
Steve Harris, Section 151 Officer and Head of Finance
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services
Cllr Gez Kirby, Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Brenda Miles, Vice Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Colin Mann, Leader of the Plaid Group
Cllr Kevin Etheridge, Leader of the Independent Group

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CABINET – 8TH DECEMBER 2021

SUBJECT: GRASS CUTTING REGIMES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the views of Cabinet in relation to grass cutting regimes across the county borough and proposals to enhance and promote biodiversity following consultation with local members. A report was presented to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on the 26th October to seek their views prior to this report being present at Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Members will recall that a national lockdown was imposed in March 2020, this required the council to reshape and transform, almost overnight to respond to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Consequently, many services across the council were paused, one of these services was grass cutting.
- 2.2 The national and local lockdowns forced residents to interact with their surroundings in a new way. Whilst people worked from home where they could, the local environment became a source of appreciation and as lockdown rules heightened, appreciation for our local county and urban parks along with other open green space heightened, which benefitted residents with both their physical and mental wellbeing.
- 2.3 Through the summer of 2021, a consultation exercise was undertaken with local members to identify suitable areas within their respective wards which could be allowed to flourish during the summer period. These spaces would be marked with a wooden plaque thanking residents for allowing the dedicated areas to grow into eco-friendly spaces and allowed to produce abundant flowers, pollen seed and habitat for local wildlife

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The approach adopted during the 2021 cutting season be adopted as the standard going forward in relation to our highway verges and by-pass routes where mowing is kept to a minimum.

- 3.2 That urban areas, such as housing estates, older person accommodation, cemeteries etc. are maintained at the current cutting frequencies.
- 3.3 That Cabinet endorse the list of areas nominated by both officers and local members within their respective wards, which could be allowed to flourish during the summer period. Officers will continually work with local members to identify areas as the programme is expanded.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To fulfil our statutory bio-diversity duty and to assist in our response to the Climate Emergency, which this council declared in 2019.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Grass cutting frequencies currently range through the growing season across Parks, housing estates and other public open space. Cemeteries and older person sheltered accommodation are cut on a weekly frequency, albeit these were reduced in the summer of 2020 due to the pandemic.
- 5.2 As members will be aware, in 2020 the UK was placed into a national lockdown and consequently, many of our non-essential services were paused. In response to the global pandemic, many staff were redeployed to allow our efforts to focus on maintaining essential front-line services and delivering the new services created to support our communities at the height of the pandemic.
- 5.3 At the start of the pandemic in March 2020, one of the many services paused was grass cutting and this had an unexpected and welcome impact on our environment as we had inadvertently created many wildlife habitats and havens for pollinators. Some of our community spaces became a sea of wildflowers, enjoyed by many and the council was commended by the Welsh naturalist and TV personality, Iolo Williams.
- 5.4 Like many services across the authority, we are continually striving to ensure that we are transforming and evolving to ensure we are meeting the ever-changing needs of our communities and that we are doing all that we can to respond to the Climate Emergency, which the authority declared in 2019. The management of green and blue spaces should be directed by the Green Infrastructure Strategy, which was formally adopted in November 2020 and such changes will enable multiple benefits such as improving mental and physical health and increasing biodiversity, which will lead to more resilient communities, more resilient habitats and ecosystems and a more resilient local economy.
- 5.5 Throughout May 2021, cutting along our highway verges and roundabouts were kept to a minimum in support of the 'No Mow May' campaign. The campaign encouraged local individuals, councils, and stakeholders to help bees, butterflies, and other wildlife by letting wildflowers grow on lawns and green spaces throughout May instead of mowing them. Grass cutting across the county borough still took place in order to:
- Maintain visibility for road users;
 - Keep traffic signage and sight lines clear;

- Maintain margins and access on footways and cycle routes;
- Maintain parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, housing estates, play and recreational green open spaces.

Set out at appendix one, Members will see photographs taken along both the Risca and Newbridge by-pass routes in June 2021, which illustrate the success of the approach.

- 5.6 In regularly mown areas, grass cuttings are left on the ground, which unfortunately does not promote a good growing environment for wild flora and fauna. Wildflowers and grasses thrive in nutrient poor soil, leaving grass cuttings uncollected allows nutrients from the grass to go back into the soil, which is not good for the wild flowers we would like to encourage. Areas that are left to grow need to be cut and collected at the end of the summer, removing the arisings deprives the soil of nutrients and thus creates the perfect environment for more species of flora and fauna to flourish.
- 5.7 Through the summer of 2021, a consultation exercise was undertaken with local members to identify suitable areas within their respective wards which could be allowed to flourish during the summer period. In total three responses were received from the 73 Councillors. These spaces would be marked with a wooden plaque thanking residents for allowing the dedicated areas to grow into eco-friendly spaces and allowed to produce abundant flowers, pollen seed and habitat for local wildlife.
- 5.8 Areas nominated by local members and relevant officers are: -
- Snowdon Close, Risca;
 - Junction of Heol Adam and B4254, Gelligaer (near the Cross Inn);
 - Areas within the Grove Estate, Trethomas;
 - Areas around the Community Centre, Llanbradach.

Arial photographs of these areas are set out in appendix 2.

- 5.9 During 2021, an assessment was undertaken along strategic roadside verges. The main objective being to gather data on habitats within the verges and to identify opportunities for management that would be beneficial for biodiversity.
- 5.10 The study was undertaken in May and June 2021 and identified a wide range and variation of verge habitats. The best example of diverse grassland habitats tended to be on the most recently constructed roads and where the soils have a relatively low nutrient status. One notable finding was a population of the nationally rare plant, Deptford Pink at Aberbargoed. In some cases, the flora diversity of newer roads has benefited from wildflower seeding. Longer established verges tended to be less diverse and dominated by coarse grasses and scrub, although there are exceptions where species rich vegetation has remained in areas of low fertility soil or which have been maintained by more frequent cutting in previous years.
- 5.11 Site specific recommendations to enhance biodiversity have been made for each of the sections of roadside verge and a series of more general measures have been produced that can be applied at verges across the county borough. The most important of these are to leave verges uncut through the spring and early summer to allow plants to flower and set seeds and to remove grass cuttings to reduce the dominance of coarse grasses.

5.12 Conclusion

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

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made within this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has identified a number of both positive and negative impacts; however, the recommendation is to proceed with the proposal. The proposal would have a positive impact in that it would enhance our local environment and create habitat for wildlife and areas where wildflowers could flourish. It will also assist with residents' physical and mental well-being regardless of protected characteristics and support the council's Biodiversity Duty and Decarbonisation Strategy but also assist with the Climate Emergency which the Council declared in 2019.

7.2 However, areas left to flourish may give an untidy and unmanaged appearance, which could result in complaints from residents. This potential negative reaction will be mitigated by the installation of a sign where areas are being managed in an alternative manner to advise residents and to highlight the benefits.

[Link to full Integrated Impact Assessment](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no significant financial implications associated with this report, any costs will be funded from existing revenue budgets.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 A report was presented to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 26th October to seek their views prior to a report being presented to Cabinet. During the debate, one Member praised the commitment to allow the growth of wildflowers but raised the issue of road safety if visibility was reduced as a consequence of the policy at highway locations such as roundabouts. The Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager provided assurances that the policy would not impede traffic safety. It was outlined how verges along principal roads such as bypass routes were cut twice a year to ensure that sight lines were maintained. One Member asked

about contact details for Park Officers, the Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager provided details to the Member.

Members of the committee discussed and debated the proposals and unanimously supported the recommendations. It was noted that there were 12 votes for, 0 votes against and no abstentions. The Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager advised that relevant officers would continue to work with local members to identify suitable areas within their respective wards, which could be allowed to flourish during the summer period as the programme is expanded.

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

11. STATUTORY POWER

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

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Background Papers:

[Link to Green Infrastructure Strategy](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Photographs of Risca and Newbridge by-pass in June 2021

Appendix 2 Aerial photographs

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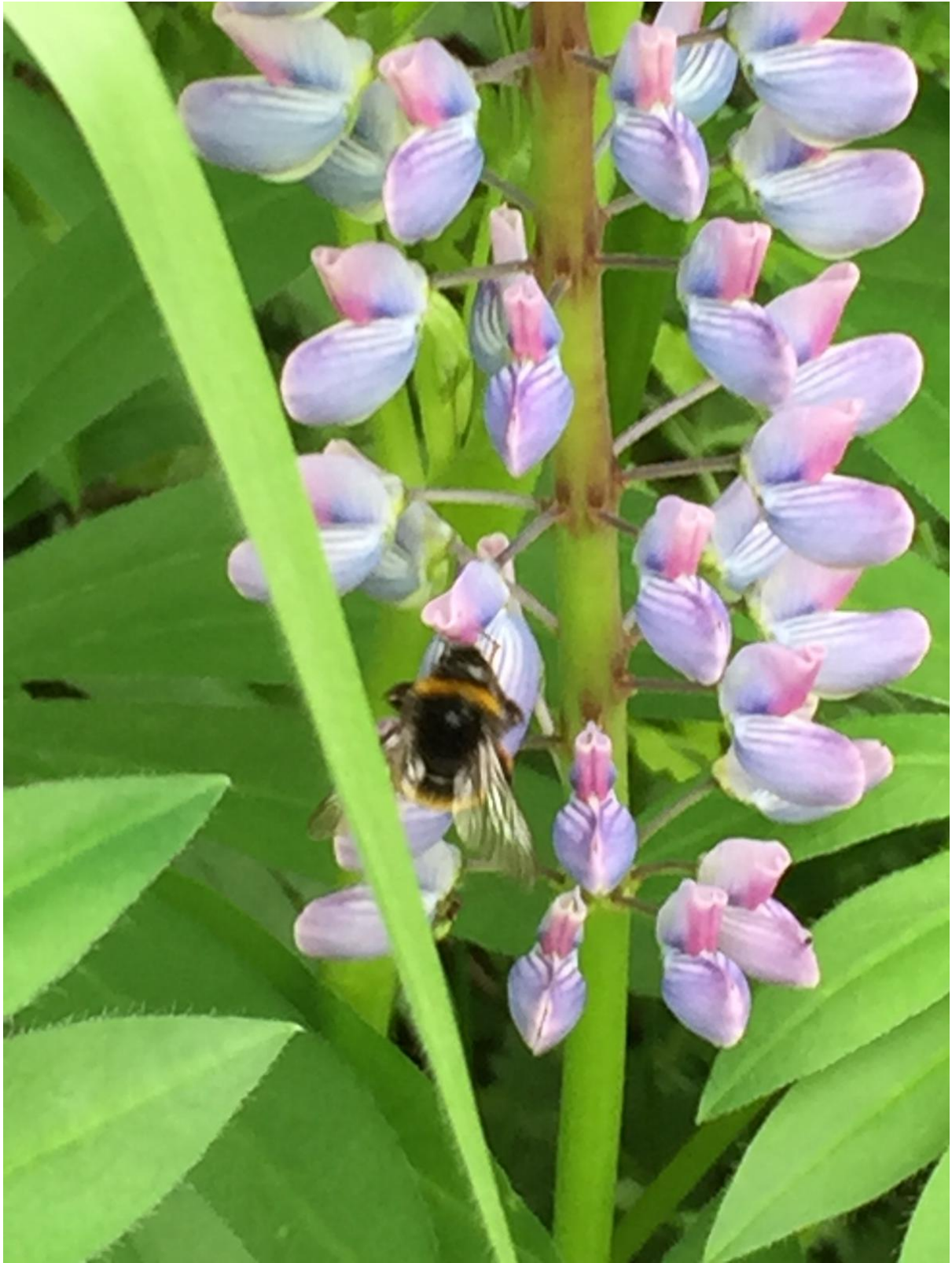
Newbridge by-pass



Risca by-pass



Risca by-pass



Newbridge by-pass



Newbridge by-pass

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Appendix 2



Area around the Grove Estate, Trethomas.



Snowdon Close, Risca



Junction of Heol Adam and B4254, Gelligaer (The Cross Inn)



Areas around the Community Centre, Llanbradach.