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Date: 23rd November 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

A multi-locational meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held in Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 30th November, 2022 at 1.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided on request.

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

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

Yours faithfully,

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

Christina Harrhy
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

Pages

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.

A greener place Man gwyrdach



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.

To approve and sign the following minutes: -

3 Cabinet held on 16th November 2022.

To note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

4 Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

1 - 6

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

5 Corporate Performance Assessment 2021/22.

6 Draft Self-Assessment Report for 2021/22.

7 Update on Decarbonisation of Fleet Vehicles and Related Policies.

7 - 12

8 Cyber Security Strategy 2022-2025.

13 - 30

9 Update on the Procurement Reform Agenda and to Extend the Council's Programme for Procurement (Strategy) for a Period of up to Eighteen (18) Months.

31 - 54

10 Education Strategy.

11 Christmas Close Down Arrangements.

Circulation:

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

And Appropriate Officers

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Agenda Item 3



CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2022 AT 1PM

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair

Councillors:

J. Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change), C. Andrews (Cabinet Member for Education and Communities), S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Housing), E. Forehead (Cabinet Member for Social Care), N. George (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property), P. Leonard (Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection), C. Morgan (Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces), Cllr. J. Simmonds (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation) and E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance).

Together with:

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

Also in Attendance:

R. Tranter (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), M. Lloyd (Head of Infrastructure), S. Harris (Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer), N. Taylor-Williams (Head of Housing), J. Roberts-Waite (Strategic Coordination Manager), R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services), P. Griffiths (Green Space Strategy and Cemeteries Manager) and S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer).

Also present to speak on the Notice of Motion: Councillors J. Reed and J. Jones (Ynysddu Ward) and Mrs J. Jones (Local Resident).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Leader reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here To View](#).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 19TH OCTOBER 2022

It was noted that Councillor E. Stenner (Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance) was present at the Cabinet meeting held on 19th October 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 19th October 2022 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 22nd March 2023.

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

5. NOTICE OF MOTION – RE-EVALUATE THE CABINET DECISION OF THE 9TH FEBRUARY 2022 – B4251 YNYSDDU TO WYLLIE HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Consideration was given to the Notice of Motion, as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report, in order to make an appropriate recommendation. Cabinet noted that the Notice of Motion had been received from Councillors J. Reed and J. Jones and was supported by Councillors K. Etheridge, A. Farina-Childs, B Owen, and N. Dix. Cabinet further noted that the Notice of Motion was considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 26th October 2022 and was supported by the majority present.

Councillor J. Jones addressed Cabinet and focused on reasons why night lighting should be reinstated on the Wyllie Bends. Councillor J. Jones asked Cabinet to consider the 32 recorded incidents between 1991 to 2021 and the additional 3 incidents that have occurred in recent months. Councillor J. Jones advised that no reference was made to street lighting in the report to Cabinet on 9th February 2022 or in the AMEY report and as such felt that Cabinet was prevented from making an informed decision. Councillor J. Jones asked Cabinet to consider the Notice of Motion and support the request for an independent re-evaluation of the safety of Wyllie Bends.

Councillor J. Reed addressed Cabinet and using photographs outlined the road in question and the boundary fence. Cabinet was asked to note that the AMEY safety report did not recommend the installation of a chain link fence, which was detailed in the Cabinet report as being most appropriate safeguard for this section of the road and in accordance with relevant design standards, might reduce the risk of vehicles leaving the road and protect pedestrians. However, a mere boundary fence was installed, which Councillor J. Reed considered would not provide the same level of protection to road users as a Vehicle Restraint System (VRS).

Reference was then made to the AMEY report and although it stated that a VRS would be disproportionate to the benefits it would achieve, Cabinet was informed that there had been 3 further accidents this year on Wyllie Bends, where all three vehicles have left the carriageway. Councillor J. Reed asked Cabinet to consider why there are similar roads to the Wyllie Bends with regards to speed and topography throughout the borough that have VRS installed, but not Wyllie Bends.

Councillor J. Reed asked Cabinet to support the Jones family and concerned local communities by recommending a reassessment of the road and the installation of a Vehicle Restraint System (VRS) at strategic places along this dangerous road.

The Leader expressed condolences to Mrs J. Jones on the tragic loss of her daughter.

Mrs J. Jones, mother of Ms. L. Jones, who tragically lost her life in an accident on Wyllie Bends in October 2019 addressed Cabinet and detailed the circumstances and road conditions that led to her daughter's death. She outlined areas where she believed appropriate consultation had not taken place and inaccuracies that she felt required addressing as they were not included in the report considered by Cabinet in February 2022.

Officers stated that Cabinet was provided with details of the independent safety report that was commissioned and undertaken by AMEY Consulting for the section of highway between Ynysddu and Switchgear. These were clearly set out in the Cabinet report of 9th February. The Officer advised that all the report recommendations have been considered and those necessary implemented following a review of the report findings.

Cabinet sought clarification on a number of issues and the Officer responded to the points raised. Cabinet was advised that both concrete posts and metal posts comply with highway specifications. An Officer delegated decision was taken, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to use metal posts due to the long lead time for the concrete posts. It was acknowledged further discussion with the family could have taken place.

Cabinet was further advised that following a review of the safety report the most beneficial intervention identified was to reduce the speed limit of the road to 40mph as recommended by the safety consultant. Comparisons to other roads are not meaningful as each has its own unique characteristics that need consideration. It was noted that authority also has a Vehicle Restraint Policy which is used to determine if a Vehicle Restraint System (VRS) is required and this did not recommend a VRS as it only scored as a medium priority as detailed within the Cabinet report. The safety report further highlighted that the installation of VRS can itself cause a hazard; this is because it is designed and tested to be impacted at a certain angle at a certain speed. The use on particularly tight radii can cause the impact angle to be far too steep which will then become a hazard in itself to the occupier of an errant vehicle.

The Chief Executive explained that there are national guidelines and legislative requirements as a highway authority that must be fulfilled and it was pointed out that following the review of the safety report the most beneficial intervention identified was to reduce the speed limit of the road to 40mph, as recommended by the safety consultant. The Chief Executive suggested that as the main characteristics of the road had changed since the last assessment Cabinet may consider it appropriate to commission a further independent safety assessment of the road.

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

RESOLVED that the notice of motion be supported to the extent that a further independent road safety report is obtained on the B4251 between Ynysddu and Switchgear.

6. STREET LIGHTING REVIEW

Consideration was given to the report which sought to update Cabinet on a high-level review of street lighting undertaken in lieu of the employment of LED and Part Night Lighting which was fully introduced across the County Borough in February 2021 and the Climate Change Emergency that has been declared by the Council. The report also sought to provide Cabinet with feedback and recommendations from the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny

Committee held on 25th October 2022 and sought a Cabinet decision on the future street lighting strategy for the County Borough.

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 25th October 2022 including the suggested recommendations outlined in section 10 of the report.

Cabinet noted that to meet the challenges of the carbon reduction commitments and rising energy costs, in May 2018 the installation of LED lighting and implementation of a Part Night Lighting (PNL) Strategy was recommended by the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee. This was subsequently approved by Cabinet and rolled out across the County Borough between April 2019 and February 2021 and the system has been operational since with full LED infrastructure and PNL between the hours of midnight and 5.30am. The strategy has resulted in carbon savings of circa 2836 tonnes per annum as well as significant/future cost avoidance savings as detailed in Section 8 of the Officer's report.

Reference was made to Section 5.5 of the Officer's report and clarification was provided in relation to the number of complaints received by the Authority. Following the implementation of the change to LED streetlights and the reduction in street lighting operating hours policy, a total of 316 complaints from CCBC residents have been received, which equates to 0.18% of residents. It was noted that Highways Managers and Senior Officers from Gwent Police meet regularly to review crime statistics for the hours of reduced street lighting operation, and these meetings provide an opportunity for police to request temporary night-time switch on where crime investigations are underway or where CCTV infrastructure is being introduced. To date there is no correlation between the occurrence of crime and the reduction in street lighting operation hours policy.

The Central Management System (CMS) and dimming was detailed and Cabinet noted the additional costs associated with its implementation and were conscious that 7,400 existing lanterns would not be compatible and would require upgrading at a cost of £1,645,000. Costs associated with additional base stations were explained as was the annual maintenance fee which would give CMS an overall installation cost circa £3.5m.

Cabinet noted the review options compared to status quo detailed in section 5.14 of the report. The options examined by Officers which resulted in various carbon and financial impacts were outlined and it was recommended that Cabinet support the existing policy.

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

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

1. The comments and recommendations of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee be considered.
2. The existing street lighting policy be maintained.
3. Officers continue to work with their colleagues in Gwent Police in accordance with the existing, agreed protocol relating to crime.
4. Issues relating to fear of crime are recognised by the Authority and where these issues are considered to be significant an individual response be offered through the Community Safety Partnership which will include a number of wider interventions, such as security advice and guidance.

7. CAERPHILLY HOMES – DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report which sought to update Cabinet on the progress being made towards delivering the 400 new home ambition that was agreed in January 2020 and to obtain agreement to move to the next stage of the development process, thereby undertaking detail site investigation work to determine whether the sites noted in the report were deliverable and viable.

Cabinet noted that having secured funding to support the delivery of two highly innovative pilot schemes in Trecenydd and Trethomas via the Welsh Government Housing Programme the emphasis has now been to learn from the implementation of both schemes in order to inform the delivery of new homes at Ty Darran and the former Oakdale at scale and pace. It was noted that both the Ty Darran and former Oakdale Comprehensive School had received outline planning permission and subsequent reports detailing the contract arrangements, cost plan, marketing and commercial strategy and social value plan would follow in due course. The focus now is to identify potential development sites that follow on from Ty Darran and the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site thereby ensuring a continuous supply of development sites are brought through the system to help meet the 20,000 new low carbon affordable home commitment made by Welsh Government.

Cabinet noted that the report set out the next 5 sites that have been identified following a robust exercise to determine which are most suitable, taking into consideration the potential developable area, the number of units that may be accommodated and any known constraints. It was highlighted that subject to approval being obtained, further in-depth site investigations to ensure the suitability of the proposed sites for residential development will be undertaken.

Clarification was sought on inflation in relation to the development of new homes. The Officer confirmed that inflation is going to have a high impact on the Housing Revenue Account as it will put extra financial pressure on delivery, materials and labour. Cabinet was informed that the Annual Business Plan Review will be presented in the new year, which will further detail the impact of inflationary pressures within the Housing Revenue Account. Cabinet was further informed that Welsh Government are looking at introducing a fluctuation clause into the grant agreement to reflect the upward pressure of inflation in relation to new build.

Reference was made to the consultation responses detailed in the Officer's report and it was confirmed that Local Ward members have been consulted on all the sites identified in the report.

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

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

1. The proposal to bring forward a suite of Caerphilly Homes development sites that offer a positive contribution to the Council's policy decision to increase affordable Council housing stock be considered and views offered.
2. The proposal to the commissioning of intrusive site investigations and the commencement of a detailed development appraisal for each site be approved.

8. TY DARRAN DEVELOPMENT – PRE-CONSTRUCTION SERVICES AGREEMENT (PSCA) INCLUDING ENABLING WORKS

Consideration was given to the report which advised Cabinet of the progress made towards delivering a net zero carbon ambition for a 46 unit later living scheme at the former Ty Darran

Care Home, Risca and to obtain approval to enter into a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with Willmott Dixon via the SCAPE Public Sector National Construction Framework Agreement. The report also sought approval to commence detailed site investigations and enabling works on the Ty Darran site in order for the demolition and sewer diversion to commence in January 2023 with a view to commencing construction on site in Autumn 2023, subject to the receipt and approval of a detailed Delivery Agreement (DA), cost plan and viability appraisal.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Communities, as the Age Friendly Champion, was really pleased to see that there will be an opportunity for co-production with future residents in designing the communal spaces of this development.

With regards to mitigating the impact of climate change, clarification was provided on the Passivhaus schemes delivered by the Council and funded by the Welsh Government's Innovate Housing Programme. Cabinet noted that the aim of this programme was to pilot new construction methods and materials to mitigate the impact of climate change, lower energy costs and increase the energy efficiency of homes.

Cabinet was advised of an amendment to the report. The figure for enabling works is as quoted in 5.1.14, however the PCSA figure has increased to £673,748, which has resulted in an increase of £42,436 and therefore the total cost of the PCSA (including the enabling works) is £1,150,888. It was explained that this is largely due to a request from Caerphilly Homes to include additional legal fees and contingency costs.

Clarification was provided on the benefit of having a local manufacturer involved in the development. Cabinet was advised that it has resulted in benefits to the circular economy by ensuring that the investment in new homes delivers wider benefits and opportunities for the local population and community.

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

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

1. The challenges and merits of developing the Ty Darran site against the demand for such accommodation be considered and views on the proposals to develop the site be offered.
2. The signing of a pre-construction agreement with Willmott Dixon via the SCAPE public sector compliant framework be approved to ensure the demolition of the existing building and the start of the enabling works in January 2023.

9. CAERPHILLY BIODIVERSITY REPORT 2022.

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval for the Council's Biodiversity Report for 2022 and its subsequent submission to Welsh Government. Cabinet was advised that the Council has a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. It was noted that under section 6(7) of the Act all public authorities were required before the end of 2019 and before the end of every third year thereafter to publish a report on what they have done to comply with this duty.

Cabinet noted that the report had been considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee as its meeting on the 25th October 2022.

Cabinet was referred to Appendix 1 of the report which demonstrated how the Council fulfils that duty and acts as a driver for ensuring that all service areas consider biodiversity and actively enhance biodiversity when carrying out their day-to-day activities.

Cabinet referred to section 5.4 of the report which detailed the actions and projects delivered in the County Borough of Caerphilly to halt the decline of biodiversity, and further information was sought in relation to support for voluntary groups, particularly in relation to tree planting. The Officer outlined a number of initiatives currently taking place and Cabinet was advised that discussions are taking place with the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations and Groundwork Wales. A number of issues around identifying suitable sites for tree planting was also outlined.

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

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

1. The content of the report and the recommendations of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee as detailed in Section 11 of the Officers report be considered and the Council's Biodiversity Report for 2022, at Appendix 1, and subsequent submission to Welsh Government be approved.

The meeting closed at 2.21 pm.

Approved and signed as a correct record subject to any corrections made at the meeting held on 30th November 2022.

CHAIR

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Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 23rd November 2022

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author:	Cabinet Member:
30/11/2022 13:00	Corporate Performance Assessment 2021/22	To provide members with a high-level position of the Councils performance for 2021/22	Sue Richards; Ros Roberts;	Cllr. Eluned Stenner
30/11/2022 13:10	Draft Self-Assessment Report for 2021/22	To consider and agree the Self-assessment for 2021/2022 as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021	Sue Richards; Kath Peters; Ros Roberts;	Cllr. Eluned Stenner
30/11/2022 13:20	Update on Decarbonisation of fleet vehicles & policies	An update on progress with work to transition our fleet to electric vehicles, including details of phase I of the infrastructure works, with recommendations on policies relating to the use of Council charging points by employees and residents.	Paul Cooke; Sue Richards;	Cllr. Jamie Pritchard;
30/11/2022 13:30	Cyber Security Strategy	To recommend endorsement and implementation of the Strategy.	Liz Lucas; Ian Evans;	Cllr. Nigel George;
30/11/2022 13:40	Programme for Procurement	To extend the Council's existing Programme for Procurement, which is due to expire in May 2023 for a period of up to 12 months to consider and where applicable incorporate aspects of the UK Procurement Bill and Social Partnership & Public Procurement (Wales) Bill in the Council's new Procurement Strategy (the new Procurement Strategy will replace the existing Programme for Procurement).	Liz Lucas; Ian Evans;	Cllr. Nigel George;
30/11/2022 13:50	Education Strategy	For Cabinet to consider and approve the Education Strategy proposed from September 2022 – August 2025.	Keri Cole; Paul Warren;	Cllr. Carol Andrews;

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 23rd November 2022

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author:	Cabinet Member:
30/11/2022 14:00	Christmas Closedown arrangements	For Cabinet to consider the proposals for the Christmas closedown arrangements.	Lynne Donovan;	Cllr. Nigel George;
14/12/2022 13:00	A468 / B4600 Bedwas Bridge Roundabout improvement	The use of CIL funding to initially secure the land necessary to deliver improvement to the Bedwas Bridge Roundabout at the A468/B4600	Mark S Williams; Marcus Lloyd;	Cllr. Julian Simmonds
14/12/2022 13:10	Agile Working Policies	For Cabinet to agree HR policies to support agile working.	Lynne Donovan	Cllr. Nigel George;
14/12/2022 13:20	Low Cost Home Ownership (Decision)	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.	Nick Taylor-Williams; Jane Roberts-Waite;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;
14/12/2022 13:30	HRA Charges (Rent Increase)	Members to agree the level of rent increase for council tenants effective from April 2023.	Lesley Allen;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;
14/12/2022 13:40	Council Tax Base 2023/24	For Cabinet to agree the calculation of the Council Tax Base for the 2023/24 financial year.	Sean O'Donnell;	Cllr. Eluned Stenner;
18/01/2023 13:00	Heating Plant Replacement – Ty Penallta	To update Cabinet in relation to works required to the heating plant at Ty Penallta, to	Mark Faulkner;	Cllr. Nigel George;

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 23rd November 2022

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author:	Cabinet Member:
		outline the costs and work programme involved and to seek Cabinet approval for the works to be funded from the Council's Capital reserve.		
18/01/2023 13:10	Draft Budget Proposals for 2023/24 and Updated Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	To present Cabinet with details of the draft budget proposals for the 2023/24 financial year and an updated MTFP, to allow for a period of consultation prior to final decision by Council on the 28th February 2023.	Stephen Harris;	Cllr. Eluned Stenner;
25/01/2023 13:00	Pontllanfraith Indoor Bowls	To provide an update on the management of the Islwyn Indoor Bowls Centre and to recommend a revised approach moving forward.	Mark S Williams;	Cllr. Chris Morgan;/Cllr. Nigel George;
22/02/2023 13:00	Budget Proposals for 2023/24 and Updated Medium -Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	To seek Cabinet endorsement of the 2023/24 budget proposals prior to final determination by Council on the 28th February 2023, and to note the updated MTFP.	Stephen Harris;	Cllr. Eluned Stenner;
22/02/2023 13:10	HRA Business Plan 2022/23	To update Cabinet on the latest Housing Business Plan position in advance of submitting the plan to Welsh Government by 31/3/23, which is a requirement under the terms of the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) grant. The Housing Business Plan is a 30 year plan and will include rental increase assumptions and forecasted borrowing requirements to enable the HRA to maintain viability while meeting its core objectives.	Lesley Allen;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 23rd November 2022

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author:	Cabinet Member:
22/02/2023 13:20	Empty Property Grant Approval (Decision)	The new Welsh Government National Empty Property Grant Programme will launch in September 22 and ask for bids from LAs to issue grants up to a Max of £25K to owner occupiers to bring empty properties back into use. Caerphilly Homes will administer the grant for Caerphilly with an expectation that in years 2 and 3 of the 3 year programme, there will be a 35% contribution from each participating LA. The grant will be awarded on a first come first served basis.	Nick Taylor-Williams; Claire Davies;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;
22/02/2023 13:30	Decarbonisation Action Plan	To update members on progress with the Authority's decarbonisation action plan which sits under the overarching decarbonisation strategy	Paul Rossiter; Paul Cooke; Allan Dallimore;	Cllr James Pritchard
08/03/2023 13:00	Biodiversity and Grass Cutting Regimes	To seek Cabinet approval in relation to proposals to enhance and promote biodiversity in our grass cutting regimes across the county borough and following consultation with local members.	Mike Headington;	Cllr. Chris Morgan;

Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 23rd November 2022

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author:	Cabinet Member:
08/03/2023 13:10	Empty Homes Strategy (Decision)	To seek Cabinet approval of the proposed strategy	Claire Davies; Mark Jennings;	Cllr. Shayne Cook;
22/03/2023 13:00	No items currently scheduled			
05/04/2023 13:00	No items currently scheduled			
19/04/2023 13:00	Review of the Local Toilet Strategy	To seek Cabinet approval for the Council's updated Local Toilet Strategy following a review and public consultation.	Rob Hartshorn;	Cllr. Philippa Leonard;

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CABINET – 30TH NOVEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT END OF YEAR REPORT 2021/22

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present Cabinet with the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) for the year ending 2021/22 a period impacted by both the pandemic response and the pandemic recovery. The progress reported needs to be considered against this context.

1.2 The CPA forms part of the overall Council 'self-assessment' activity and is submitted to Cabinet for endorsement.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The Council's Performance Framework was endorsed by Cabinet in February 2020 and this report introduces one of the key components of the Framework, the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA). The CPA is a 'self-assessment' of the Authority's progress across a wide range of information types.

2.2 As part of the Performance Framework, this report presents to Cabinet the CPA attached as Appendix 1.

2.3 Beneath the CPA are the Directorate Performance Assessments (DPA) which are detailed sources of information for each Directorate. Information from the DPA's is fed into the CPA. The CPA is an opportunity for members to ask, how well we are performing? and what evidence are we using to determine this.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Cabinet:

1) Note the comments and challenge of the Council's Corporate Performance for 2021/22 from Joint Scrutiny set out within section 10

2) Endorse the Corporate Performance Assessment for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Members are involved in the 'self-assessment' process by scrutinising the information within the Corporate Performance Assessment. This also supports the principles within the new section (Part 6, Chapter 1) of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which provides for a new performance and governance regime for principal councils
- 4.2 Statutory guidance for local authorities says that council executives should welcome and encourage scrutiny inquiries to make recommendations for system improvements.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Performance Framework has been developed to meet several strategic and operational needs as well as to meet the legislation and further the Council's desire to be a high performing learning organisation focused on meeting the needs of its residents. The framework was piloted in 2019 and endorsed by Cabinet February 2020. This report introduces and shares the CPA for year end 2021/22.
- 5.2 The spirit of the CPA (Appendix 1) is about providing learning from which improvements can be driven. The CPA is less about performance and targets (though they have their place) and is more so to provide a wider picture of performance that will support reflective and challenging conversations and scrutiny that will ultimately lead to learning and further improvement.

5.3 The Framework

The Council's Performance Framework has several component parts:

- **Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA)**
- Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA)
- Service Planning, identifying priorities resources and actions to improve.
- Risk Management – the barriers that may prevent improvement.
- My-Time Extra – personal learning and development, skills to deliver on objectives.

- 5.4 The Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) dashboard is used by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Cabinet to monitor the Council's progress in delivering its strategic priorities, identifying and challenging areas of underperformance and discussing and agreeing any remedial actions that may be required.
- 5.5 The dashboard is received by CMT and Cabinet on a twice-yearly basis. While the dashboard itself offers a rich insight, it is set at a high-level position and designed to be an 'at a glance' overall picture.
- 5.6 The detail that sits underneath it and creates the CPA from it is held within each individual DPA report, which are usually monitored at their individual scrutiny.
- 5.7 While the Appendix includes a range of insights into how the Council has performed, as this document is intended to provide learning and drive improvement, some of the headline areas raised within the Appendix have been set out in the table below:

Corporate Challenges	Planned Interventions
In Year Underspends	A Review of the Councils Reserves Strategy will be undertaken
Sickness Absence Levels	Review of sickness absence policies underway External resource to be engaged to assist with understanding the issues and developing evidence based responses Implementation of Council's Employee Wellbeing Framework
Workforce Challenges	The implementation of the Council's Workforce Development Strategy and Employee Wellbeing Framework
Welsh Language Capability	Refinement of the Councils current approach to providing Welsh Language training to staff Inclusion of Welsh Language data in CPA
Freedom of Information Compliance	Additional resource has been added to the Information Governance Team Work underway to include FOI requests and responses on Council website

5.8 Conclusion

The Council's Performance Framework as set out will provide Cabinet, Joint Scrutiny, CMT and DMTs with a regular and embedded mechanism for monitoring progress, managing performance, and driving improvement. The dashboards, which provide 'a single source of the truth', enable key aspects of performance to be discussed, action to be agreed and learning to be generated. The ability to specifically link individual contributions to organisational goals provides a platform for every employee to understand how they fit and to be recognised for the part they play in delivering the Council's objectives.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions were thought to be required in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 This report is for information and has no decision-making requests, so the Council full Integrated Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied. Information on equalities and Welsh language will be included appropriately within the DPA and CPA as part of a picture of Directorate's self-assessments.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications within this report, however the CPA (Appendix 1) has a section on resources including relevant budget and out turns as part of the overall self-assessment of the directorate.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications within this report, however the CPA (Appendix 1) has a section called 'resources' which provides data on a range of workforce aspects.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The CPA was presented to Joint Scrutiny on 10 November and enjoyed constructive debate.
- 10.2 There were questions from Members on sickness absence, breaches of data requests and if there were sufficient resources in areas receiving the greatest number of complaints such as refuse collection, recycling and highway maintenance. Officers highlighted that the pandemic had an impact on staff absence due to sickness. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services also advised that a report had come before the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee outlining a series of measures designed to improve the situation regarding sickness rates. The Head of People Services outlined the national nature of increased sickness levels and provided assurances this is being reviewed alongside other Local Authorities and external partners
- 10.3 A Member requested figures based on gender for those appointed to high positions within the Council and asked for more information on whether vacancies were being filled by internal or external candidates. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services advised that putting all the information contained within Directorate Performance Assessments into one report would produce a document that would be too lengthy for one meeting.

The Director suggested that a Member Seminar be organised so that members can learn more about the information that forms the basis of the CPA. Members agreed and welcomed this idea.

- 10.4 One Member welcomed the report but questioned the objectivity as it was a self-assessment. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services reiterated that the report was a snapshot and that a future seminar would allow Members to drill down more deeply into the information. There was further explanation given on the future 'Panel Review' from external sources, which that would 'sense check our self-assessment arrangements.
- 10.5 A Member asked if there were any comparisons with other Local Authorities. The Business Improvement Manager said that making comparisons was challenging as the Welsh Government (WG) had suspended data reporting to maximise resources during the pandemic. In addition, WG are no longer collecting national Performance Indicators, though if a set became available locally through the Welsh Local Government Association it could be used to provide context.

- 10.6 There were questions around the underspend in the finance table. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer reminded Members that an outturn report outlining how the underspend was ring-fenced for a number of purposes and that this report had been agreed by Cabinet and Full Council.
- 10.7 The accuracy of the Welsh language statistics in the report and the percentage figures for Freedom of Information (FOI) compliance were questioned. Welsh language statistics have since been checked and confirmed as correct. An explanation has been added to explain why the figures for each Directorate cannot simply be added up. The FOI figures have been amended and are now correct. An explanation has also been added to the CPA to explain how the compliance rates are calculated.
- 10.8 A Member criticised the underspend of £37.8 M and suggested that virement of this money would allow resurfacing of poor roads for example. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer reminded Members that an outturn report outlining how the underspend was ring-fenced for a number of purposes and that this report had been agreed by Cabinet and Full Council. A Member queried why the sickness absence rates and the number of staff aged over 55 did not feature in the risk register. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services outlined how the sickness rates were for 2021/22 and the risk register relates to the previous financial year, and therefore they would be reviewed under a future risk register.
- 10.9 One Member praised the work carried out as part of the Sure Start programme. The Early Years Manager agreed that the work done was phenomenal and gave Members an update on the work undertaken.
- 10.10 The Chief Executive thanked Members for the challenging comments made this evening. The Chief Executive praised the work of Council staff during very challenging times during the pandemic. Members heard how certain areas such as complaints and FOI compliance may have been negatively impacted during this time, but it was because resources had been redirected to provide community support during the pandemic.
- 10.11 The Chair also praised the role of staff delivering free school meals during the pandemic and concluded that the report had been discussed, challenged and scrutinised as per the recommendation.
- 10.12 The summary CPA allowed for good debate, however some of the questions raised by Members could have been answered by having the full version of the document made available to them. We recommend that in future the full document is provided to Members.
- 10.13 Changes made to the CPA following committee, were to add commentary to explain the difference in Welsh language statistics, in that some staff have more than one role. An explanation was added to explain the difference in FOI figures, and any errors have been amended.

11. STATUTORY POWER

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

Author: Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager, roberr@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services and Housing
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Members of Joint Scrutiny
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet member Finance and Performance

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Corporate Performance Assessment Year End 2021-22



Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA)

Year End 2021/22

Chief Executive Summary

The Chief Executives End of year Self-assessment Summary 2021/22

The past few years have taken us to places we never could have imagined. The global pandemic required us to step in and step up quickly. We brought our civic leadership responsibilities to the forefront of all we did, to enable us to lead our communities through the dark days of Covid with a shining beacon of security and hope. Overnight we turned our organisation on its head – introducing many new services and turning others off within a matter of hours – all to meet the new and urgent needs of our communities – we responded quickly and we responded together. Throughout this time, we saw first-hand the forceful impact of TeamCaerphilly - bound together through a shared purpose and desire to do whatever was needed to protect our people and place.

We have learnt so much – and one of the many challenges we face is how we keep hold of the many great things we achieved – such as cutting through unnecessary bureaucracy and flexing and empowering our staff to do the right thing. As I personally look back over the past year and previous years – it is filled with emotion – it is with sadness, as so many people tragically lost their lives, but it is also with immense pride.

Despite operating within a very demanding environment, we continued to maintain service delivery. Our schools and education service continue to thrive and it is extremely pleasing to report that none of our schools are receiving any support or intervention by Estyn. The recent 2022 examination results are yet to be collated officially but the feedback to date is very positive. Throughout the pandemic we delivered over 2 million meals to our families most in need. A mammoth task co-ordinated by the catering team through an army of willing staff and community volunteers.

The pressures within the Health service are very concerning and a whole system review is required in order to reduce the burden upon Health colleagues and the pressures we are facing within the domiciliary care service. Our looked after children numbers are increasing and the mental health condition of some of our school pupils is an area of focus for us, both unfortunately is a legacy of the pandemic. Recruitment and retention within the social care area is particularly acute but this is a pressure we are facing across the Council as a whole. This is one of the key organisational risks we have identified and as such we are actively focussed in this area and have several interventions under development.

Plans have been submitted to UK Government for some very exciting physical regeneration projects and if successful will bring a demanding work programme with it. The recent completion of the largest WHQS investment programme covering over 10,000 council properties and the beginnings of our new build programme, is bringing a sharp focus on the delivery of our Placeshaping programme.

Our annual review from our regulators, Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales and Audit Wales was once again very positive and endorsed the positive work that has been undertaken across all our services, and importantly, where areas were identified as in need of attention, they were areas we already had identified ourselves and plans were already underway. Thereby further reinforcing my view that we know ourselves very well and know where we are going.

The fantastic achievements made by so many across the organisation were once again recognised on a national platform with a plethora of individual awards, culminating with the Council of the Year. Whilst we didn't win the award on this occasion, we were only 1 of 5 from across the UK to be shortlisted – so nevertheless a great achievement and a key milestone for us as we continue our journey along the undulating TeamCaerphilly road.

As we move from one national crisis, we are swiftly moving into another. The landscape is extremely complex, challenging and unprecedented.

Our communities are bruised from the pandemic and are now facing the acute impact of eye-watering rising energy and food costs. The frightening impact of climate change is being seen here and now and the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine is calling upon us to dig deep and act once again.

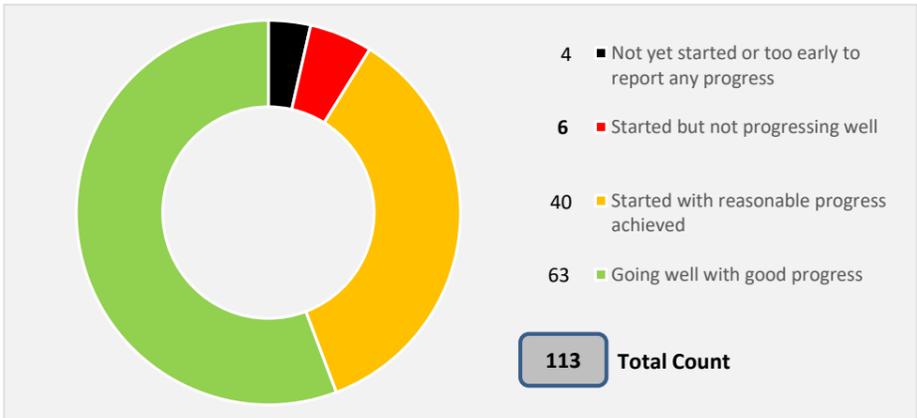
We will need to reshape & repurpose our organisation to respond – but we are being impacted too - a further Covid wave, pressures within the health and social care sector, recruitment and retention, less funding along with an expectation to do more but our desire and responsibility to serve the complex and acute needs of our communities remains our primary focus.

The years ahead will be extremely challenging, but we will respond based upon the firm knowledge that we are robust and resilient.

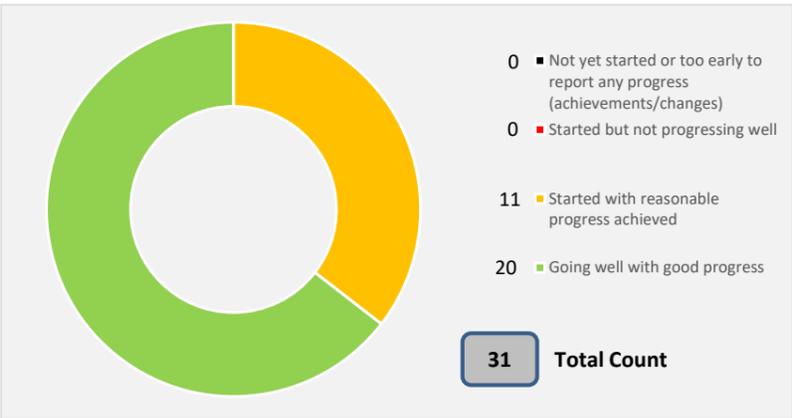
Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA)

Year End 2021/22

All DPA (Directorate) Priorities - Progress



CMT Priorities - Progress (See Chart on the right for more details)



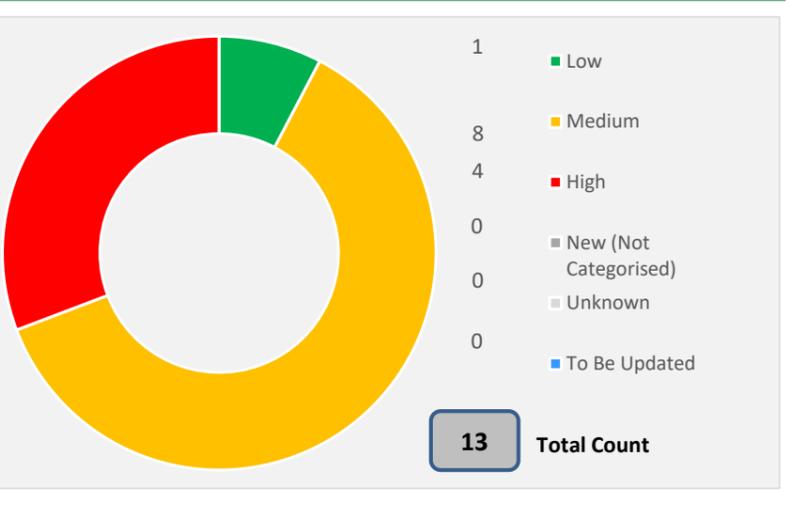
CMT Priorities - Progress (Details by Directorates)



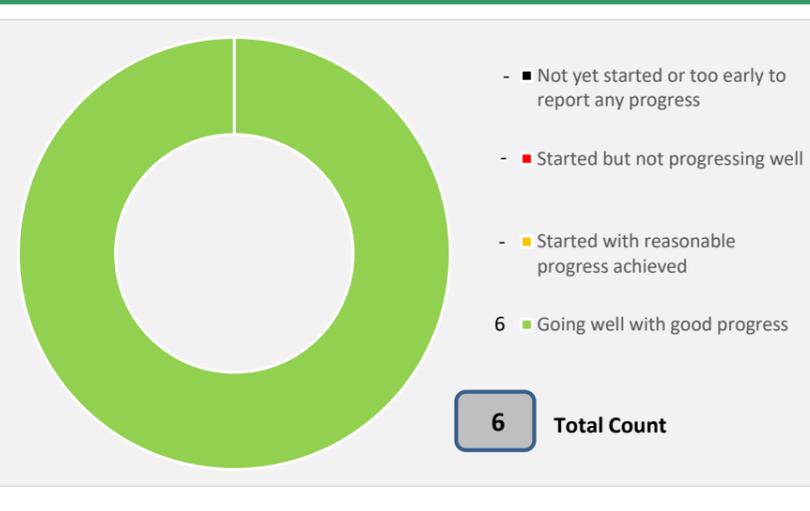
Finance - Budget Monitoring Report - period 12

Service Area	Underspend/ (Overspend) 2021-22 £m
Education & Lifelong Learning	1.902
Social Services	9.043
Economy & Environment	2.473
Corporate Services	1.352
Miscellaneous Finance	4.479
Additional Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	3.540
Council Tax Surplus	1.761
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	7.342
Schools	5.923
TOTAL	37.815

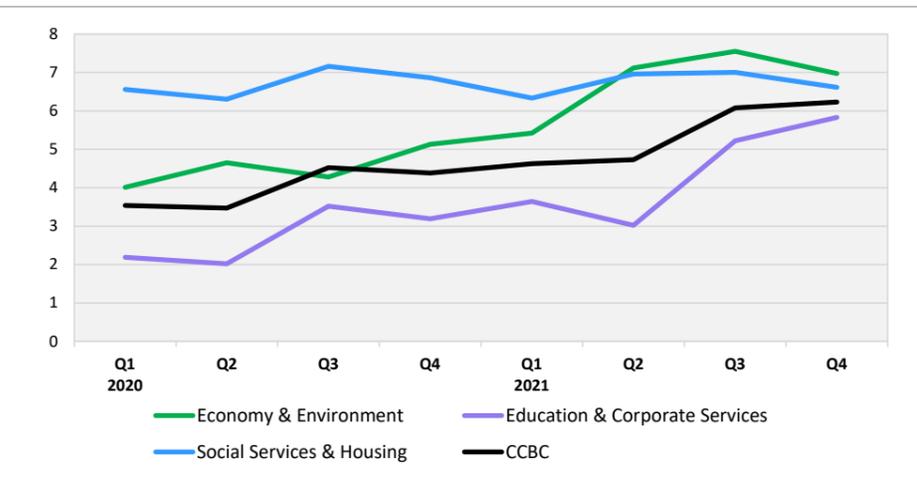
Risk Register - Number/Category of CMT Risks



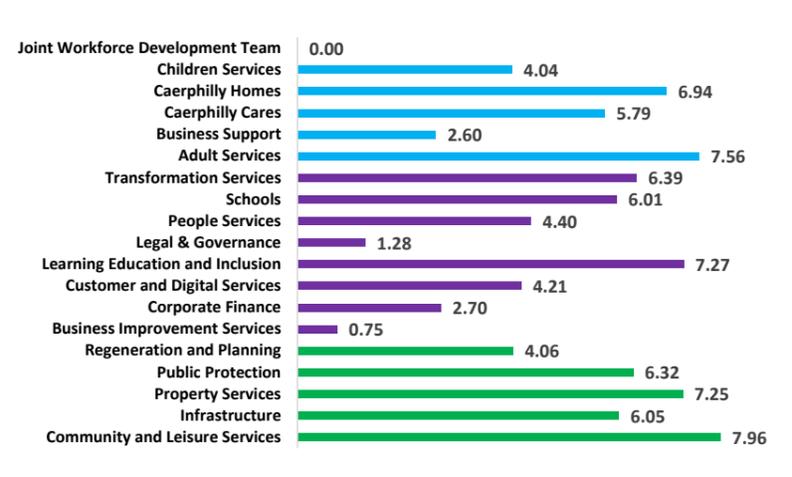
WBO: Well-being Objectives - Progress/Status



% Sickness Absence by Directorate



% Sickness Absence by Service Area



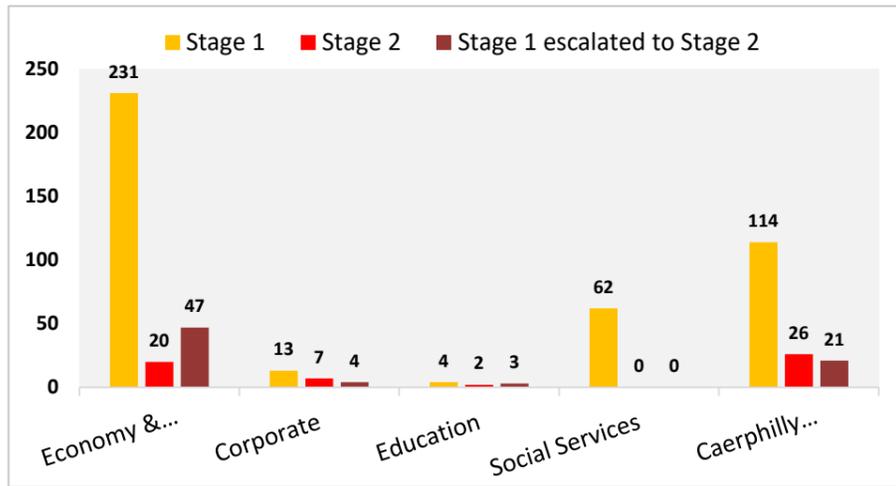
Workforce breakdown

Category	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Voluntary Leavers	110	213	153	135
Other Leavers	29	42	20	18
Total Leavers	139	255	173	153
External New Starters	132	295	209	195
Number of Agency Staff	322	354	289	343
Headcount	8,255	8,310	8,368	8,348
Age 55 and over	2,076	2,044	2,061	2,067
% of headcount	25.14	24.59	24.62	24.76

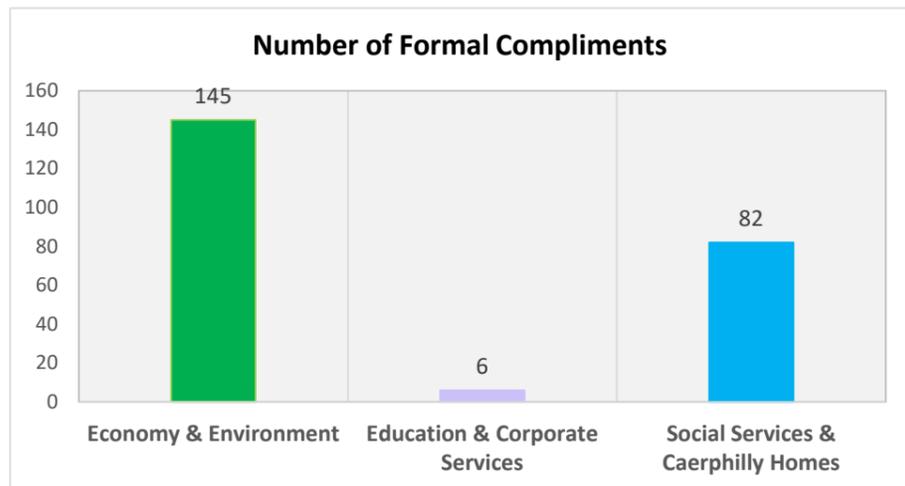
Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA)

Year End 2021/22

Corporate Complaints: Number of Stage 1 & Stage 2



Compliments (Positive Feedback)

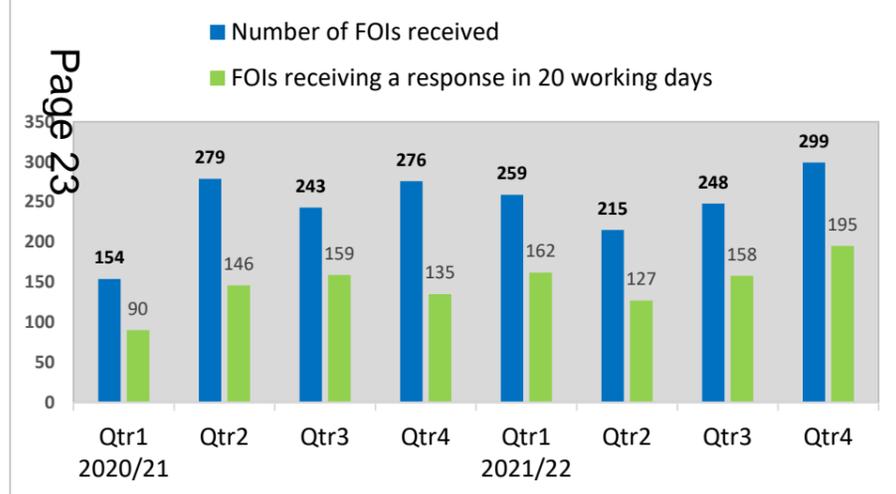


Welsh Language stats - whole authority

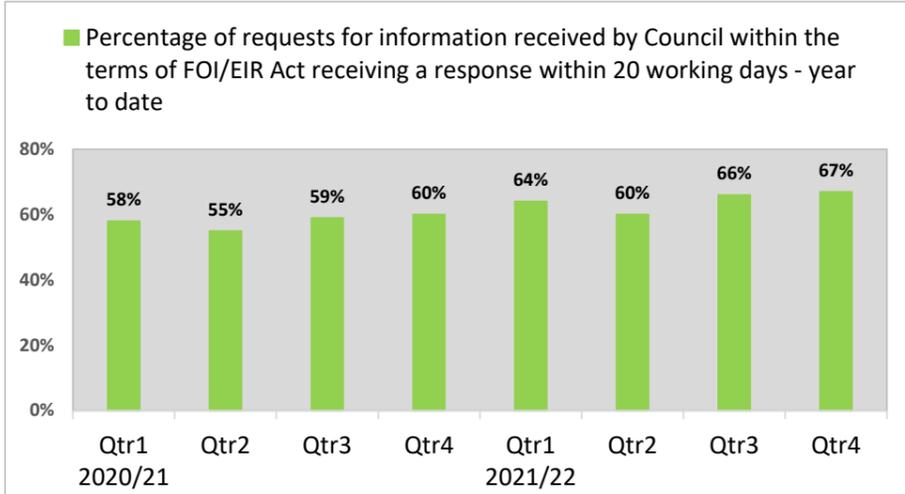
	Total Staff	Welsh Speakers	%
Economy & Environment	2075	376	18.12
Education & Corporate Services	4761	1333	27.99
Social Services & Caerphilly Homes	1910	309	16.17
Council Total	8348	1968	23.57

The figures per Directorate for Total Staff and Welsh Speakers do not equal the overall total for the Council due to some members of staff having more than one post within the organisation, and those posts are within different Directorates. The figures above are the total number of people who have completed the Linguistic Skills form noting Welsh Language skills.

FOI's - Freedom of Information Requests - CCBC



FOI - Compliance - 20 days (%)



CCBC FOI/EIR compliance percentage is calculated using the number of Valid FOI/EIR requests received and not Total FOI/EIR requests received. A small number of FOI/EIR requests may be invalid for compliance calculations as they have either been withdrawn by the applicant or require applicant clarification which restarts the 20 day compliance period for that request.

Key messages - Social Services

- Adults Services:**
 - There is a steady drop in adults receiving services.
 - A slight increase in number of Assessments between quarters 3 and 4 due to services getting back to normal after the pandemic.
 - Again a slight drop in Reviews could be down to shortage of staff in this area.
- Children Services:**
 - The number of Children Looked After has decreased slightly.
 - A positive increase in discharges from care in Qtr 4 which is attributable to successful revocations of Care Orders in the Courts.
- Directorate:**
 - Difficulties in recruiting Qualified Social Workers into frontline Teams with high levels of vacancies being managed across the Service.
 - Fragility of the Social Care market.

Key messages - Economy & Environment

- Bus passenger numbers remain a concern for the viability of the industry and the ability of the sector to deliver services due to financial sustainability and availability of drivers.
- The loss of EU funded programmes (such as those relating to employment support) is a significant risk for the Authority and political lobbying has taken place accordingly (this could present redundancy liabilities).
- Market competition for staffing resources has created recruitment and retention challenges for some front-line services. This is now affecting our ability to deliver and maintain services at previous expected levels. Prioritisations must take place.
- Evaluating staffing roles, working locations and IT equipment for improved adaptability and agile working arrangements is proving to be time consuming and complex (Links to CR3 Frontline Services and CR6 Agile Working).
- Analysis of our fleet vehicles and introduction of electric fleet vehicles is progressing, but very slowly, as is the installation of a charging network across various sites.
- Prudent assets modernisation, maintenance, and rationalisation, continues to be a challenge, and is linked to delivering outcomes, from the ongoing Corporate Reviews.
- The top five stage 1 and 2 complaints continues to focus on, Refuse-Recycling-Green Waste-Missed Collections and other matters, Parking, Highway maintenance works, Planning-General, Cleansing and General Weed Control-Grounds Maintenance.
- Directorate sickness levels have shown a steady increase (worsening) throughout the year and has been the worse of the last 3 years. It is a concern in certain services areas and is something that the Corporate Management Team are presently considering.
- With some exceptions performance results across the directorate generally show that we are maintaining reasonable levels of service delivery, given the diversion of some resources, lost resources and constraints experienced throughout the Covid pandemic and as a result of ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties

Key messages - Educations & Corporate Services

Corporate Services

- CCBC became an asylum dispersal area in June and has stepped up to manage the hosting of Ukrainian nationals under the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme.
- The New Gwent PSB has been supported and facilitated by CCBC and we have led on the development of the Gwent local assessment of well-being.
- Sickness absence levels continue to rise. The percentage sickness absence for the authority in Q4 was 5.83% and the number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee has risen to 14.12 days compared to 10 days in 2020/21.
- We have recorded 68 data breaches during 2021/22. Common themes: wrong e-mail address selected from autocomplete drop down menu, e-mail addresses not entered into bcc field when sending email to multiple recipients, information sent to wrong person.
- We still have lingering non-compliance against the Welsh Language Standards with the Commissioner's most recent assurance report picking up issues with errors in social media posts, call menus in English only etc. These are niggling non-compliances that we are working with services to improve.

Education

- There are no schools placed in the category of special measures by Estyn. One remains in significant improvement and is due to be revisited soon. Three schools previously identified as 'Estyn Review' have made sufficient progress, and no longer requires external monitoring.
- Implementation of the Welsh Government EdTech initiative provided significant investment in IT and digital, including completion of network infrastructure installations, improvements to connectivity and bandwidth, really benefitting online and blended learning.
- The Early Years partnership project has been an amazing achievement and is now available to vulnerable families from antenatal to 7years across the borough regardless of their postcode.
- Support to families across the borough has increased significantly for families living outside Flying Start areas from 50 in previous years to 826 in 2021-22 supporting circa 1400 children aged 0-7years.
- Automation of the location of school places during 21/22 has made the process much faster for parents, reduced potential errors and increased efficiencies.
- The Catering team has quickly procured a provider to access the current capacity of school kitchens and dining halls and now has a detailed analysis of requirements at each site. Identified adaptations are planned with the planned roll out of universal Free School Meals.
- When the Libraries were closed the service adapted their model to online catalogues, click and collect and deliveries to vulnerable people. This transformed the service with expansion of online services, more information is in the Education DPA.
- The Education Welfare Service developed a Covid Attendance Toolkit to prioritise cases where pupils' attendance is lowest (below 85% threshold), officers are working with pupils and families with attendance as low as 40%.
- Ongoing challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic provide barriers to progress and are significant. Schools report high pupil absence, increased pupil wellbeing concerns and the need to recover lost learning.
- NEETs increased to 2.2% - which represented 41 people out of 1888.

Key messages - Caerphilly Homes

Caerphilly Homes

- The completion of WHQS this was a huge achievement, and our Housing stock is now in good condition.
- Our housing association partners have completed the redevelopment of the former Cwm Ifor Primary School, Penyrheol, creating 17 new homes built to Passivhaus standard.
- Over 1,100 residents helped to find additional benefits worth nearly £3m as the cost-of-living crisis escalates.
- Of the 1136 residents whose income was maximised 46% were in crisis and 54% were approached as part of our proactive model. 3059 tenants (included private) were supported to remain in their homes as part of early homeless prevention work.
- Outline planning permission was awarded for Oakdale school site and Ty Darren in March 22, our first two independent development projects.
- The homeless households temporarily accommodated in Bed and Breakfast has increased over the year as has the number of households requiring B&B accommodation (149) but those prevented from homelessness has also increased.
- There has been a steady increase in complaints
- Tenant Satisfaction Survey showed some areas that require improvement or at least to the perception of the service.
- Housing is carrying circa 55 vacancies across the service with acute issue being experienced within the repairs and maintenance team where operatives are leaving to obtain better salaries in other social landlords as the cost-of-living crisis increases. Operatives who have been with us since an apprentice for 18 years are taking offers of circa £3-£5K more in salary.
- Due to substantial issues with the availability of contractors and materials, the Private Sector Housing Team were unable to process and deliver the amount of grants and loans this year.
- The cost of materials has increased significantly, which has affected the number of private sector homes we were able to support.

CMT - Risk Register

Caerphilly CBC Corporate Risk Register				Last Quarter Risk Level	Current Risk Level	
Risk ID	Risk Name	Risk Description	CMT Lead Officer	Q4 2021/22	Q1 2022/23	Well-being Risk Level
CRR 08 - Social Services & Housing Directorate	Fragility of the Social Care market	The independent sector social care market across Wales is in an unprecedented position in terms of its fragility and this is an ongoing problem for the authority. The ability to recruit and retain care staff, in the face of significant competition from the retail and hospitality sectors is becoming more and more of an issue. As a consequence independent providers are handing back packages of care and the future of some care homes is in the balance.	Corporate Director Social Care & Housing	High	High	High
CRR 07 - Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate	School Attainment	The impact of covid on learner achievement remains unknown and requires further evidence and appropriate intervention, particularly with the inconsistent nature of assessment since 2020 along with reduced levels of pupil attendance and higher than average levels of exclusions.	Corporate Director Education & Corporate Services	High	High	High
CRR-16 NEW 2021/22	Recruitment & Retention of Staff	The Council needs to be able to employ sufficient numbers of staff across its services in order to ensure service delivery can be maintained. At present, there are challenges in recruiting replacement staff within certain Council professions that could, if not overcome, create difficulties over the medium to long term.	Corporate Director Education & Corporate Services	High	High	High
NEW 2020 CRR 11 - Directorate of Economy & the Environment	Fleet	Providing a fully operational, compliant fleet of vehicles is essential for the Council to deliver all of its front line services. In this regard the Council holds a goods vehicle operators licence ("O licence") and must continue to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of the "O licence" and the legislative framework in which it exists. There is a current risk relating to the ability of the Council to staff its fleet management and maintenance service with suitably qualified and/or experienced staff and deliver the required level of management and maintenance standards.	Corporate Director Economy and Environment	High	High	High
CRR 13 - New Q1 20/21 Homelessness	Increased Homelessness	Increased numbers of homelessness could result in increased incidents of rough sleeping and increased use of B&B/hotel type accommodation to address emergency needs. This in turn could result in poor outcomes for the households concerned and a repeat of the homelessness cycle. As national Covid policy delaying evictions by private landlords has come to the end, evictions could rise significantly.	Corporate Director Social Care & Housing	Medium	Medium	High
New...For further consideration	Loss of EU / WEFO Grant Funding Streams and related programmes	The loss of EU / WEFO grant funding streams will have a direct impact on the Council's budget and place at risk the provision of certain services and projects that are underpinned by this external grant funding.	Corporate Director Economy and Environment	Medium	Medium	High
CRR 14 - Microsoft operating support	Increased Cyber Security Threat	Local Government and other Public Sector organisations are recording an increasing number of cyber security attacks with successful attacks placing core business and service delivery at risk.	Corporate Director Education & Corporate Services	Medium	Medium	High

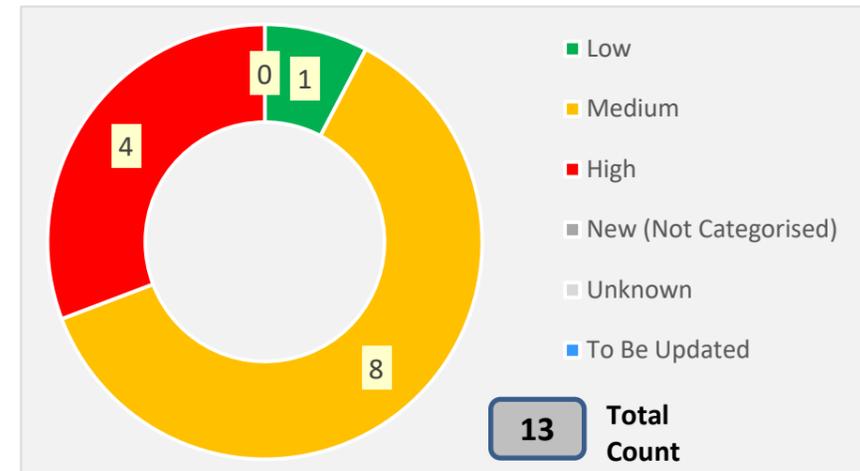
CMT - Risk Register

Caerphilly CBC Corporate Risk Register				Last Quarter Risk Level	Current Risk Level	
Risk ID	Risk Name	Risk Description	CMT Lead Officer	Q4 2021/22	Q1 2022/23	Well-being Risk Level
CRR 02 - All Directorates	Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	The Council's MTFP needs to be refreshed in the Autumn of 2022 in order to address the significant impact of rising inflation, higher than expected pay awards, the increased costs of energy and supplies and the wider impact of cost of living on our residents.	Chief Executive	Medium	Medium	Medium
CRR 12 - Covid 19 New Q1 20/21	Covid 19 Recovery (and future wave response)	As the local economy seeks to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council will need to focus on a series of recovery measures to stimulate local growth. The Council will also need to remain prepared to manage its critical services and workforce pressures through potential future waves that limit social mobility and reduce the availability of resource	Chief Exexutive	Medium	Medium	Medium
CRR 15 - Contractors	Material and Contractor Costs and Supply Chain Issues	The availability of contractors, material shortages and supply chain delays as well as inflationary cost increases are having a significant impact on the Council's ability to deliver planned maintenance and to progress key infrastructure and building projects.	Corporate Director Economy and Environment	Medium	Medium	Medium
CRR 05 - Dir for Economy & Environment	Ash Die Back (Chalara Fraxinea) Disease	This disease will result in the decline, death and removal of circa 37,400 Ash Trees in Caerphilly, many of which line our roadside verges and other high risk locations.	Corporate Director Economy and Environment	Medium	Medium	Medium
CRR 06 - Dir for Economy & Environment	Local Development Plan	The Council's current LDP was due to expire on 31st December 2021. A Replacement LDP was well advanced, however, the Council withdrew that plan in July 2016 following opposition to a number of development sites contained within the document. The Council has resolved to progress the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan and a new LDP in parallel. Work on the new plan has commenced, the delivery agreement has been approved by WG, the various working groups are progressing and regular member seminars are being held.	Corporate Director Economy and Environment	Medium	Medium	Medium
CRR 10 - Social Services & Housing Directorate	Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme	Everyone in Wales should have the opportunity to live in a good quality home within a safe and secure community. To help achieve this, the physical standard and condition of existing housing must be maintained and improved to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS). Meeting the revised completion deadline is critical for Caerphilly tenants.	Corporate Director Social Care & Housing	Low	Low	Low

CMT - Risk Register

Caerphilly CBC Corporate Risk Register				Last Quarter Risk Level	Current Risk Level	
Risk ID	Risk Name	Risk Description	CMT Lead Officer	Q4 2021/22	Q1 2022/23	Well-being Risk Level
			Count Number and Category of Risks	Q4 2021/22	Q1 2022/23	Well-being Risk Level
			Low	1	1	1
			Medium	8	8	5
			High	4	4	7
			New (Not Categorised)	0	0	0
			Unknown	0	0	0
			To Be Updated	0	0	0
			TOTAL	13	13	13

Q4 2021/22



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CABINET - 30TH NOVEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (INCLUDING WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES) 2021/22

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Cabinet with the Annual Self-Assessment Report for 2021/22. The report also includes an update of the Well-being Objectives for 2021/22.
- 1.2 The Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021 requires a draft of the self-assessment to be reviewed by Governance and Audit Committee prior to coming to Cabinet. The draft attached (Part 1, Appendix 1) was approved by Governance and Audit Committee on 11 October 2022.
- 1.3 The report was also presented to Joint Scrutiny on 10 November 2022 for their scrutiny and challenge.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Self-Assessment Report is a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Act replaces the improvement duty for principal councils set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. Self-assessment is an important part of the Council's performance framework. This is the first time the Council has been required to produce a Self-Assessment Report which replaces the former Annual Performance Report.
- 2.2 The Council is required to assess its own performance and provide the public with an accurate picture of that performance and identify areas for improvement.
- 2.3 The Council must also report progress against the six Well-being Objectives set out within the Corporate Plan 2018-2023. This report includes an update on the fourth year of the Corporate Plan.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet approve the Self-assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2021/22 (Appendix 1) as a final position on organisational performance for the year 2021/2022, following the reports being scrutinised by Governance and Audit and Joint Scrutiny Committee. See section 10 for consultation responses.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to publish a self-assessment report and make it available as soon as reasonably practicable after the financial year to which it relates.
- 4.2 Under the Act there is a duty to keep performance under review, the extent to which we are fulfilling the 'performance requirements' which is to:
- Exercise our functions effectively.
 - use our resources economically, efficiently and effectively.
 - Have effective governance in place for securing the above
- 4.3 Members engage in the 'self-assessment' process by scrutinising the information within the report. This supports the principles within Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 statutory guidance.
- 4.4 The guidance says that "council executives should welcome and encourage scrutiny inquiries to make recommendations for system improvements. The aim is to support councils to build on existing strengths and to support them to achieve a more innovative, open, honest, transparent and ambitious sector, challenging itself and collectively driving up service delivery outcomes and standards."
- 4.5 "Member committees are a key part of offering constructive challenge to how a council is performing and how it organises itself in the delivery of sustainable services and are a key part of a council's self-assessment". The council is demonstrating this by the route the 'self-assessment' has taken through Governance and Audit and Joint Scrutiny Committee

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 This report introduces the Annual Self-assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2021/22 (Appendix 1).
- 5.2 The intention of self-assessment is to show how a council acts on organisational learning and makes it part of an ongoing process of review. The key principle is to know how good organisational performance is and where it could improve. From this learning we have produced a Self-Assessment Report.
- 5.3 The new approach as set out in the Act is designed to be a more streamlined, flexible, sector-led approach to performance, good governance and improvement. The intention is for councils to be proactive in considering how internal processes and procedures change to enable more effective planning, delivery and decision-making to drive better outcomes
- 5.4 The statutory guidance says that self-assessment can be achieved by using intelligence already held corporately in an insightful way and reflecting at a strategic

level on how the council is operating, and to identify what action is needed to ensure it can continue to provide effective services now and for the long term.

- 5.5 The Council's Performance Framework has been developed to meet several strategic and operational needs as well as meeting the legislation, and further the Council's desire to be a high performing learning organisation focused on meeting the needs of its residents.
- 5.6 Much of the information contained within the report is sourced from the Directorate Performance Assessments, the Corporate Performance Assessment in addition to other council sources of information such as the Annual Governance Statement, Financial Reports and Equalities Reports.
- 5.7 The self-assessment process will produce a summary of the learning which has emerged from the self-assessment process. We have chosen a range of information to use that will be reviewed to reach our conclusions under the following headings:
- Corporate Planning
 - Financial Planning
 - Workforce Planning
 - Procurement
 - Assets
 - Risk Management
 - Performance Management
 - Other Key Council Health Checks
- 5.8 These headings are from the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) guidance as a way to frame the organisational learning. The report also includes a progress update of the six Well-being Objectives contained within the Council's Corporate Plan (2018-2023), which was endorsed by Cabinet in April 2018. The Objectives will remain in place until 2023.
- 5.9 Each of the six Well-being Objectives has a series of outcomes which sets out what the Council hopes to achieve on behalf of citizens. This report sets out the progress made against those six objectives during 2021/22.
- 5.10 As the first year of 'self-assessment' within the context of the new legislation, we have reviewed the process and listened to the feedback from our committees to help inform areas for development for the next 'self-assessment'. They are,
- Provide more 'evaluative statements' in the final document, by showing a greater connection to the source information, which informed the summary 'judgements'. This may require additional hyperlinks to the source documents, so the reader has greater understanding of why judgements were made and greater publication of data showing connections to learning.
 - To allow greater consultative time with Governance and Audit committee prior to a formal committee
 - To run workshops with committee to provide greater awareness of the legislation and the council process to meet the legislation.
 - To strengthen the 'involvement' process with the statutory list in the guidance which are, local people; other persons carrying on a business in the council's area; the staff of the council; and every trade union which is recognised (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (c.52)) by the council. This is not about consulting on the final document but

using an evidence-based approach by involving the above groups in ongoing self-assessment judgements.

5.11 Conclusion

The Council's Performance Framework has been developed to meet several strategic and operational needs, as well as to meet the legislation. It is an ongoing process that allows the Council to act on organisational learning, review its performance and recognise where it could improve.

The self-assessment provides a platform to celebrate the activity that has gone well, reflect on the areas that need to be improved and to identify new approaches and interventions to support future progress.

The Self-Assessment Report 21/22 summarises learning on the Council's organisational effectiveness, using the Well-being of Future Generations framework. The Self-Assessment also identifies actions to improve our organisational effectiveness, and this will be monitored throughout the year.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made or were thought necessary, for this report that are not already contained within the report.

6.2 Unless a specific Well-being Objective is judged as delivered in its entirety, or assessment of data and public consultation responses change direction significantly, it is assumed the Well-being Objectives will continue throughout the course of the remaining year of the Corporate Plan.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 No Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed for this report although individual assessments may have been made to support activity within the Well-being Objectives. Page 14 of the Self-assessment Report provides a brief update on our Welsh Language and equalities work. Delivery of the Well-being Objectives maximises our contribution to all the national well-being goals including 'A More Equal Wales'

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Page 7 in the Self-assessment Report provides information on Financial Planning.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personal implications arising from this Report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

The "Annual Self-Assessment Report (Including Well-Being Objectives) 2021/22" came to the Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10th November 2022.

Following an introduction from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, Committee Members received a presentation from the Corporate Policy Manager. Members were given an overview of the statutory requirements and key points from the Self-Assessment Report were also highlighted.

- 10.1 One Member asked why grant funding was underspent and also enquired if grant money received is now being spent on the intended uses or had it been returned. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer outlined that the underspend related to money received specifically during the pandemic such as the Covid-19 hardship fund which had now ceased. So, it was money which had been directed at addressing Covid-19 challenges rather than funding which had not been spent. Members heard how no grant money had been returned. The Member also sought clarification on a sentence under Equalities and Welsh Language and suggested the report is properly proof-read before publication. A further question on the low level of Welsh learners was also put to officers. The Head of Transformation outlined how the paragraph in question would be checked for clarity and the whole document would be proofed again. On the issue of Welsh learners, the officer advised that the training programme was relaunched following the pandemic and would offer courses ranging from beginner to advanced learner. The Corporate Policy Manager added that the Council also offered confidence building classes to encourage staff to use existing Welsh skills.
- 10.2 A Member highlighted the projected occupancy rate of less than 40% at Ty Penallta over the coming years and asked about future usage. He believed that some of the space could be used to help the homeless. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services highlighted a section of the report that referred to the opportunity to rationalise the Council's estate and therefore reduce associated expenditure such as rent, heating and lighting. Members heard how due to the Agile Working Policy it would be possible to increase occupancy at Ty Penallta above 45% as part of a review of what happens to outlying buildings.
- 10.3 One Member observed that the Voluntary Sector should be included as part of partnership working towards a single public estate. On the issue of equality, the Member highlighted that many elderly residents did not access online services, and this should be factored into future planning. The Member also queried the running of food cooperatives as depicted in the report as she felt the role of voluntary organisations had been overlooked. On the issue of working with the Voluntary Sector the Corporate Policy Manager advised that the current policy on the development of Community Hubs involved partnership working with this sector. The officer also stressed that the Council acknowledged that not everyone was digitally enabled and therefore face-to-face services would also be available in the Hubs. The Corporate Policy Manager also observed that she would check the wording of the food cooperatives section of the self-assessment. The Member also raised hospital discharge challenges due to a lack of adequate social care and suggested that this should be a priority for the Council. The Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing assured Members that this was a key priority for the Authority and outlined some of the achievements and challenges within domiciliary care for communities. Members heard how it was a challenging balancing act between prioritising people in the community and those ready to be discharged from hospital.
- 10.4 A Member questioned the principle of self-assessment and suggested that in terms of general well-being a freeze on Council Tax and rents would be welcome during a cost-of-living crisis. It was also suggested that national charities should be allowed to use surplus capacity in Council buildings. The Chief Executive suggested that a lot of what had been outlined was not relevant to the report being discussed. Members

were advised that there would be opportunity to discuss issues around the Council Tax when the budget was discussed at Full Council. In terms of the principle of self-assessment the Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services reiterated a point made earlier in the meeting that the Council was subject to an independent review at least once a term and that this process checked for accuracy on performance data.

- 10.5 One Member suggested that surplus capacity in Council buildings should be addressed as a priority. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services reiterated points around the Agile Review that would consider opportunities to cut costs by rationalising the estate and maximising the workspace at Ty Penallta
- 10.6 A Member raised the issue of the Street Lighting policy as decarbonisation was highlighted in the report. He suggested an adult conversation was needed for safety reasons over the issue of switching off 87% of lighting at midnight. The Member also suggested that the Reserve Strategy scheduled for March should be brought forward so that Members were better informed when discussing the budget. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer advised that work was already taking place on the approach to addressing the financial challenges and that robust scrutiny of the reserves held is part of this process. He advised Members that the Reserves Strategy would come before the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in January. The Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change advised that the street lighting policy had recently been considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee and that leaving lights on after midnight would increase carbon emissions.
- 10.7 One Member questioned why the views of residents were not included in the assessment. He suggested that a panel review every 5 years was not good enough in terms of monitoring the assessment process. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services advised that the What Matters survey for all residents was imminent and that the findings would feed into future self-assessments.
- 10.8 In response to 10.1 the Report has been checked. In response to 10.3, officers reviewed the voluntary sector involvement in the narrative for Well-being Objective 5, and felt it should remain unchanged, as it is factually correct, but added a few more words to reflect appreciation for voluntary sector contribution.

11. STATUTORY POWER

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

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Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services and Housing
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Members of Joint Scrutiny
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services

Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning
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Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Gareth Jenkins, Assistant Director - Head of Children's Services
Tina McMahon, Community Regeneration Manager
Jeff Reynolds, Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager
Paul Cooke, Senior Policy Officer
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation

Background Papers:

[Corporate Plan 2018-2023](#)

[Statutory guidance on Part 6, Chapter 1, of the Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Annual Self-assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2021/22

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Team Caerphilly

BETTER TOGETHER

Self-Assessment Report (including
Well-being Objectives) 2021/22



Part 1: Self-assessment Report 2021/22

Section 1:	Foreword from the Leader and Chief Executive	2
Section 2:	Introduction	3
Section 3:	How do we carry out our self-assessment? Our approach	4
Section 4:	Monitoring Progress	5
Section 5:	Our Key Learning from 2021/22	6
Section 6:	Other Key Council Health Checks – Equalities and Welsh Language, Decarbonisation, Consultation and Engagement	14

Part 2: Well-being Objective Performance Report 2021/22

Section 7:	Introduction	18
Section 8:	Annual Report on the Well-being Objectives 2021/22	19
	WBO 1: Improve education opportunities for all	19
	WBO 2: Enabling employment	24
	WBO 3: Address the supply, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's health and well-being	28
	WBO 4: Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment	32
	WBO 5: Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	35
	WBO 6: Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being	41
Section 9:	How to contact us	44

Part 1: Self-assessment Report 2021/22

Section 1: Foreword from the Leader and Chief Executive

Welcome to our self-assessment report, which provides an important opportunity for us to reflect on our performance over the past 12 months and consider the future direction of travel of the organisation.

Caerphilly County Borough Council is a large and diverse organisation delivering a wide range of key services to our community. Over recent years we have developed a 'Team Caerphilly' ethos which helps unite us and provides a shared ambition for the council to strive to deliver excellence in everything we do. We are a modern, innovative, and forward-thinking organisation which places the customer and citizens at the heart of all we do. Our 'Team Caerphilly' operating model is based on the principle that we have a commercial head and a social heart, and this guides everything that we do together.

This annual self-assessment process is a new requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and provides a new way for local councils to assess and report on their effectiveness. We recognise that there is always room for improvement and this self-assessment process allows us to examine and scrutinise the way we operate to ensure that we address any issues and learn lessons as we move forward.

The past few years have presented a number of significant challenges as we navigated through a global pandemic. Overnight, at the start of COVID-19, we turned our organisation on its head – introducing many new services and turning others off within a matter of hours – all to meet the new and urgent needs of our community. We responded quickly and we responded together. Throughout this time, we saw first-hand the forceful impact of Team Caerphilly - bound together through a shared purpose and desire to do whatever was needed to protect our people and place.

Now, as we emerge from the pandemic, we are faced with new challenges such as the cost-of-living crisis, the climate emergency, social care pressures and ongoing budgetary pressures which are expected to worsen over the coming years.

Set against this difficult background, we have a duty to keep our performance under review to ensure we exercise our functions effectively, use our resources economically, efficiently, and effectively and have effective governance in place.

You will see from the results of this self-assessment that we are already addressing all of these things. However, this process helps us to identify our strengths, as well areas where we can do better, so that we can improve our ability to fulfil these functions further.

We are currently experiencing a range of pressures and challenges, and these are likely to continue for the foreseeable future, but we do so safe in the knowledge that we will respond as a robust and resilient organisation, working together for the good of all. As one, as Team Caerphilly.



Cllr Sean Morgan
Leader of the Council



Christina Harry
Chief Executive

Section 2: Introduction

Welcome to the Caerphilly County Borough Council's first annual self-assessment. In 2021 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act came into law and set out a new approach for how Council's assess and report on their effectiveness.

The legislation is designed to be a more streamlined, flexible, sector-led approach to performance, good governance, and improvement. The intention is for councils to be proactive in considering how internal processes and procedures should change, to enable more effective planning, delivery, and decision-making to drive better outcomes.

In the Act, there is a duty to keep under review, the extent to which the Council is fulfilling its performance requirements, which reflects on the extent to which the Council

- is exercising its functions effectively.
- is using its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively.
- has effective governance in place for securing the above.

The Council must publish a Self-Assessment Report once in every financial period, which considers the main learning points, and what it will do to improve upon them. The Self-Assessment Report is a way of critically, and honestly, reviewing its current position, to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. This Self-Assessment Report replaces the former Annual Performance Report.

This report can be viewed as the Council's internal assessment for improving its effectiveness.

The Council key messages from page 6, are framed around the 7 core set of activities that are common to the corporate governance of public bodies as outlined in the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \('the Act'\) Guidance](#), and more information can be found from this link.

Section 3: How do we carry out our self-assessment?

Our approach

The intention of self-assessment is to provide and act on organisational learning and provide an ongoing process of review about how good our performance is, and where it could be better. From this learning we produce a Self-Assessment Report.

We have chosen a range of information to use that will be reviewed to reach our conclusions, such as performance data, complaints, and finance data. Where possible, we aim to use existing sources of information to provide a joined-up approach.

Self-assessment is achieved by using intelligence in an insightful way and reflecting on how we are operating, to identify and take actions that may be needed, to ensure we can continue to provide effective and efficient services now and for the longer term.

To inform our self-assessment it is important for us to know the following:

- What went well and why?
- What did not go well and why?
- What impact have we made and how do we know? What difference have we made?
- What have we learned?
- What actions do we intend to take in the next period to ensure that we are meeting our performance requirements?

An important tool in how we assess our performance, is the use of a 'Corporate Performance Assessment', or CPA, which is a high-level strategic dashboard that includes a range of information to give a 'snapshot' of performance across the organisation. This is compiled from key data reported in several Directorate Performance Assessments (DPAs), from which, each directorate within the authority, provides a range of information to keep progress under review, provide knowledge, manage resources, and risks, providing intelligence to answer the question, what are we learning? and what are we doing about that learning?

Using a variety of data sets in one focused output, can help us better understand potential causes and effects of situations, so that data is not seen in isolation, and it can assist the pick-up of cause-and-effect correlations. It is about providing us with a rounded and balanced view of intelligence across the authority.

In addition to the information gathered in the DPAs, we include other sources of information such as, Annual Equality Reports, the Annual Governance Statement, Complaints data, The Local Authority Social Services Annual Reports, evidence from inspection and regulatory sources, including reports from Estyn, Audit Wales, and Care Inspectorate Wales, and other public interest reports where appropriate, although this list is not exhaustive.

What we have learned from previous years reporting, is that we have a very large pool of evidence around how we are performing and publishing all that data would be difficult to make such a large document accessible. This document seeks to address that issue, by providing a high-level summary statement that assesses our performance the from intelligence gathered through our internal monitoring and assessments.

Section 4: Monitoring Progress

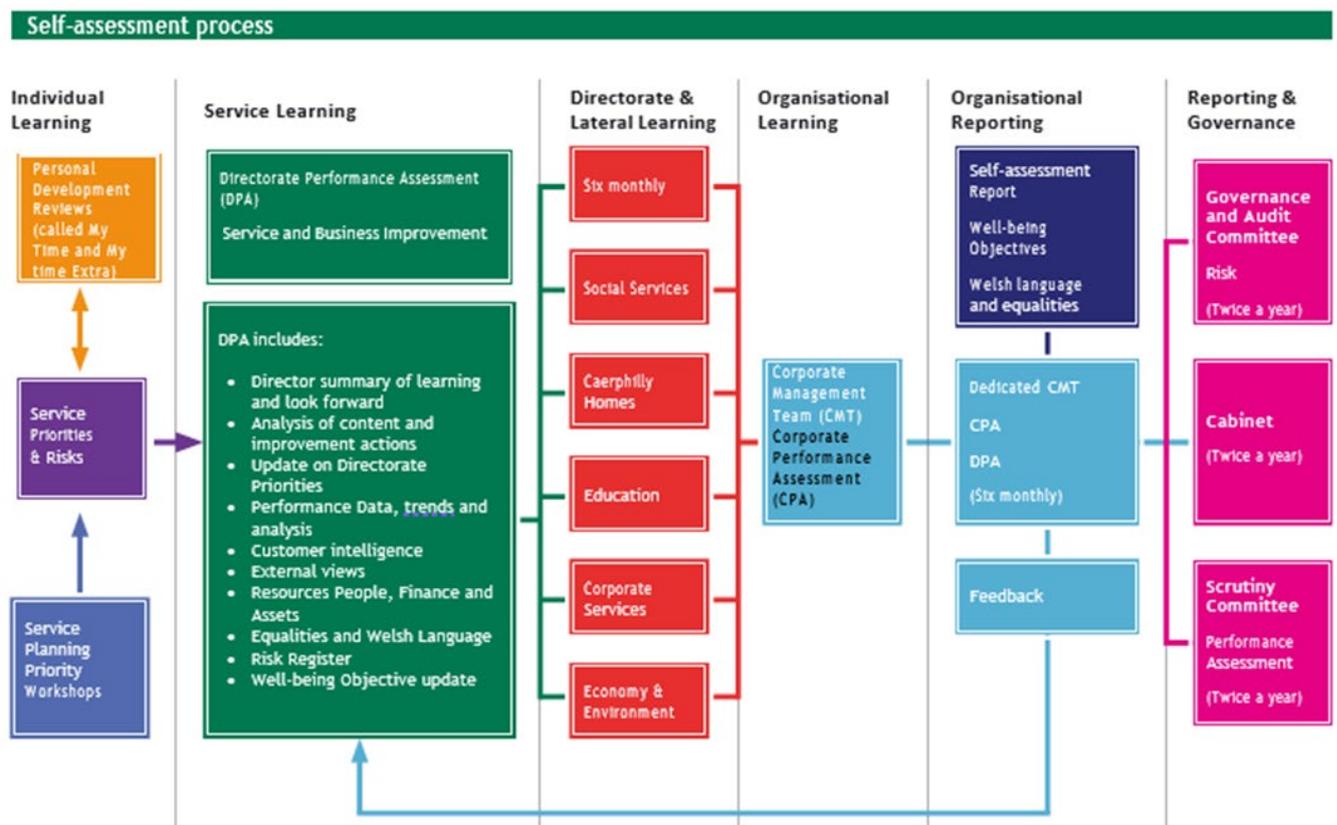
We make a draft of our self-assessment report available to our Governance and Audit committee. The committee must review the draft report and may make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or action.

The Governance and Audit function is to gain assurance that processes are in place and are effective. They can challenge and suggest changes to the conclusions, for example if they believe there is further learning that should have been included.

They can also suggest different actions to address an area of improvement and review if these are the right actions for effectiveness. Governance and Audit committee can also refer items to the councils other Scrutiny's if they believe an area requires a more detailed look.

The Councils Self-Assessment went it's to Governance and Audit Committee for their review and the Committee endorsed the Council's Self-Assessment Report on 11 October 2022 in accordance with part 6, section 91 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2020.

The graph below shows the system of which most of our information flows through to inform the high-level self-assessment and how actions to take forward within our self-assessment will be monitored.



Section 5: Our Key Learning from 2021/22

Corporate Planning

The Council's current Corporate Plan 2018-2023 concludes next year and as such, work is underway to develop a replacement plan for the period 2023-2028. As a 5-year plan, the Council will be looking to the longer term, asking what will make a difference, and conducting consultation activities to establish what matters to our residents, as a basis of the new plan.

Progress reported against the Council's current six Well-being Objectives over the last twelve months summarises a judgement below:

Well-being Objective	Summative Judgement
1. Improve education opportunities for all	Progressing well
2. Enabling employment	Progressing well
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	Progressing well
4. Promote a modern, integrated, and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity, and minimizes the adverse impacts on the environment	Progressing well
5. Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	Progressing well
6. Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being	Progressing well

The full report of progress can be seen on part 2 of this Self-Assessment (page 17).

In addition to progressing the Council's 6 Well-being Objectives, the Council has continued to respond to the significant workforce and community challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, dealt with the emerging humanitarian crisis associated with the Ukraine War, driven forward an ambitious transformation programme, as well as undertaking considerable work to ensure that it meets all relevant legislative requirements.

This legislative work has seen the Council undertake

- the preparatory work for the implementation of the new Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
- the publication of a new Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 as required by standards 145 and 146 of the Welsh Language Standards (No1) Regulations 2015
- the publication of our Strategic Equality Plan 2021 to 2024 under the Equality Act (Wales) Regulations 2011
- the publication of the Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report under current legislation and in compliance with Standard 158
- the Annual Performance Assessment of our agreed Well-being Objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- the preparation of a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 under Section 84 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 that complies with The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019 and The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020
- the publication of an Annual Monitoring Report for the Local Development Plan (including the Annual Community Infrastructure Levy Report) to comply with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the LDP (Wales) Regulations 2005, the Strategic Environment Assessment Directive, and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010
- the submission of the 2020/21 Financial Accounts to the Auditor General by 30 November 2021 in accordance with current Welsh Government guidance

The Council has also been heavily involved in developing its partnership working arrangements, having supported the development of a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) for South-East Wales, as well as the establishment of a Gwent Wide Public Services Board, which Caerphilly supports.

Actions to take forward for corporate planning

Activity	By When
To Implement a new Corporate Plan 2023-2028	May 2023
To Publish a new Public Services Board Well-being Plan and Local Delivery Plan	May 2023

Financial Planning

The Council has a strong financial position, is considered financially resilient, and has maintained a strong liquidity position, assets versus liabilities, for several years.

The Council is prudent and transparent in its budget management approaches, reporting its in-year budget forecasts through Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet, as well as presenting reports on several other key areas including, Usable Reserves, Treasury Management, and the Capital Strategy.

The Council has experienced higher than usual underspends against its budgets in recent years with a corresponding increase in the level of usable reserves. However, these underspends are largely attributable to significant additional grant funding provided to the Council in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, along with temporary reductions in service levels in some areas.

The Council has not yet, developed sufficiently explicit links between its Corporate Plan, Medium-Term Financial Plan and Transformation Programme, but work is now underway with the new Cabinet to align these key strategic documents.

The Council has set aside funding to support the delivery of its Well-being and Place Shaping Programme, which includes, new school builds, the development of respite facilities, improving the quality of the highway infrastructure, and the development of the replacement Welsh Housing Quality Standards Programme. However, there are challenges currently being faced by our public services, in, recruiting to critical internal roles, attracting contactors to undertake works, the

increased costs and delivery timescales for materials across global supply chains, which all impacts upon the pace and cost of these planned investments and deliveries.

The Council has a strong track record of delivering against savings plans. However, the current cost of living crisis, and associated significant increases in inflation, will put unprecedented financial pressures on both the Council and its communities, and it will, therefore, be essential that the Council Transformation Programme delivers at pace and scale.

The recent price increases in household energy bills combined with higher costs for food shopping and the price of fuel, has and will create significant challenges for many residents, especially those already in need. This is likely to translate into additional demand on services resulting in further financial pressures for the Council moving forward.

As part of the process of reviewing and updating the Medium-Term Financial Plan, a review of usable reserves will be undertaken to identify any funding that can be repurposed moving forward. Alongside this, the Council’s Reserves Strategy will also be updated to ensure that it remains fit-for-purpose in the context of the current challenging financial climate.

Actions to take forward for financial planning

Activity	By When
Strengthen the links between the emerging Corporate Plan, the Council’s Medium-Term Financial Plan, and the TeamCaerphilly Transformation Programme	March 2023
Undertake a review of the Council Reserves Strategy	March 2023
Seek to progress the Council’s Well-being and Place Shaping Programme at pace	Ongoing subject to individual Business Case approvals.

Workforce Planning

Workforce planning has grown in significance throughout the pandemic. During the pandemic, the Council found itself regularly redeploying its workforce to support the delivery of critical services and to introduce new services. Beyond the pandemic, we and other public service provider organisations are now facing challenges recruiting to critical roles.

Nationally, salaries have not kept pace with inflation and the cost of living is adversely impacting on many staff. This directly impacts on recruitment and retention, with individuals attracted to jobs where their skills can now attract a higher salary.

The Council has strengthened its approaches to workforce planning, agreeing a Workforce Development Strategy 2021-24 and an Employee Wellbeing Strategy 2021-24. The Council participated in an Audit Wales Workforce Study which has recommended improvements to workforce and succession planning, monitoring and review.

The Council also introduced a staff benefits scheme and has collated a wide range of resources for staff, many of whom are residents, to assist with cost-of-living increases via its web pages.

The Council is reviewing and modernising its recruitment and selection processes and has recently secured the appointment of over thirty apprentices. Work is also underway to promote the Council as an employer of choice, to ensure that applications are received from strong

candidates, specifically seeking out a career with Caerphilly County Borough Council. The approaches being introduced, are also delivering insight and evidence into what works well and what works less well, and this knowledge, will be used to assist the Council with the current workforce challenges relating to recruitment.

The Council has recognised numerous skills gaps across a range of roles and is exploring opportunities to develop and implement strategies to extend the breadth and depth of knowledge across its workforce, as well as embedding modern management and leadership skills.

Across the Council, sickness absence rates have increased to around 14 Full Time Equivalent Days (FTE) per year, and although this mirrors the national picture, will now be subject to a review as noted in the action box below.

The pressures on workforce do not end there. The impact of increased demand for NHS services, for example, is directly impacting the level of resources that Council needs to provide for Domiciliary Care. A review of unscheduled care is taking place by Audit Wales.

Welsh Government’s new Programme for Government is also placing further pressures on resources that are already stretched. Helpfully, Welsh Government is seeking to engage Local Government with a view to understanding, and potentially removing unnecessary bureaucratic burdens and barriers. This is welcomed.

Actions to take forward for workforce planning

Activity	By When
Deliver the Workforce Development Strategy 2021–24 Action Plan	2024
Deliver the Employee Wellbeing Strategy 2021–24 Action Plan	2024
Review and modernise the recruitment process	Autumn 2023
Embed workforce planning across the organisation	Autumn 2023
Embed annual apprenticeship recruitment	Ongoing
Embed and formalise agile working practices	Early 2023
Review our Human Resource Policies relating to agile working	Early 2023

Procurement

Over this reporting period, our Procurement Team have progressed several significant programmes of work. The team have put in place a Social Value Policy, which aims to gain additional community benefits, through use of the Council’s third party spend, using a suite of Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) which have been formally adopted via the Social Value Portal. The work of the Procurement Team is supported by the Supplier Relationship Officers who support small and medium businesses and the wider foundational economy in bidding for business, which, in turn, strengthens our local supply chain and economic growth.

In addition, we continue to be actively involved with a National TOMs Framework for Wales through the Welsh Local Government Association, supported by the National Social Value Taskforce Wales (NSVT Wales), which is a stakeholder forum comprising of public sector bodies including Welsh Government (Community Benefits Team), The Future Generations Commissioner, Transport for Wales, as well as a number of other Councils and Housing Associations.

The purpose of TOMS has been designed to help measure and maximise the social value created through the delivery of services across the 7 Well-being Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and importantly, allows organisations to measure and report value created as a financial contribution to society.

The Council has continued as the procurement lead for Welsh Governments EdTech Programme. The EdTech Programme delivers the supporting connectivity, in-school infrastructure, cloud services, digital resources, and classroom skills to support the Curriculum for Wales, online safety, and cyber resilience. Caerphilly has led the £100 million plus programme of investment and has secured significant value for local authorities and schools across Wales through innovative procurement practice.

Challenges this year have included changes to the supply chain which has seen rising costs of building and infrastructure materials. The availability of contractors, material shortages and cost increases are having a significant impact on the ability of the Council to progress with key infrastructure development and building projects. Contractors are increasingly declining to submit tenders. When submissions are received, costs are often above planned budget which requires further work to bridge the gap. Where developments rely on grants, the knock-on effect is often a resubmission to the funding body which can add to further delays.

All supply chains are currently experiencing significant price pressures due to the economic challenges across the world, such as, the war in Ukraine, COVID-19 pandemic, energy price escalations and Brexit. These pressures will be long lived and will impact our ability to deliver key projects including construction for the near future. Going forward, procurement will require flexibility within contracts to deal with such situations as they become more prevalent.

Actions to take forward for procurement

Activity	By When
To promote our Social Value Policy, publicising and raising awareness of embedding social value across our third party spend to gain benefits for our community from our spending power and to report on the outcomes.	2023
To deploy the changes in procurement legislation as part of procurement reform agenda and the Social Partnership and Procurement Bills.	2023-2024

Assets

The Council continues to operate agile or modern working methods across a large proportion of its office-based workforce. This has been achieved through the prevalence of mobile access devices such as laptops and mobile phones, the flexibility of supporting policies as well as the availability of technology such as virtual meeting solutions like Microsoft Teams and Civico.

As part of our post recovery work from the pandemic and the progression of agile working approaches, the Council has learned that a number of buildings currently in our portfolio, are no longer required. Daily occupancy at the Council’s main administrative building, Ty Penallta, has been at around 20 percent for the last two years. A recent capacity planning exercise that built in future needs, raises this number no higher than around 45 percent. As the exercise has also indicated surplus capacity at several of the Council’s buildings, there is a clear opportunity to rationalise the Council’s estate, and reduce associated expenditure such as rent, heating and lighting. An Agile Working Programme continues to develop these approaches.

As part of the Council’s Transformation Programme, the concept of face-to-face services being available to residents through a series of public service Community Hubs, has also been developing. These hubs hold the potential to provide multiple services across multiple providers from a single location, further reducing the number of buildings the Council requires to meet the needs of its residents.

Audit Wales conducted a review called Springing Forward – Managing our Assets. Their summary concluded that the Council should focus on the development of an integrated longer-term asset strategy.

The Council has also adopted a Cloud Strategy which seeks to migrate the Council’s priority IT systems from on-premises hosting and support to cloud hosting and support over the next financial year. This will change the makeup of the Council data centre and will also enable reductions in the Council’s server assets and associated energy and support costs.

The Council has an Asset Management Plan that runs until 2026 and we have recently appointed a new Head of Service for Land and Property, who will help refresh and refine the Council’s approach to managing and using its buildings and offices.

The Council recognises that it needs to now formalise its future assets intentions, as an integrated suite of plans and strategies.

Actions to take forward for key assets

Activity	By When
Develop a longer-term Asset Strategy and assign resources to the delivery of the strategy.	April 2023
Evaluate the benefits of partnership working for a longer-term approach to a single public estate.	December 2022
Introduce agile working policies that support asset management and visa-versa	December 2022
Continue to expand and extend the Cloud Strategy beyond the high priority systems	To be confirmed

Risk Management

The Council has an established Risk Management Process in place. Corporate Risks, which are the most significant risks facing the organisation are captured in the Council’s Corporate Performance Assessment. The risks are formally reviewed by the Corporate Management Team on a routine basis and the Corporate Performance Assessment information dashboards is reviewed by Cabinet on a six-monthly basis.

Underpinning the Corporate Risks are a set of Directorate Risks. These are identified and monitored through the Directorate Performance Assessments, which are periodically reviewed by Directorate Management Teams on a quarterly basis, and during 2021/22 were also subject to review through numerous Scrutiny Committees.

The Council’s new Governance and Audit Committee also monitor the Corporate Risk Register.

The Council is in the process of revising the structure of its Corporate Risk Register and Directorate Risk Registers, with an emphasis on linking to the replacement Corporate Plan. This will improve the overall accessibility of information and ensure that mitigating actions are captured, whilst monitoring their levels of impacts and likelihood of occurrences, securing appropriate risk level controls through reviews.

The Council finalised a revised and new Risk Management Strategy in January 2022 with new guidance approved by our Governance and Audit Committee. The guidance is operational for services, to help identify, manage, and report on risks. However, risk management is a cyclical and ongoing process, so the new Risk Frameworks, the Strategy and Guidance, will have to be updated to reflect any improvements as required through the decision-making processes during the Autumn of 2022.

The Council used to deliver risk management training as part of business as usual, but unfortunately, the pandemic put a temporary pause on this. However, this now needs to be reinstated specifically for our new elected Council Members and Administration. During this time, much recruitment was often online, and new team members often worked remotely, so the Council will provide more training and awareness raising of the council's financial regulations, decision making process, constitution, and other areas of governance, to help and ensure our employees understand how governance works. This work will take place as part of our programme of Corporate Reviews.

Actions to take forward for risk management

Activity	By When
Review the Corporate Risk Register and ensure the process allows for ease of connection between the directorates and high-level risks including the promotion of how to raise risks.	April 2023
Finalise and submit for adoption, the revised Risk Management Strategy and new Risk Framework following a review of the risks processes.	July 2023
Training Elected Members in risk management, processes, and ways to scrutinise them, to gain assurance of good governance and controls.	September – Dec 2023

Performance Management

The Council has a multitude of effective performance management arrangements in place, which helps it monitor, report, and scrutinise performance across such matters as

- progress against Council priorities and strategic objectives
- performance against key indicators
- resource management, including people, finance, and other assets
- customer insight, including complaints and compliments
- and risk management

Our Performance Framework, consists of a Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) Dashboard, complimented by a series of Directorate Performance Assessments (DPAs) Dashboards. A Dashboard is a visual way of showing different data and information.

These are all regularly reviewed by the Directorate Management Teams, Corporate Management Teams, Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet.

These frameworks, provide a more focused and collective insight, with better intelligence and learning, which helps inform this overall self-assessment. Recent reporting improvements have helped refine and better inform our self-assessment process, with a specific focus on evaluating, what has gone well, and what has not gone so well. Subsequently, enabling and developing improved learning opportunities and agreeing more informed actions to drive ongoing improvement.

With the new intake of Elected Members following the Local Government election in May 2022, the Council will now train and help develop those new members, in order to equip them to engage with and challenge the presented performance information. It is likely that this will centre on the Corporate Performance Assessment Dashboard with an all-member scrutiny being developed to support that broader challenge.

The new Corporate Plan forthcoming will be developed over the coming months, and it will include a new set of Well-being Objectives that will be derived from the Corporate Performance Assessment Dashboard findings, and feedback from other consultations and engagements, providing an ongoing focus to address community needs, whilst also providing an opportunity for monitoring of progress built into the supporting infrastructure.

The Council also intends to improve its data collection and data analysis capabilities, and as a result, has embarked on a digital programme that expands the use of various Microsoft platforms and tools, to build and show data in a way, which makes it easier to understand. This is a medium-term project of up to three years, with numerous pilot exercises already started which may improve data transfer, data automation, and data reporting, which can be replicated across the organisation.

Actions to take forward from performance management

Activity	By When
Introduce a new Corporate Plan and embed into Performance Frameworks	July 2023
Train and equip Members to engage with the Corporate Performance Assessment and challenge performance via Joint Scrutiny	2022-2023
Further develop and streamline the collection, processing, analysis and reporting of data, using improved Microsoft digital platforms and tools throughout the organisation.	2022-2024

Section 6: Other Key Council Health Checks



Equalities and Welsh Language

The Council continues to deliver against the actions set in the [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024](#), focussing on making services as accessible as possible and to engage more with our residents.

The Council developed an [Integrated Impact Assessment Template](#) in April 2021, in accordance with the Socio-economic Duty. This has helped ensure that services understand and consider the impact any proposals have on protected characteristics, the Welsh language, the Socio-economic Duty, and the Future Generations Act. By linking the assessment to the reports going forward for a decision, it ensures that decision-makers are well informed and able to understand the impacts of any transparent when it comes to our decision-making. However, the Council will benefit from providing further support to Elected Members in understanding the purpose of impact assessments and to ensure that they are adequately scrutinised as part of the decision-making process.

The Council has integrated equalities and Welsh language into the Directorate Performance Assessments (DPAs) so that when reporting on progress by directorate, there is an integrated view of service delivery.

The [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-2022](#) showed that we received one Welsh Language complaint during this financial year. The complaint raised a number of issues, the complaint could not be dealt with in Welsh by telephone, the complaints webpage only provides an email address as contact details and the Chatbot does not work properly on the website. The Council is addressing the points raised.

The Council reviewed and updated its [Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022](#) and this can be viewed on the website along with all supporting documentation.

There was a slight increase in the number of Welsh speaking staff recorded on our HR system for 2021-2022 across all 4 directorates, however, a significant dip in the number of staff learning Welsh was recorded with only 35 registered. This is the lowest figure the Council have recorded since it began collecting this data back in 2001.

There is some work that needs to be done here, especially at a time when having staff with Welsh Language skills is so important to deliver bilingual services. Following the Commissioner's annual audit, the Council is now addressing a number of non-compliance issues. The Council's recruitment process was a particular focus with the Commissioner requiring an action plan, which you can see in our annual report. [welsh-language-standards-annual-report-2021-22](#)

It is evident from the content of the report that there has been some progress during 2021-2022. Over the next 12 months the Council will be ensuring services are being delivered in line with the Welsh Language Standards. The Council will also work with service areas to identify and address any Welsh Language training or Welsh Language skills requirements to deliver services.



Decarbonisation

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and approved a Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan in November 2020, setting the target of being Net Carbon Zero by 2030. This strategy provides high level direction with 122 actions in the action plan identifying specific work across all parts of the organisation. Despite making steady progress, the Council recognised in 2021, to push this agenda forward with the speed required, that dedicated additional resources would be needed. Specific decarbonisation budgets will need to be agreed and a Decarbonisation Team has been appointed which should be fully operational by the end of the calendar year.

In line with Welsh Government requirements, the Council has calculated and submitted its baseline carbon emissions for 2020/2021. This has provided vital knowledge and understanding of our emissions and has enabled a focus on those areas that are responsible for our most significant emissions. This new learning will influence the priorities given to various actions in the action plan

The Council is working on some significant projects to help achieve its decarbonisation objectives. These include the development of a 20MW solar farm in the south of the county borough. This, when operational, will provide enough electricity to power around 6,000 homes.

The Council also has an ambitious programme to decarbonise our vehicle fleet. This is currently focussing on reducing vehicle numbers and reviewing smaller vehicles, where there are proven electric alternatives. At the same time, the Council has the necessary charging infrastructure required to support vehicles transitioning to ultra-low emission alternatives.

It is clear from this work and other decarbonisation projects that the Council must increase the capacity and technical knowledge of decarbonisation, renewable energy, and climate change across the authority. As a result, it is planning significant training and support for officers across the organisation to enable them to play a full part in this priority area.



Consultation and Engagement

The Council is committed to ensuring high quality, citizen focussed services for the communities that comprise our county borough and effective engagement is central to the Council's decision-making processes. Caerphilly's Consultation and Engagement Framework sets out the approach for a common understanding to further improve engagement.

[TeamCaerphilly BETTER TOGETHER Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025](#)

The Council needs to ensure that it better engages with its communities, strengthening relationships and working together, to design and deliver services that meet the needs of its residents. To do this a number of actions have been identified and put in place.

The challenges of the pandemic have propelled the Council into taking a more creative approach to engaging with communities. It has adopted a range of digital engagement mechanisms whilst still ensuring that those who are not digitally enabled can easily get involved if they so wish.

Caerphilly is in the process of adopting a new platform that will allow it to deliver a range of methods to engage online including discussion forums, surveys, polling, Q&A tools etc. In 2021/22 the Council became organisational members of the Coproduction Network for Wales, which reinforces the Council's commitment to effective engagement with our various stakeholder groups.

Caerphilly is working to align and streamline its strategic engagement and consultation activities and to take a more coordinated approach in the sharing of data outcomes from these.

For example. The proposed corporate Well-being Objectives, Public Service Board Well-being Plan, and resident feedback from the biennial far-reaching residents survey.

The Council has set up an internal working group, with representatives from across the organisation, to audit skills, share examples of good practice, map 'touch points' with various stakeholder groups and provide consultation/engagement training.

Caerphilly also launched a Community Empowerment Fund in direct response to resident feedback, which suggested communities would benefit from a local, ward-based fund to empower communities to undertake sustainable community projects to meet local need. The role of elected members is crucial to this process and the fund has so far (since its launch in September 2021) seen over 100 local community projects supported.

Team Caerphilly

BETTER TOGETHER

Part 2: Well-being Objective Performance Report 2021-22



Part 2: Well-being Objective Performance Report 2021/22

Section 7: Introduction

We have a five-year Plan 2018-2023 which has six Well-being Objectives. They are:

- WBO 1: Improve education opportunities for all
- WBO 2: Enabling employment
- WBO 3: Address the supply, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's health and well-being
- WBO 4: Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment
- WBO 5: Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- WBO 6: Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

The objectives are areas we want to improve upon based on what you told us mattered to you and your well-being. They are how we contribute to making the environmental, social and well-being of our communities better.

We are a large organisation, and we provide a range of services from cradle to grave to our [circa](#) 180,000 residents of the borough. As you can imagine this means there is a lot of activity to be reported on, so in this annual report we highlight to the reader some of the main areas where we think we have performed well, where we need to improve, and what difference we are making. We also tell you what we will focus on delivering for the last year of the five-year Plan.

This report tells you how we have performed in delivering our Well-being Objectives in year **four** of the five-year Plan.

You can find more detail and background to the Well-being Objectives in the Corporate Plan (2018 to 2023) at the link [Caerphilly - Caerphilly County Borough](#)

We would welcome your feedback and opinions and if there is any further content you would like to know about. You can find contact details at the back of this document on page 44.

Section 8: Annual Report on the Well-being Objectives 2021/22



Well-being Objective 1 – Improve Education Opportunities for All

What went well this year

Last year we delivered many successes, despite the ongoing challenges presented by pupil and staff absence as a result of Covid. We continue to deliver during challenging times. The collective performance of all involved has been remarkable.

We initiated an independent external review of our Education Strategy, Shared Ambitions, providing an external check and assurance that we are on the right track with our improvement journey. The outcome of this review was shared with Scrutiny and Cabinet in the summer of 2022.

Reducing the impact of poverty has an increasing urgency particularly in Early Years, so we introduced a new Early Years Model in April 2021 with the purpose of ensuring access to support, irrespective of postcode. It has been piloted with many partners such as midwifery, health visiting, childcare, and schools. It has supported more vulnerable families across the borough than ever before with the benefits including improved child development, speech, language and behaviour. Anxiety has reduced and families are beginning to feel more resilient.

There is also a new Early Years and Childcare website offering a range of support tools for families. The Early Years model includes midwifery who have had capacity issues over the last years, and they are committed to moving forward with the development of an app to share information from the Local Authority and Health Board to families during their pregnancy. A new website has also been developed for post-16 learners, so that they can access the range of support.

There is a strong focus on raising standards of achievement, which is important to maintain in the light of disruption in learning. Meetings to support and challenge schools as appropriate, have continued to take place and schools have been reviewed and revisited by Estyn in the last year. Two out of the three schools in the category of Significant Improvement have now been removed, with the report on the third school due to be published [shortly](#). In addition, all three schools previously under Estyn review have made sufficient progress to be removed from follow-up monitoring. We have no schools in a statutory category.

We worked closely with the Regional Education Consortia, supporting schools to increase attendance and to prepare for the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales, and the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Act in the coming year.

We, and the Education Achievement Service, have introduced a new multi-agency 'Team Around the School' protocol so that additional support for schools can be co-ordinated wherever necessary.

Some of our pupils who are unable to follow a traditional attainment path have benefitted from a broader range of choice this year as well as accessing appropriate formal and informal qualifications.

Safeguarding processes continue to be prioritised and implemented, particularly where pupils are identified as vulnerable. Risk assessed home visits have been a regular feature and face to face provision at schools and settings was well attended. Well-being sessions were increased, and good relationships with staff allowed pupils to voice concerns and anxieties. Safeguarding audits have re-started and training sessions have met timescales.

Digitally, many services were developed to give more online support as well as in-person to offer different ways to help children, young people and families. This gave a wider reach by targeting individual support to those who most need it. The Welsh Government EdTech initiative provided a big investment in IT and digital equipment for schools.

As a result of the introduction of remote learning, digital skills have developed rapidly in some areas. The EdTech Programme is an investment by Welsh Government to support the transformation of digital infrastructure in schools and has provided learners with the equipment needed to engage successfully with remote learning, and many benefits have been identified. These will be considered as schools and settings settle into a face-to-face environment, but also, will continue to enhance learning through remote learning and recorded lessons.

Libraries remain committed to its spending on children and young adult stock items to support education and reading for pleasure and fully support the Welsh language and culture reflected by its richness and variety of library stock including e-Books and e-audiobooks.

Did you know?

Library Services including computer use, remain free for children and young adults and libraries have child-friendly spaces that cover an age range from birth to teenage. Children under 16 do not pay fines on overdue items and printing documents for homework remains free at all library sites.



During the Covid-19 closures, Library Services continued to support education and learning, offering alternative library services: Order and Collect, LibraryLink Home Delivery and browsing by appointment. Digital visits were arranged by Community Librarians to schools reminding children of the library service.

A total of 98% of library staff have completed Tier 2 Adult and Children Safeguarding training, to support vulnerable adults and children and signpost accordingly.

We are taking positive action by transforming the education estate, through investing in a range of multi-million pound improvement programmes to school buildings through our jointly funded 'Sustainable Communities for Learning' Programme (previously known as the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme) and other funding streams such as the Welsh Medium Grant. Our aim is to ensure the right schools are in the right place, for both educational and community usage and to manage the number of places in schools in line with local demand. We deliver this in a number of ways, which include refurbishing and upgrading existing buildings, adding extensions, or replacing school buildings. We have a number of projects in progress and being developed which include a range of diverse and exciting improvements, including our plans for our first Net Zero Carbon School to replace the existing Plasyfelin Primary School and a new build replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon Welsh Medium Primary School.

What did not go well and what have we learned

Ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic created barriers to progress, some of which were significant. Schools reported high pupil absence and increased persistent absenteeism and pupils have been unsettled and anxious, particularly those taking examinations. The lack of routine, together with anxiety, have resulted in an increase of challenging behaviour, particularly in Secondary Schools and exclusions have risen.

Despite having access to additional funding, it has often been difficult to recruit to new posts and there have been capacity issues in all service areas, which has, in turn, impacted upon programme deliveries and their timescales.

The Adult Community Learning Team have significantly increased their online delivery, but face to face courses/classes are slow to return to pre-Covid numbers. We are actively promoting the service and working with key partners to target participants.

Our number of young people not in employment, education or training increased to 2.2% (41 people out of a group of 1888) however given the impact of the pandemic, this is still low.

Whilst our Sustainable Communities for Learning programme has progressed a number of school building projects such as extensions to schools and replacing older buildings, the process is complex and must follow specific steps that are set out in law. This means that it can take a long time before starting a specific project and when a project reaches the stage of going to the market for a supplier, we are finding that external influencing market factors (such as the war in Ukraine) are impacting the tendering process where costs can be significantly higher than the original budget allocated. We are aware of these risks and are actively monitoring them to prevent any overall impact on the programme.

Throughout this year, we have learned how important teamwork and staff morale is. For example, many staff across the Council supported Education to deliver free school meals to identified families. We have also had to appreciate the importance of learner well-being and being patient and innovative in how some pupils resume formal learning. We have taken the opportunity to review our data systems so that transfer of information is more effective.

What difference did we make

In Early Years work, there are around 1400 children aged 0-7 being supported with individual support at any one time across the borough. The numbers supported through Flying Start Outreach (outside of postcode area) has increased from 50 in previous years to 826 in 2021/22. This is making a difference to vulnerable families regardless of postcode.

School leaders tell us they feel very supported by the Local Authority this year, as they were provided with helplines and coaching programmes, to help build their resilience. Despite the disruption, there were relatively few class closures.

School leaders also valued the support we provided during the pandemic period on health and safety advice, HR, blended learning, finance and support for vulnerable learners and families.

Both Library Services and Adult Community learning are extremely valued by our communities and the successful transformation grant bid at Rhymney Library and the creation of the Idris Davies Learning Hub will act as a pilot for future services.

The support for attendance helped to increase the percentages of attendance, and the most vulnerable pupils have been able to attend face-to-face sessions throughout. We also maximised

opportunities to deliver professional learning remotely. This meant a higher level of engagement in all meetings, particularly with Governors.

A number of projects have progressed which have improved the learning environment this year. We have 5 proposals under the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme at various stages of progression, one proposal for the enlargement and relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon is now at build stage having progressed successfully through the planning application process.

Proposals for our exciting new replacement of Plasyfelin Primary School on the existing school site which will be our first Net Zero Carbon School is at the design stage along with our proposal to amalgamate Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School to form a new Primary school on the existing Llanfabon Infants School site and our expansion plans for Trinity Fields Special School and Resource Centre. We are establishing a new Centre for Vulnerable Learners (Pupil Referral Unit) on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School site which is currently at Pre-Planning Application stage and out to planning consultation. Plans for the next phase of our programme are currently being created, which will be outlined in more detail throughout 2023.

Investment into Welsh Medium was strong in the borough and the Welsh Medium Capital Grant in region of £6.8 million is progressing improvement and expansion works at five Welsh Medium Schools.

The Athletics Hub, located at Rhiw Syr Dafydd Primary School was completed consisting of a 6 lane 300 metre track and provision for sprint and field events. This £755k investment is now available for bookings for educational and recreational use.

A Capital Maintenance Grant (Welsh Government £10.8M Grant and Local Authority £1.4M Grant) Investment into schools, continues to be used for ongoing improvements works, which ensures ongoing maintenance and improvement of our existing physical buildings from a Structural, Health and Safety and Decarbonisation perspective as well as supporting curriculum development.

Our focus for the future

Officers working across the Local Authority work with partners to regularly evaluate performance with an ongoing focus on learner provision and progress.

A revised education strategy is required, not only to address ongoing issues, but to re-set ambition and deal with the challenges which are long lasting and require key milestones that are effective and meet the needs of all learners. This process has led us to the following areas to focus on in the future:

- ✚ Continue to provide robust approaches to safeguarding of children and young people based on emerging needs and demands as an outcome of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ✚ Equip leaders with the skills to have a significant impact on progress, attainment and provision and wellbeing.
- ✚ Ensure the effective implementation of Curriculum for Wales and ALN Act.
- ✚ Accelerate the progress of pupils who receive education outside a mainstream setting (EOTAS/EHE)
- ✚ Reduce the number of young people post-16 without access to education, employment or training (NEETS).
- ✚ Improve pupil attendance and reduce exclusions, with particular focus on vulnerable groups.
- ✚ Further improve provision and support for young people (post-16)
- ✚ Close the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty.

- ✚ Improve digital skills for all learners.
- ✚ Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in Welsh medium by 2031
- ✚ Support pupil wellbeing by improving attitudes to healthy food choices and active fitness
- ✚ Ensure the most vulnerable families including those in poverty, can access support to give their child the best start to their early years.
- ✚ Through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme ensure that the County Borough provides sufficient school places to meet demand as well as upgrading/replacing school accommodation, as appropriate, so that schools are fit for purpose in the 21st century with a focus on working towards Net Zero buildings in line with Carbon reduction commitments.
- ✚ Improve more efficient use of the education estate by both schools and the wider community.
- ✚ Participate in a national Children and Young People Survey and use the results of the next satisfaction survey to inform our services for Libraries (planned for 2022).



Well-being Objective 2 – Enabling Employment

What went well this year

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, 2021/22 has been another challenging year of the direct delivery of employment support and enabling employment within Caerphilly.

Whilst employment opportunities themselves have improved significantly, engagement of eligible unemployed people within the borough has proved difficult. This is partly a legacy of the pandemic, where many of the complex barriers to gaining employment that people face, (for example those with physical or mental health issues), were directly exacerbated by the pandemic and have resulted in many potential participants moving further away from the labour market. In addition, lockdowns, and general restrictions on public life throughout the pandemic may have contributed to decreased motivation to find work, within communities which may already have been experiencing cycles of worklessness and deprivation.

Nevertheless, there has also been many positive developments to enabling employment on a more general scale, and from the opportunities developed within the Council. For example, performance in relation to employment of young people was positive, the Council has provided a range of new employment opportunities with placements and apprenticeships. The Kickstart Programme was rolled out with success and there have also been positive developments in relation to procurement, housing stock investment and the Cardiff City Regional Deal alignment.

255 participants have been supported into employment across the Communities for Work (CfW) and Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) Programmes.

There were ongoing positive outcomes for the 16-24 age group. Engagement of young people was slightly under target of 96 for the year, with 80 achieved. We supported 73 young people into employment, this significantly exceeded the target of 48. There was a 62% “Into Employment” conversion rate (as an average across all programmes). The conversion rate refers to the percentage of those engaged that then gained employment, so although we didn’t reach our target for overall engagements, the ability to move people into employment once they are engaged is strong.

Employment programmes also continued to provide excellent support for customers with disabilities and work limiting health conditions. In particular, the CfW+ programme was able to increase the proportion of customers with a disability or work limiting health condition that were supported into employment, with 28% (45 people) of job entries relating to participants with either a disability or work limiting health condition.

We were allocated an additional £558k from the Young Person’s Guarantee (YPG) Fund to expand the Communities for Work Plus programme. This additional funding allowed us to retain experienced and knowledgeable staff who were at risk due to the ending of their original funding streams.

We have seen a surge in engagement activity within the last quarter of the current year, because of lessening restrictions. This resulted in our teams significantly increasing their presence in local communities, with mentors now able to offer, and encouraging face-to-face contact with all customers. After a difficult period, this has been an extremely positive development and the benefits have been felt as referrals have slowly begun to grow again. We are now operating

several weekly outreach sessions or drop-ins around the Borough, in addition to using staff as Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) to engage more effectively with internal and external partners. We continue to use social media to expand our reach and are planning larger scale community events for the coming year.

We have supported local employers to grow by use of our Employment Support Programmes. Employers we have supported locally include Lovells, Kier Construction, QDL, Surf the Shop, and Transcend. This has included both placements and employment opportunities. An example of this, is that we worked closely with a local contractor for the Council to match job opportunities to participants accessing the employment support programmes. The council's Academy Mentor was able to offer additional support to applicants to ensure their progression into these opportunities, for example by supporting them to access additional qualifications and collate the necessary paperwork to enable them to start in the role. In one example, this additional support resulted in successful full-time employment.

The Caerphilly Academy pilot is also now beginning to deliver as intended prior to the onset of the pandemic, with individuals supported into Kickstart positions, additional paid placements, and apprenticeships, with the support of the Academy Mentor proving central to the success and retention of these placements in many cases.

There were eight unemployed young people who successfully gained employment through the Kickstart Scheme. We supported the scheme by increasing the wage offered by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) from National Minimum Wage to Foundation Living Wage. The Academy Team worked closely with departments to create job roles that would allow the successful applicant to gain the much-needed experience and knowledge to start a career in their chosen field. We developed a smooth joining process for the successful applicants and introduced them to their future mentor at interview stage, so the relationship could continue to be developed.

Social Value is a broad term used to describe social, environmental, or economic impacts (or benefits) of actions we take, for example using our 'purchasing power' to work with those we purchase from to recruit apprentices, where relevant to the purchase

Procurement (purchasing) is an important way to provide wider benefits to the community and add 'social value' when we purchase. We have put in place a 'Social Value Policy to increase our contribution in this area.

We have put in place a way to measure value called TOMS (Themes, Outcomes and Measures July 21) which helps us apply a consistent approach to measuring and reporting social value and community benefits and includes a number of outcomes such as, but not limited to, creating training, apprenticeships and employment opportunities in the use of local supply chains

We have included TOMs in sixteen procurement procedures this year to generate opportunities for employment and will be able to report on specifically as to what difference this has made next year.

An Innovative Housing Programme (IHP) is a Welsh Government (part) funded initiative, with a focus of Modern Methods of Construction to enable the building of new homes, which is currently in its 4th year, but 1st year for Caerphilly Homes, following the completion of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) funded programme in 2021/22.

A Plot shop was approved in principle as part of the City Deal. This is a new initiative adopted by some Councils, providing opportunities, and making it easier to access land and expert advice, pioneering custom and self-build housing, as a mainstream choice for aspiring homeowners.

A Housing Investment Fund Principle was agreed, and as such we have submitted three schemes for consideration, with one scheme approved on the reserve list, two schemes approved to progress and one of these now progressing to planning application stage

The Regional Employment Framework will be submitted to the Shared Prosperity Fund. This will follow on from the Community Renewal Fund pilot which is currently being delivered within the 2022/23 year; and should provide maintained employment support offer for the council following the ending of the of European Social Funded Projects in March 2023.

What did not go well and what have we learned

In the latter part of the year, our Employment Programmes suffered from a significant drop in referrals due to the introduction of UK-wide DWP Programmes Job Entry Targeted Support (JETs) and Restart, which have taken referrals away from our programmes, whereby there is pressure on work coaches to refer to the DWP programmes as a first option. This drop in referrals has led to a subsequent and frustrating decrease in outcomes over the year; However, with the easing of restrictions in recent months we have been able to return to significantly increased levels of community outreach and face-to-face working, which we hope will produce results of higher referrals in the 2022-23 delivery year.

We have also learned that we need to emphasise the importance for a smooth transition from the past several years Welsh Housing Quality Standards Work Programme, for housing stock improvements, whilst using appropriate employment opportunities, and moving forward into the Caerphilly Homes Housing Strategy and Housing Asset Management Plan (which are both long term programmes) that will require the upkeep of a skilled workforce availabilities.

The learning on the Innovative Housing Programme sites is scheduled to be transferred to the next major new build project at the former Oakdale Comprehensive School and this time, the Council will require Willmott Dixon to provide a Social Value Plan setting out clear objectives and outcomes

What difference did we make

As part of our Housing Stock Investment, we recruited nine apprentices in January 2022 to support our in-house delivery team who have all settled in well and are developing their skills.

We have introduced a range of employment support programmes, such as the Academy and Kick Start Programmes as noted under the 'what went well' section, which has secured employment.

Training pathways (including Construction, Hospitality, Call Centre and Heavy Goods Vehicles) have been delivered, to support the upskilling of local people to meet demand in local businesses, via relationships formed by our Business Liaison Team.

On two of our IHP funded pilot sites, Willmott Dixon recruited two trainees who are both employed full time. They have also contributed to other social value outcomes, such as supporting Trecenydd Community Centre, the Council's Annual Foodbank Initiative and Welsh Government Employment Support Programmes delivered by the Council.

Our focus for the future

- ✚ We will grow our engagement capacity to ensure we are truly reaching the hardest to reach communities. This will become more important to the success of our work programmes, so we reduce reliance on referrals from Jobcentre Plus and engage those people who are reluctant to access mainstream job centre support.
- ✚ Engagement plans for the coming year include growth of our Single Point of Contact (SPOC) network to raise awareness amongst potential referral partners and a return to larger scale events to raise the profile of our employment programmes and the development of an employment “shop” or hub within town centre(s).
- ✚ We will incorporate the new funding from the Young Person’s Guarantee Fund to enable increased engagement of young people in the CfW programmes and effectively close down the European Social Funded (ESF) CfW programme, adhering to guidelines for document retention and financial closedown etc.
- ✚ Develop succession plans to ensure maintenance of staff following the end of the ESF funded CfW programme, working with the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) to access replacement funding and ensure a seamless transition from one programme to the next.
- ✚ To develop an Investment Plan under Shared Prosperity Fund to ensure Employment Support resource (currently funded via ESF) is maintained.
- ✚ Publicise and raise awareness of embedding social value across the Council’s third party spend and become self-sufficient with our understanding and evaluation of social value using the Themes Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) Framework. Feedback from our Supply Chain is positive on the TOM framework as it gives them much more flexibility as to what community benefits they can bring.
- ✚ Continue to learn, develop and better understand TOMs in a ‘live’ environment over time
- ✚ We will require a clear and concise Social Value Plan for all our future Housing developments.
- ✚ We plan to advertise for ten more apprenticeship opportunities in September 2022. Our ability as a Council to offer quality apprenticeship opportunities to local people helps contribute towards the local economy, tackles worklessness and addresses poverty.



Well-being 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

What went well this year

Although, disruption to our day to day working environment continued throughout this period, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions imposed by Welsh Government to protect public health, we have been able to successfully achieve many of our intended outcomes.

We met the Welsh Government target date for ensuring our circa 10,500 tenants' homes met the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, so homes are in a good state of repair; safe and secure; adequately heated, fuel efficient and well insulated.

We enhanced levels of support to help people manage their accommodation and their money and provided financial support and advice to tenants and residents across the borough, mitigating the effects of welfare reform.

One of our Housing Association Partners completed the redevelopment of the former Cwm Ifor Primary School, Penyrheol, creating 17 new homes built to Passivhaus standards.

We exceeded our target for the financial savings that we helped our council tenants find, generating £3,207,624.88 of savings by March 2022.

We and our Housing Associations Partners drew down £14.92M of Welsh Government grant funding to build new affordable homes, an increase on the initial allocation of £2.3M.

The Caerphilly Keys Project continues to play a crucial role in the Council's plan to prevent homelessness by providing access to good quality, affordable accommodation in the private rented sector.

We provided various forms of support to people who were either potentially homeless or homeless including rough sleepers, to secure safe and affordable homes, with access to support services and financial assistance.

We made great progress working in partnership with the Supporting People Team to develop the Housing First Initiative for people with complex needs. This project provides an inclusive approach to helping people obtain safe and secure accommodation with a package of support from a dedicated team.

What did not go well and what have we learned

Limited progress has been made to increase the percentage of social housing stock that has an accessibility code. This is because we are experiencing significant Housing Occupational

Therapist staff vacancies, and this meant we were unable to make satisfactory progress throughout this period.

Due to substantial issues with the availability of contractors and materials, we were unable to process and deliver the amount of grants and loans we intended for Private Sector Homes this year. Additionally, the cost of materials has increased significantly, which has affected the number of private sector homes we were able to support.

Restrictions linked to the pandemic and staff shortages in the Private Sector Housing Team have resulted in a backlog of proactive inspections of Houses of Multiple Occupation. Due to remote working it has proved difficult to provide energy efficiency advice to tenants in their own homes.

Work on a Local Housing Market Assessment started but due to the release of new Welsh Government guidance, the work had to stop and will begin again in 2022 using a newer method. We learnt that we need to be more agile in our approach to everything we do, as it changes rapidly, and we need to build in resilience to our structure and working practices. We also need to improve how we advertise and recruit staff as we have a skills shortage in emerging areas for the business in the future and need to attract talent.

What difference did we make

We completed improvements to the remaining of our 10,660 homes to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, which made our homes both internally and externally of good quality and suitable for the needs of existing and future residents.

We supported over 4,000 council tenants, generating more than £3 million in savings, minimising the effects of welfare reform, and helping people claim the benefits to which they are entitled.

Did you know?

We helped almost 1,000 residents to access a total of £250,000 of winter fuel payments ensuring these residents can afford to heat their homes.

We helped residents to reduce their debt by accessing more than £500,000 of Housing Support Grants, with a further £400,000 of additional income. This has a significant impact on the daily lives of Caerphilly's residents.

We worked with our Housing Association Partners who have been able to provide 62 new and affordable homes throughout the Borough to help alleviate housing need.

We successfully engaged with over 80% of private rented landlords, to raise awareness of the energy efficiency standards, which supported their tenants to save money and increased the amount of environmentally friendly homes within the Borough.

We completed 38 Valley Task Force Grants, bringing long-term empty homes back into use increasing the number of available homes.

We received a £60,000 grant from Welsh Government to improve the living conditions of those in the private rented sector, where properties do not meet the current energy efficiency standards. This has allowed us to provide support to landlords, leading to a better quality of life for their tenants.

We completed over 1,000 minor adaptations and almost 150 major adaptations, alongside a further 105 Disabled Facilities Grants and nine stair lifts, helping residents to remain independent in their own homes.

We assisted 231 elderly and disabled residents by accessing 'Enable Funding' and 'Care & Repair' services to support them to remain at home, increasing their level of independence.

We improved the accessibility of three sheltered schemes, with ramped access to one, automatic doors to another and handrails to a third, enabling residents to live safely and independently.

We facilitated the running of community surgeries in eight different locations across the borough, providing a range of support services, such as, financial help and housing advice and giving residents the chance to access our teams face-to-face.

We received outline planning permission for two Caerphilly Homes led developments. The former Oakdale Secondary School delivering circa 85 new homes and the Ty Darren Older Persons Later Living Scheme in Risca delivering circa 46 new homes.

We had approval from Welsh Government of our five-year Empty Homes Action Plan to assist bringing back into use, empty properties across the Borough.

Our focus for the future

- ✚ Implement a new IT system which will improve the type and level of data we collect, which will improve the services we provide to both tenants and residents.
- ✚ We want a successful implementation of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, which will ensure compliance with new housing laws, making it easier for tenants to rents their homes and ensuring tenants know their rights and responsibilities.
- ✚ Complete an Action Plan in response to the Tenant Satisfaction Survey.
- ✚ Implement a new 'Planned Asset Management Strategy' (PAMS) which will maintain and continue the improvements made to our homes after the completion of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, keeping our homes fit for purpose so that tenants live in safe and secure accommodation.
- ✚ Start on associated work following the response to the consultation of Welsh Housing Quality standard 2023 focusing on decarbonisation of the housing stock by 2035.
- ✚ Introduce a new Local Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan, which will provide the context and actions for the providing housing and housing related services throughout the borough.
- ✚ Complete a new Local Housing Market Assessment, to provide an updated picture of housing need throughout the borough.
- ✚ Submit the 2022/27 Gypsy Traveller Accommodations Assessment to Welsh Government for approval.
- ✚ Provide support with the development of the second Council replacement Local Development Plan.
- ✚ Adopt a Rapid Re-Housing Strategy and ensure that our Common Allocations Policy is reflective of any new priorities, to ensure a reduction in the time people spend in emergency accommodation, preventing accommodation breakdown, repeat presentations and relapses into substance misuse or offending
- ✚ Work with Housing Association Partners to develop and deliver new affordable homes ensuring that we spend the record levels of social housing grant.

- ✚ Support tenants and residents to manage their money, maximising income and reduce fuel poverty by making homes more energy efficient and exploring any available funding
- ✚ We are hoping to achieve full planning permission to create a development of mixed types of homes (affordable homes & market sales) on the former Oakdale Secondary School site.
- ✚ Ty Darren is another site where we are hoping to achieve full planning permission for a Later Living Scheme.



Well-being Objective 4

Promote a modern, integrated, and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity, and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment

What went well this year

We completed a review of the Integrated Network Maps for Active Travel Routes, and the new Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) was approved by Cabinet January 2022 following extensive statutory and public consultation. This now sets the framework for a delivery plan for the next 15 years and formal Welsh Government approval was also received in August 2022

We progressed to Phase 1 of a jointly funded investment package with Welsh Government for Metro plus schemes across the region. The key project for the council within this programme is the Caerphilly Interchange. The Transport Interchange Project will provide Caerphilly with a new landmark, a gateway which welcomes new visitors while providing great facilities for passengers and the community (if we are able to secure the required funding).

Phase 1 is the 'concept design stage' of developments and we have appointed an Architect to develop the concept design. Stakeholder and public consultation will be undertaken as part of the Caerphilly 2035 Plan, to inform the design. The UK Government's Levelling Up Fund is being pursued as that would allow delivery of the new interchange by April 2025. You can find out more about this at [Have Your Say Today - Caerphilly Interchange - Commonplace](#)

A feasibility study for the Central Rhymney Line was commissioned by Transport for Wales and has been completed, the Rhymney line is part of the South Wales Metro Project (2019 to 2024). The final report is expected to identify proposals for which preliminary design options can be developed for the park and ride facilities at Llanbradach and Ystrad Mynach. This would be developed and consulted upon as part of the South Wales Metro programme.

Consideration of the Nelson to Ystrad Mynach passenger services are expected to be reviewed as part of the wider strategic proposals being developed for the south Wales Metro. This line is still currently used as a freight line, transporting coal from the opencast mine in Merthyr Tydfil

Improvements to bus stops in the Mid Valleys and across the county borough area have been substantially delivered in 2021/22 with a further 96 bus stops improved. A funding bid has also been submitted to improve the last group of bus stops (43) during 2022/23, that would complete the Bus Stop Improvement programme for the whole of the county borough.

Despite the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and safety restrictions, Transport for Wales (TfW) continue to progress a detailed design for the Core Valley Lines Transformation Programme, but a revised delivery programme is expected to be confirmed.

Dialogue with Welsh Government and TfW includes both the longer-term aspirations for the Ystrad Mynach to Nelson rail line and the Caerphilly to Newport corridor Metro improvements. Through the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority (CCRTA), Officers are working with Welsh Government to identify future Metro strategic priorities.

The outstanding works for the Ystrad Mynach to Penpedairheol and Cefn Hengoed active travel route (INMC24) has now been completed.

The Experimental schemes for Nelson (one way, footway and cycleway) and Ystrad Mynach (Lewis Street cycleway) delivered in 2020/21 from WG's Sustainable Travel Covid-19 Response Grant, were made permanent.

Virgin Media have continued to accelerate their lightning build throughout Caerphilly borough, where customers will be able to take benefit from the new Gig 1 service – delivering average broadband speeds of 516mbs download (50x faster than the standard UK broadband). BT Openreach continue to get to 25,000 customers ready for service (CRFS). As a result of all programmes across the county borough they are building on 38,500 full fibre connections.

What did not go well and what have we learned

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the country in many ways. Public transport services are still struggling to recover with patronage still significantly below pre-Covid levels. Welsh Government are consulting on their proposals for strategic bus reform. The medium and long-term impact on strategic planning for future transport infrastructure and service improvements remains unclear.

We learnt that protecting a route between Caerphilly to Newport, to potentially allow the reinstatement of a public transport route, is with TfW for consideration as part of their Metro Enhancement Framework. This is a long-term aspiration that will be reviewed as part of the Council's emerging replacement Local Development Plan.

TfW are still developing proposals for a four trains per hour service on the Ebbw Valley Railway that would require significant improvements to Newbridge station, with a view to delivery by 2024. TfW and Network Rail held public drop-in sessions to present their proposals. This includes improvements to Newbridge rail station and dualling of the track.

What difference did we make

The positive and substantial response to the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) consultation demonstrates the appetite for Active Travel improvements across the country borough. The approved ATNM represents the Council's much increased ambition for Active Travel infrastructure and provides a strong foundation for the development of the Council's Active Travel delivery programme. The ATNM consultation has allowed the public to inform us about their issues, requests, concerns, and other matters of consideration.

£2M investment works has been made to the Monmouth to Brecon Canal, relining a section to safeguard its structure. This has now allowed full access for walking and cycling along the Risca footpath-towpath section (Active Travel Routes 176 and 178).

We did a significant amount of resurfacing and improvement work on the A road roundabouts which are our strategic routes. We also made some of the experimental orders for new cycle route sections such as Lewis Steet Ystrad Mynach and Bwl Road Nelson, permanent, and completed a section of the cycle route below the Cwm Calon housing estate in Penallta.

We completed resurfacing and improvement of the Active Travel Route between New Tredegar and Abertysswg.

A number of crossings were identified across the county which did not have appropriate drop kerbs. A total of 87 were installed improving the walkability of the neighbourhoods.

Did you know?

1750 Km of highways were inspected and maintained, and 6,141 Potholes were addressed. 9,887 Highways maintenance and defects were dealt with, and 724 Roads were gritted to maintain traffic flow during inclement weather.

The last phase of the Mid Valley area bus corridor improvements was completed in 2021/22 with the delivery of 96 bus stop improvements with the limited funding award from Welsh Government. Further funding has been sought for 2022/23 to complete the last remaining bus corridor improvement programme for the county borough that will improve accessibility for passengers.

Regular highway network improvements and maintenance continued this year at a cost of £2,937,530, delivered resurfacing 74,995 square meters of highways and surface dressing treatment to 191,874 square meters, during the period between February and October of 2021. We identified 5,008 carriageway potholes and 528 footpath potholes for addressing, 17 severe weather culvert runs, inspections and cleansing, with 49,046 Gullies, emptying and cleansing.

In winter we carried out 86 Winter maintenance runs, to keep our key highways open (covering 28,140 kms of salting, using 4,837 tons of road salt).

Our focus for the future

- ✚ We want to develop and deliver the Active Travel Integrated Network Map programme.
- ✚ Progress the detailed architectural design for Caerphilly Interchange and target the new UK Levelling Up Fund for its delivery by March 2025.
- ✚ Support delivery of the Ebbw Valley Railway with committed improvements ensuring the Council's priorities for Crumlin and Newbridge are considered.
- ✚ Continue to develop the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure for public, taxi and public transport use, with a focus on implementing an on-street charging network.



Well-being Objective 5

Creating a County Borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable development principle within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

What went well this year

We appointed a Food Development Officer and Food Development Assistant Officer towards the end of the financial year, to start tackling of food poverty and insecurity in earnest. The increase in the number of Social Food Organisations helping to support people in food poverty has grown considerably throughout the borough.

We had a successful roll out of the Food Poverty Grant, and this helped us fund groups for such projects as Community growing spaces and the outdoor community fridge. The scope of the grant allowed current social food organisations to develop and improve the services offered to their clients.

Grant funding was awarded quickly and diligently to voluntary groups and social enterprises including the Household Support Fund and the Isolation and Loneliness Grant that supports community groups tackling loneliness in our most deprived communities through innovative and community focused projects.

A successful bid to the Welsh Governments Food Insecurity Grant, helped community organisations to establish locally sought solutions to food insecurity across the county borough.

The opening of a Social Pantry in Risca, a Social Enterprise creating jobs within Ystrad Mynach offering low-cost food and supporting a café to become sustainable and create jobs, are just two of the projects funded and proven to make a real difference.

The launch of the Caerphilly Food Poverty Network took place March 2022, and the network aim, is to bring together food producers, suppliers and community food support groups to network and build links with like-minded people.

We supported the regions food and land-based economy with funding through the UK Governments Community Renewal Fund 'Food4Growth Project', which is a regional project delivered by Torfaen, Monmouthshire County Council and ourselves.

The Healthy Early Years (Hey) Scheme is part of a Welsh Government initiative to give national accreditation to childcare settings, as contributors to children's health and well-being, the scheme continues to encourage positive health behaviours in children from an early age.

As of 31 March 2022, we had 11 childcare settings progressing through Phase 1 of the (Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme) five of which were newly recruited during the past year. This includes food, nutrition, and physical activity. There are 10 settings progressing through Phase 2, which includes encouraging and promoting good mental and emotional health, well-being, safety and hygiene. There are 20 settings on Phase 3, which includes the environment and staff health and well-being. Two settings underwent a successful bi-annual review and achieved re-

accreditation. Virtual training was provided for all settings engaged on the scheme in Staff Health and Well-being.

We provided training for 12 settings on a programme called 'Little Magic Train' which is a movement-based learning platform that allows children to express emotion and be included. Everyone who takes part creates their own masterpiece through their journey. This multi-sensory activity is an ideal springboard for further learning that ranges from dialogic reading to physical literacy using creativity and role-play as the sessions are a bridge between the imaginary and real world. The Gwent wide Gold Standard Healthy Snack Award training was developed and delivered alongside Aneurin Bevan Heath Board Dieticians and a training event held on the 8 July across Gwent assessed and awarded 20 childcare settings the Gold Standard Healthy Snack Award status.

The National Quality Awards for Healthy Schools are still currently suspended; however Public Health Wales (PHW) have asked Local Authorities to submit schools who are ready to achieve the award. Caerphilly has 1 school ready, and they are awaiting dates. This year we have been focussing on PHW Whole School Approach to Mental and Emotional Well-being and six schools took part and completed the pilot scheme.

Did you know?

A report released in December 2021 by Welsh Government and Flytipping Action Wales revealed that Cardiff (301), Newport (59), Carmarthenshire (41) and Caerphilly (40) are the top performing areas for issuing fixed penalty notices to tackle fly-tipping in Wales 2020/21.

Regarding 'Period Dignity' during the last year we have ensured all our schools and community settings have a wide range of environmentally friendly products available. We have provided products to all libraries, allowing all sites to provide the public with a walk-in and collect service. We continue to increase the number of settings throughout the authority to ensure they have a wide selection of products on site. We have also supported some secondary schools with educational workshops.

We introduced a new Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) relating to dog control which included the banning of dogs on marked sports pitches placed in all Council owned parks. Providing a safe and clean area for sports to be played on also contributes to the Sports and Active Recreation Strategy as it encourages healthy lifestyles and supports our residents to be more active, this helps maximise people's health and well-being.

As part of Healthy walks, the survival of our led walking groups following the Covid-19 pandemic is undoubtedly the major success of the year. Coming out of the pandemic it was uncertain whether any of these groups would restart. With Covid risk assessments in place our volunteer led groups tentatively recommenced in May 2021. Our full timetable of walks is now back in place with The Pengam Strollers, Penallta Strollers, Bedwas Strollers, Islwyn Ramblers, Caerphilly Ramblers and Caerphilly Adventure Group all back leading walks.

On the back of our local groups restarting, we were able to deliver the Caerphilly Challenge Series in Rhymney, with 415 entrants attending on the day in one of the first large outdoor events to take place in Wales since February 2020. The day was a tremendous success with all abilities and ages taking part, benefiting their health (physically and mentally) and enjoying the green spaces of Caerphilly. There were 75 volunteers who helped deliver the event and feedback from participants was positive.

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

The Caerphilly Landscape Partnership has continued community engagement activities through close partnership working with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and after a break from Covid, are now taking referrals again. This has followed direct engagement and promotion of the project and its aim of encouraging members to enjoy the landscape on their doorstep, and to experience the health and well-being benefits of walking. There has also been an increase in engagement on the health walks at Lansbury Park following the partnership support work in the area.

ABUHB has delivered walks from Graig y Rhacca with the Rhacca Ramblers and Lansbury Park with the Lansbury Trekkers during the period with our support, with 24 walks led throughout the year to the end of the programme March 2022. Outdoor Emergency First Aid training session and outdoor walk leader training was held so that walkers become certified to lead their own walks to continue the legacy of the project after the funding ends.

In sports and leisure, we upgraded Newbridge Leisure Centre fitness suite to a high-quality community space and targeted investment in our swimming areas focusing on education.

Caerphilly Adventures is a section based in Cwmcarn Forest and provides recreational opportunities for adults and young people to take part in outdoor activities such as hill walking, canoeing, rock climbing, caving and stand-up paddle boarding by running a range of courses. There has been significant investment in equipment and the site to help us operate in a more efficient and professional way. A recent addition is the 60+ Programme which offers e-biking and hill walking opportunities for residents who are aged 60 to encourage them to maintain fitness.

The lifting of the post Covid restrictions saw an increase of visits to country parks and we attracted and consolidated significant external funding to assist delivery and what we can provide at key sites, for example we secured funding for a new multi-use visitor centre at Penallta Parc.

We are working with Monmouthshire County Council, Blaenau Gwent, Newport and Torfaen councils as well as Natural Resources Wales, Forest Research and the Severn Wye Energy Agency, to ensure that the area's natural resources are healthy, resilient to pressures and threats so that they are able to provide vital health and well-being benefits for current and future generations.

The commencement of the Covid Memorial Woodland at Cwmfelinfach was launched by the First Minister to remember those lost to the pandemic.

What did not go well and what have we learned

The food poverty issues are not going away, especially with the cost-of-living crisis, and we need to continue to support those groups who are supporting our most in need with food poverty. Support groups have reported that since the hike in energy costs that the number of people turning up has almost doubled and not just those people in receipt of benefits.

We will continue to support the groups with mentoring, training, and how to promote their services, as a positive impact on reducing food waste and lowering our landfill, therefore meeting our targets, and to educate and link together people who are in the food industry to develop a cooperation that benefits all with a positive impact on our communities.

Our Food Co-operative on Tuesdays started November 2021 and we had 15 to 20 people picking up food, this increased steadily each week but in the last month has increased dramatically. We now have 60 to 70 people collecting each week and we expect that to continue to rise. In addition to the Food Co-op, we also supply fresh food to other families on weekends. Our total weekly figure is approximately 108 families, and we expect this to increase on a weekly basis, as many of our recipients depend on our help.

In promoting healthy lifestyles, we have learned that people value their outdoor green spaces and the company of others as evidenced by numbers of walkers returning to our led walks. During the pandemic it was evident that more people were independently accessing green spaces which highlighted a number of issues with our self-led trail guides. We have learned not to assume that our routes are all open and acknowledge that if we are going to promote independent walking we need to plan and resource the upkeep of these routes.

Country parks and other green areas are appreciated by residents who have competing uses and this needs to be managed with more sites brought under green flag award or similar, which will require on going investment.

We have not met our target this year for participants in Sport Caerphilly activities due to Covid-19 restrictions and guidance. There has also been issues where trying to meet demands of delivery has not always been possible in such programmes as Tots, Positive Futures, and school sport due to a loss of workforce. Casual coaches have reviewed their careers and moved on to new opportunities in new industries. We have tried to overcome these barriers by going out to recruitment, but this has been challenging in the number of applicants and meeting the criteria. To address this, we are looking for our Leadership Pathway in 2022/23 and hope to upskill a new workforce through this method. In addition to the above, we have not been able to deliver large scale events such as Legacy Games, Caerphilly 10k and 2k, which historically are heavy in participation levels and engagement.

Overall, there has been year-on-year increases for participation and over half of all children have taken part in 5 x 60-minute activities at least once, however, with the pandemic, this halted growth in participation that would have taken place in the school sport programme. Whilst our school sport programme resumed in 2021/22, this continues to have its challenges due to changes in guidance around Covid-19 up until recently. However, the interest and schools that have engaged so far this year has been incredibly positive and numerous children and young people have participated in offers made to the schools.

Whilst improvements have been made to land management to achieve sustainable land management, more needs to be done to both fulfil legislative and moral obligations. For example, the South Wales Uplands Project, which is a regional project, led by Torfaen but covering most our out uplands and includes a range of partners to protect our lands and eco system, with a flagship initiative 'the wildlife crime toolkit' which targets arson, off-roading and littering. The same applies to wildlife conservation and the nature emergency which will require further resources to meet our obligations. The foundations to achieve this are in place.

Most of the Public Rights of Way within the county borough are open and in good condition for the public to use. However, there is a substantial backlog of legislative work that we need to undertake and progress addressing this is slow.

The value and diversity of our rural economy is becoming increasingly recognised and we have a Rural Development Plan and team that supports rural businesses and communities throughout the pandemic helping many to survive. This will also be true through the recovery period and the securing of a further round of RDP funding is essential. The post Brexit arrangements are not yet fully known which is leading to uncertainty however our aim is to continue with partnership working along a similar model.

What difference have we made

We continue to provide free products to help with the 'Period Dignity' programme, so that young people across the borough, to access from our collection points. Distribution of products from our storage site to the public needs to improve as our stock levels are rising each year with additional grant funding.

Our work to improve Food Poverty through a range of different types of projects is making a real difference to many residents that require support.

More than 25,000 people downloaded our Leisure App increasing digital access. We also won a Gold Award for most improved Local Authority in Sports and Leisure from the company that runs the method of measuring high-quality customer experience.

We opened the new state of the art Oakdale Athletics Hub in collaboration with a range of partners and this is available for community bookings.

Participation rates in extra-curricular Dragon Multi-skills, designed to offer 7 to 11 year-olds fun and enjoyable sporting opportunities, are also increasing each year although the Covid effect impacted this. Programmes such as our 'Tots' sports in football and netball have seen a huge increase in demand and participation with enabling a return in 2021/22.

We secured funding and undertook a variety of improvements to allotments throughout the county borough, including security measures and toilet provision.

In Rural Development we provided a suite of grants to support our rural enterprises and communities. We helped develop and provide recreation facilities as part of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and provided wider ecological and landscape advice throughout the borough.

We opened a new municipal cemetery at Gwaun Gledyr to accommodate the needs of the southern Rhymney Valley.

We are part of Gwent Green Grid Partnership, which is a ground-breaking project that aims to improve and develop green infrastructure. This includes natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities – as well as providing green job opportunities within the area. Green infrastructure has a crucial role to play in addressing nature, climate change and health emergencies.

Our focus for the future

- ✚ With the establishment of the Caerphilly Food Poverty Network, coupled with the Food Poverty Grant for 2022/23 we intend to continue our support for established and emerging Food Banks and Fair Share outlets. We will also support more locally grown food, therefore reducing haulage and environmental costs.
- ✚ We are fully aware of the cost-of-living crisis and will be promoting and supporting more innovative ways to tackle not only food insecurity but also food waste.
- ✚ To launch the Community Cooking Champions Scheme and Partnership with Morrisons Supermarket and further promote the Community Volunteering Scheme.
- ✚ To develop branding using recycled and reusable brown paper bags and through social media "Helping to Reduce Food Waste"
- ✚ Healthy Early Years will be encouraging more settings onto the scheme as per the annual requirement of introducing five new settings a year. The scheme will be included as a

quality award for settings wishing to deliver Early Years Education places, Flying Start Places and to be a part of the Assisted and Supported Places Scheme.

- ✚ We are developing educational workshops to support young people gain further knowledge of the range of eco-friendly products to support Period Dignity. We also aim to support more settings across the council to provide products on their premises.
- ✚ We will implement further Fly-tipping initiatives including the use of new covert CCTV cameras, multi-agency vehicle stop-checks, and a duty of care social media campaign.
- ✚ Link with and support the Caerphilly 'Green Grid' project and develop a strategy for developing and promoting our self-led routes and promote our led walking groups.
- ✚ Continued delivery of the ambition set out in Sport & Active Recreation Strategy
- ✚ Delivering staff training opportunities that support the delivery of high-quality customer experiences, interventions, and innovative solutions.
- ✚ Active Gwent is a regional collaboration across Gwent whose purpose is to improve physical literacy, promote a positive future and tackle inequality through sport. The partnership aims to get 75% of people 'hooked on sport' by 2027 although the overall target may have been impacted by Covid-19, one of our priorities for 2022/23 is to continue our promotion of girls and women's participation in sport as there are significant health and equalities benefits with these programmes.
- ✚ To prepare a revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan to assist with both maintenance and operation as well as reducing the legislative backlog.
- ✚ Construct a multi-use visitor centre at Parc Penallta and undertake a wide range of environmental improvements with some focus being on former collieries and tips.
- ✚ Secure funding to allow the continuation of the Rural Development Plan.
- ✚ Continue with partnership working to secure improved sustainable land management and access to funding streams whilst sharing resources.
- ✚ We want to ensure more land is managed sustainably for the benefit of wider eco system services including de-carbonisation and flood prevention.
- ✚ Assist and ensure that both policies and site selection in the Local Development Plan are appropriate and the Strategic Environmental Assessment is robust.
- ✚ Undertake improved management and better use of our water bodies and resources.



Well-being Objective 6

Support citizens to remain independence and improve their well-being

What went well this year

Our response to the Covid pandemic within Social Care has been exceptional. Frontline operational services had to be maintained and continued to run throughout the various lockdowns. Services were able to adjust up and down in response to restrictions being imposed and being lifted and this is credit to the commitment and resilience of all staff. Despite the pandemic, overall performance across all services has been maintained and the Annual Performance Returns to Welsh Government demonstrate this, as has the feedback from our Regulator Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

Despite increasing demand and complexity, the Directorate has, once again, remained within its allocated budget for the year.

Social Services continues to have an effective Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service in place that fully meets the requirements of the Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. All staff have received 'what matters' training in line with a national programme supported by Social Care Wales and Welsh Government aimed at supporting citizens to support themselves through the use of collaborative communication.

One of our aims over the length of the 5-year plan was to look at prevention and introduce systems that prevented people where possible going into higher statutory interventions, as such the Home First, Emergency Care at Home and Discharge to Assess Schemes are all now fully operational and contribute to both preventing unnecessary admissions to hospital and to supporting speedier discharges from hospital wherever possible.

Welsh Government have confirmed grant funding to provide preventative services and to offset the increased demands on services, as a result of Covid. These demands will continue, and structured work plans, and commissioned services are in place to ensure all funding and resources are used to their fullest.

The Intensive Support Team provides the edge of care support* for Children's Services and using grant funding, has been expanded to include a Child Psychologist, Education Worker, Health Visitor, a Family Meeting Service, and additional Family Support Workers. Children looked after numbers were predicted to continue to rise throughout the year, but actually stabilised in the period running up to Covid-19. The number has remained stable over the last two years.

**Edge of Care is about prevention, to support for Children for whom entry into care had been considered by the local authority, either on a voluntary basis or through legal proceedings, but are then supported not to enter care.*

A significantly enhanced range of support is now available for identifying and support all carers including individual support, groups and leisure and social activities and these are all publicised through a regular newsletter.

To improve the recruitment of Foster Carers and Shared Lives Carers we have assessed and approved 10 new Shared Lives Carers and 15 new Foster Carers in the past 12 months.

The current advertising campaign to recruit carers is being revised to include reference to the My Support Team Therapeutic Fostering Service.

A dedicated Communications Officer post has been created funded by Social Services to increase our social media presence, publicise the range of supports that are on offer and to boost recruitment to vacant posts and for carers.

Welsh Government requires each of the collaborative regions in Wales to deliver statutory advocacy services for children and young people. The Gwent region is acknowledged to be leading the work in Wales and within the region. Caerphilly has led the development of Parent Advocacy to support families through child protection planning and decision-making processes which is now being adopted across Wales.

Existing collaborations include the South-East Wales Safeguarding Board, hosting the West Safeguarding Hub with Gwent Police, the South-East Wales Adoption Service, Foster Wales, Shared Lives, and the South-East Wales Emergency Duty Team.

What did not go well and what have we learned

Two of the most significant challenges we faced were the ever-changing Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidance and pressures within the health system, including hospitals and the ambulance service, directly linked to responding to the Covid-19 crisis. Ongoing NHS problems around ambulance response times and hospital discharge means people are waiting for care in their own homes for longer than we want.

Increasing demand for services and increasing complexity of cases being presented result in enhanced packages of care and support with the increased costs that this incurs. Covid has had a significant impact on the way services have had to be delivered and the overall position is volatile with services being exposed to significant demand variations.

Recruitment and retention of social work and care staff continues to be problematic as it is in all social services departments across Wales. However, the positives about flexible, agile, hybrid, blended approaches to delivering our service will be maintained for the future.

What difference have we made

Despite all the challenges faced by our communities, society, and the world as a whole, Social Services have continued to safeguard and support the most vulnerable and most in need children and adults.

The most vulnerable children and adults in our communities continue to be safeguarded and protected despite the service challenges. For example, there was a positive increase in children

looked after that were discharged from care over the year, which is attributable to successful revocations of Care Orders in the Courts.

The number of assessments completed in timescale has increased over the year due to the change made to the processes to become more streamlined, which makes the assessment better for social workers to complete and implement.

The number of Children who are Looked After has decreased slightly over the past year, also there has been a reduction in the number of Child Protection Register (CPR) registrations in the last 12 months.

The percentage of children in care who had to move three or more times reduced to 1.71% which means that less children being moved around with a positive impact on the child and the families involved.

As a result of our work, complaints have not increased despite restrictions to services having to be imposed and overall, compliments continue to significantly outnumber complaints, with some positive comments recorded across all service areas.

Satisfaction surveys were suspended due to Covid operational working but will resume from 2022 onwards. Feedback from our Regulator (CIW) continues to be incredibly positive.

Our focus for the future

- ✚ We are going to develop a council wide Learning Management System (LMS) to record safeguarding training attendance and completion. This development links directly to recommendations made by Audit Wales following a review of Corporate Safeguarding arrangements. The model was initially developed by Social Services but has been adopted by the whole council and through working in collaboration with Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil and Carmarthenshire Councils, investment has been secured from Welsh Government to commission the new system.
- ✚ Recruitment and retention of qualified Social Workers remains a constant challenge to operational service delivery. We have a successful secondment programme that supports experienced but unqualified staff already working within the Service to undertake the Social Work Degree whilst also working.
- ✚ We are working to modernise day services and learning from the experiences of having to deliver services during the Covid pandemic has allowed the Directorate to take stock of the way day services can be delivered going forward. An independent review of services to identify options for future delivery has been commissioned and will report back within 2022/23.
- ✚ We have a long-standing commitment to develop new, purpose-built respite homes for short break provision for disabled adults and children will be progressed during 2022/23. The site for development has been identified.

Section 9: How to contact us

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

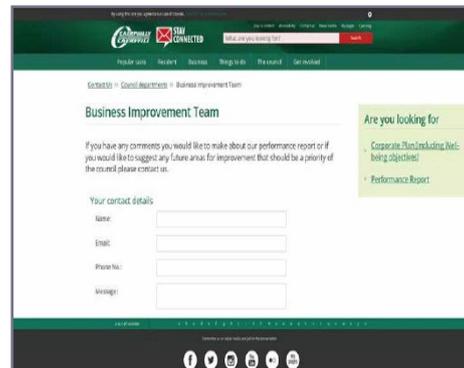
You can contact us by:

Email: BIT@caerphilly.gov.uk or via the Council Performance webpage and follow the instructions on screen.

Alternatively, please contact:

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You can contact us via social media.



This document is also available in different languages and formats upon request.

Further information can also be found on our website: www.caerphilly.gov.uk

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CABINET - 30TH NOVEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON DECARBONISATION OF FLEET VEHICLES AND RELATED POLICIES

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on the work to review the Council's vehicle fleet and the transition to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV).
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval to develop a policy for employees and visitors to be able to use the electric vehicle charging infrastructure for their own vehicles, at cost.
- 1.3 To seek Cabinet approval to implement the actions identified as the next steps to reduce carbon emissions from our fleet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Phase 1 involving installing three electric vehicle charging hubs is nearing completion. One hub at Tir y Berth and the one at Ty Penallta should be operational by mid-December 2022, and the third at Tir y Berth should be operational early in the new-year.
- 2.2 This infrastructure should provide the charging capacity for the majority of the Authority's small and medium-sized vans that are not taken home by employees overnight.
- 2.3 Work is underway to develop a trial project for home charging for vehicles taken home where the employee has off road parking suitable for the installation of a home charging unit.
- 2.4 Funding has been secured from the Cardiff Capital Region Challenge Fund to identify and develop solutions where vehicles are taken home, but no suitable off road parking is available at the employees home.
- 2.5 Priorities moving forward are for services to move to electric vehicles for their small and medium-sized vans as they come to the end of their leases.

- 2.6 Tackling the issues of how our larger vehicles transition to ultra-low emissions will then become the next key area to examine and to resolve.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet notes the progress made to date as part of the fleet review and transition to ultra-low emission vehicles work
- 3.2 That Cabinet approves the principle that employees and visitors should be allowed to use the vehicle charging infrastructure for their personal vehicles, and for a policy to be developed to that effect.
- 3.3 That Cabinet approve the proposed actions set out in this report to continue the transition to ultra-low emission vehicles.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To contribute to the Council's commitment to become net zero carbon by 2030.
- 4.2 To implement the actions set out in the approved Electric Vehicle Strategy and Action Plan and contribute to the overall Decarbonisation Strategy
- 4.3 To ensure that we make the most efficient use of our fleet and to ensure the transition to ULEVs
- 4.4 To promote the uptake of electric vehicles with our employees and visitors

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 On 11th November 2020 Cabinet approved funding of £297,371 to install electric vehicle (EV) charging points at Tir y Berth, Tredomen House and Ty Penallta. It was anticipated that this infrastructure should allow up to 100 electric vehicles to be introduced into the Authority's fleet, depending on service area demand.

- 5.2 Additional funding was secured from Welsh Government to expand the provision of charging points at depots, leading to a redesign and expansion of the project. . The new design facilitates charging of all smaller vehicles that are parked at Ty Penallta or Tir Y berth (either overnight or through the day). It includes short-term hires and it is envisaged that the new infrastructure will be the primary point for charging these vehicles. This accounts for up to 150 smaller vehicles (small vans, medium vans, MPVs and minibuses) that are not taken home and will have access to this infrastructure.

Initial consultation regarding the Tredomen House site revealed the provision of a charging hub there would be problematic. Accessing the electricity supply used by the data centre would have presented risks to business continuity. Mitigating these risks would have proved challenging and, probably, costly. The availability of suitable parking areas where chargers could be installed was also an issue. Therefore, the provision at Ty Penallta and Tir y Berth was expanded instead.

- 5.3 The project now comprises of 14 double 7kW charge units at Ty Penallta, including specific provision for the Authority's electric meals on wheels vans and ovens. Seven double 7kW chargers at the old meals on wheels site at Tir y Berth, plus 2 x 50kW

rapid chargers and 4 x 7kW chargers at units B9 – B11 at Tir y Berth to provide charging facilities for vehicles for Caerphilly Homes.

- 5.4 The total cost of the works will be £436,700, leaving a balance of £163,300 which will be used to provide charging units at other depots and sites identified under phase 2 of the programme.
- 5.5 The project has proved to be a steep learning curve for the organisation and has required additional electrical supplies at 2 locations. Lead in times for work and materials has also been considerable. However all electrical feeds, cabling and necessary site works have now been completed at both Ty Penallta and the former meals on wheels site at Tir y Berth. The 7kW chargers will be installed at those sites on the 5th – 9th December 2022 enabling the Ty Penallta and the former meals on wheels sites to be operational before the end of the calendar year. There are issues with 3rd party land which needs to be resolved before the additional electrical feed can be installed by Western Power Distribution (WPD) for the B9-B11 hub. There is also a longer lead in time for the 50kW chargers but these should be delivered by the end of December 2022.
- 5.6 As of 30th September 2022, a total of 525 vehicles made up our fleet, a reduction of 95 vehicles from a high of 620 in the summer of 2020. The 525 comprises of 105 vehicles that we own, 99 vehicles on hire, and 321 vehicles on long term lease. The reduction in total numbers is largely due to the reduction in hire vehicles from around 200 in 2020 to 99 as of September 2022.
- 5.7 In February 2017, CCBC entered into a managed service contract with Specialist Fleet Services (SFS) to provide lease vehicles. We now lease a total of 321 vehicles from SFS. Between September 2017 and January 2018 some 187 vehicles were provided to CCBC on 5 year leases meaning that those arrangements are up for renewal between September 2022 and January 2023. It is these vehicles, as they come to the end of their lease periods, which are the focus of current efforts to transition to EVs. Of those 187 vehicles 73 are small vans and 75 are medium-sized vans. Discussions with SFS have indicated that lease agreements could be extended by a year or up to 2 years for some vehicles. Those discussions are ongoing as leases come to an end and new or interim arrangements are put in place.
- 5.8 Fleet Management are currently in the process of working with Procurement Services in completing a new separate agreement for short-term hires that will provide flexibility in the transition process. It should also be noted that the managed service contract is reaching its conclusion and various options for delivering the overall fleet service, including fleet procurement and maintenance, are currently being considered and will be presented to Cabinet shortly via a separate report
- 5.9 159 of our fleet vehicles are currently taken home by employees. These are all either small vans (74) or medium-sized vans (85). Two pieces of work are ongoing to identify the best solutions to these issues. Firstly a home charging trial is being developed whereby home charging units will be provided to a trial group of employees with off-road parking, suitable for the installation of a home charging unit. Discussions are ongoing with HR, service areas and the Trade Unions to agree the final details of the trial. Secondly Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Challenge Fund support has been secured to appoint consultants to look at those vehicles where the operatives do not have off-road parking. The contract for this work should be signed imminently.

- 5.10 Should the home charging trial and the CCR funded study identify viable solutions to vehicles taken home by employees, this combined with the charging infrastructure set out in 5.3 will accommodate virtually all the small and medium-sized vans across the authority's fleet. The possible exception will be those vehicles based in locations, beyond our main charging hubs. These will most likely require individual charging points to be installed at those locations.
- 5.11 The current cost of diesel to run a small to medium-sized van is 13 pence per mile. The equivalent cost for an electric vehicle is 5 pence per mile. Based on each vehicle travelling 10,000 miles per year this would equate to a fuel cost saving of £800 per vehicle per year, or a total cost saving of £139,200 per year should all of the Authority's 174 small and medium sized vans transition from diesel to electric.
- 5.12 The charging infrastructure will be used at its greatest capacity for the overnight charging of our fleet vehicles, and for those parked up whilst employees are at the particular location. Whilst priority must be given to the charging of our fleet vehicles, there will be an opportunity to allow employees and potentially visitors to use these charge points for their personal vehicles. This may support some employees to move from petrol and diesel vehicles to electric.
- 5.13 The charge points being installed are manufactured by Pod Point and the operating system will allow us to identify the vehicle being charged by each charge point. To use our charge points employees and visitors would register via the Pod Point app, which is one of the most common apps for EV charging. The individual could then access the charge point and would pay Pod Point for the electricity used. CCBC would inform Pod Point of the price to be charged at our charge points. It is recommended that this charge should be the actual cost that we pay for the electricity plus our cost for administration and maintenance, plus 1p/kWh for the cost of administration by Pod Point. Pod Point will send CCBC a monthly statement of the electricity used and payment received from users. This information can be cross checked by ourselves as all charge point use is recorded on our system. CCBC would then invoice Pod Point for the electricity used and the CCBC administration and maintenance element. The price that we charge our staff or visitors for charging their vehicles would be a standard rate, based on the actual costs of electricity and maintenance and administration costs which could be reviewed periodically.
- 5.14 The immediate priorities are:
- To complete phase I of infrastructure works
 - To agree and undertake the home charging trial and to identify the preferred solution where employees who take vehicles home have suitable off road parking
 - To undertake the study to identify the preferred solutions where employees who take vehicles home do not have suitable off road parking
 - To transition the small and medium-sized vans to EVs as they come to the end of their lease periods and the charging infrastructure becomes operational.
- 5.15 How and where our larger vehicles will be powered will be the next significant issue to resolve. We currently have 152 larger vehicles of which we own 49 and lease 103 (see table below). Of the 33 Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV), we own 20 and 13 are on 7-year leases with most ending in January 2028.

Vehicle Type	Owned	Leased
Small Tipper	1	38

Large Tipper	2	36
RCV	20	13
Gritter	8	5
Gully tanker	0	3
Tractor Unit	1	1
Hook Loader	2	1
Compact Sweeper	1	1
Jet Patcher	1	0
4x4	13	5
Total	49	103

The key questions to be addressed are:

- What is the total anticipated number of larger vehicles and therefore the total fuel/energy requirement, including can numbers and sizes be reduced?
- Will our larger vehicles be battery electric vehicles or hydrogen fuelled?
- Where are the vehicles likely to be based in the long-term?

5.16 The questions in 5.14 are all interlinked. Currently the majority of our larger vehicles are based at Tir y Berth, however our gritters, tippers and gully machines are split between Penmaen and Bedwas depots. There are concerns around the capacity to store vehicles at Tir y Berth, and should our vehicles at Tir y Berth transition to electric, there will need to be significant upgrades to the electrical supply and capacity. Should hydrogen be the preferred fuel? If so, sites and source of hydrogen, including the option to produce our own green hydrogen will need to be resolved. Detailed investigation and feasibility studies will need to be commissioned to provide specific technical support to develop the most appropriate solutions. These issues are complex and any solutions will require considerable development time, it is therefore important that the key issues and constraints are identified to allow the feasibility studies to start in the first quarter of 2023/24.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 Technology is changing rapidly in this area. This report is based on the most up to date information that we have available. The availability of alternatives to diesel, for our larger vehicles needs further investigation. Lead in times for charge points and the delivery of vehicles remains long and it is not anticipated that this will reduce significantly in the short-term.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) identifies that there is no direct impact to service delivery from the proposal apart from the positive benefits associated with ULEVs, including lower carbon emissions with less air and noise pollution.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This report sets out the achievements to date within the already approved budgets.

8.2 Detailed proposals for future phases of infrastructure provision and other initiatives will be developed and reports brought forward at the appropriate time.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The programme of work to date has involved officers from across the Authority, most notably those from Fleet Management, Property, Procurement, HR, Facilities Management and Policy & Partnerships. This cross departmental working, plus engagement from service users will need to continue to deliver this programme.

10. CONSULTATIONS

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

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Ultra-low emission vehicles contribute to several of the Well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

Author: Paul Cooke, Transformation Manager, Decarbonisation,
cookepa@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Cllr James Pritchard – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change
Cllr Julian Simmonds - Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation
Cllr Nigel George – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property
Christina Harrhy – Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director of Economy and Environment
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S.151 Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Paul Rossiter, Energy and Water Officer
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager
Mike Headington, Green Spaces and Transport Services Manager
Robert Mitcham, Fleet and Vehicle Maintenance Manager
Derek Morris, Contracts Manager
Phillip Evans, Fleet Review Officer



CABINET – 30TH NOVEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: CYBER SECURITY STRATEGY 2022-2025

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet the draft Caerphilly CBC ('Council') Cyber Security Strategy 2022 – 2025 ('Strategy'), **Appendix A**.
- 1.2 To recommend endorsement and implementation of the Strategy.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Strategy sets out the Council's application of information and cyber security standards to protect our information systems, the data held on them, and the services we provide, from unauthorised access, harm or misuse. The Strategy is our cyber security commitment both to the people we represent and the national interest; and emphasises the importance of cyber security in the role of all Council employees.
- 2.2 Information and data are vital to every part of the Council's business. As we continue with a digital programme that is transforming the way we work and how local people access information and services, we need increasingly robust security measures to protect against cyber threats.
- 2.3 The Strategy sets out the challenges we face as a Council to the type of threats and vulnerabilities in relation to:

Cybercriminals	Physical
Cyber Crime	Terrorists
Hactivism	Espionage
Insiders	Systems
Zero-day Exploit	Training and Skills
- 2.4 The Strategy is supported by an implementation plan and critical success factors. Together with clear definitions on governance roles & responsibilities and the required standards that we as a Council need to meet on an ongoing basis.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To endorse and implement The Strategy.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that the Council is continuously improving its Governance and security arrangements and has a fit for purpose Strategy and approach to cyber security.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Strategy has been produced in response to the increasing threat from cyber criminals and a number of successful and high-profile cyber-attacks on public and private organisations. Its purpose is to give assurance to residents and other stakeholders of the Council's commitment in delivering robust information security measures to protect resident and stakeholder data from misuse and cyber threats. To safeguard their privacy through increasingly secure and modern information governance and data sharing arrangements, both internally and with our partners.
- 5.2 The Council will continue its vision for developing and managing its interface with customers and its digital environment. Pursuing this vision against an increasingly complex public service landscape as we face substantial social, economic, and political challenges. The Strategy supports that key area of focus and includes protecting an ever-increasing agile workforce, growth in the uptake of technologies such as cloud-based systems, internet-enabled services, mobile devices, high-speed broadband and together with the digital agenda on utilising/sharing more data of all forms to develop public services means that cyber security will be increasingly tested.
- 5.3 The Strategy is designed to further enhance and strengthen the Council's security position. The Council has already built a model to ensure that it has a healthy and systematic security posture that protects against most types of threats. The Model follows industry best practices such as the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) & Warning, Advice and Reporting Point (WARP) a community-based service where members can receive and share up-to-date advice on information security threats, incidents, and solutions.
- 5.4 Through delivery of this strategy, the Council will comply with and embed the principles of 'Cyber Essentials Plus'; a government-backed, industry-supported scheme to help organisations protect themselves against common online threats. The Council will also follow the "10 Steps to Cyber Security" framework published by the National Cyber Security Centre.

Conclusion

- 5.5 The Strategy underpins and enables the Council's Customer and Digital Strategy, which continues to ensure we harness the benefits of technology to improve the lives and life chances of all local people. The measures outlined in this Strategy will safeguard trust and confidence in the way we operate and deliver our services, supporting the Council to remain at the forefront of the digital revolution.
- 5.6 The Strategy demonstrates our commitment and the key actions we will take to further establish a trusted digital environment for the Council. Cyber-attacks will continue to evolve, which is why we will continue to learn and work at pace in an attempt to stay ahead of all threats.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 All details stated within this report and Strategy are reflective of all issues known as of September 2022.
- 6.2 Any amendments to the Strategy due to changes in legislation, policies and/or cyber security best practice will be the responsibility of the Head of Customer & Digital

Services in consultation with Corporate Director for Education & Corporate Services and Cabinet Member.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Strategy positively impacts all aspects of the IIA.
- 7.2 This strategy will contribute to our progress towards the well-being goals and other relevant legislative requirements. Embracing digital innovation in safe and secure way can lead to greater economic opportunities and a more prosperous and resilient society. Equipping people with the digital skills they need and designing services securely around the user will also improve social cohesion, create a more healthy and equal society with well-connected communities and contribute to a thriving Welsh language.
- 7.3 The full IIA can be accessed via [Cyber Strategy IIA](#)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected within this report.
- 10.2 The draft Strategy was presented to Governance and Audit Committee on 14 June 2022 and Members of the Committee raised the following points:
- a. A Member queried whether CCBC employed a digital auditor within the audit team. Members were advised that there is not a specific IT auditor within the audit team. Members were introduced to the Senior Information Security Officer who advised Members that he worked outside of Digital Services (within Procurement and Information Services), in order to have a more independent view of the Councils' IT and security policies (this is inline with best practice). Members were also advised of a recent vacancy within the department for an Information Security Manager and also the possibility of an apprenticeship position going forward.
 - b. A Member sought clarification on cyber-crime and fraud and queried whether there were arrangements for the integration of risks for these areas. Members were advised that there are risk registers at different levels within the authority and that cyber security is on the high-level risk register with mitigating actions. Members were also advised that further clarification on this matter will be evident when the risk registers are produced for the next meeting in October.
- 10.3 Moved and seconded that the Governance and Audit Committee considered the Draft Cyber Security Strategy in order for the Committee to gain the required assurance to

fulfil its role and to note the report and verbal Strategy update. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal confirmation this was unanimously agreed.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 2001

Author: Ian Evans, Procurement and Information Manager;
evansi1@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property,
Christina Harray, Chief Executive,
Richard (Ed) Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services,
Elizabeth Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services,
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer,
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer,
Wesley Colyer, Senior Information Security Officer,
Edward Thomson, Information Security Officer,
Carl Evans, Corporate Information Governance Manager and DPO,
Mark Brett, Lead Advisor, Silverthorn Associates,
Governance and Audit Committee (14 June 2022),
Digital Leadership Group,
Customer and Digital Services Management Team,
Cyber Security Forum, Corporate,
Cyber Security Forum, Education,
PDM (9 November 2022).

Background Papers:

Appendices:

Appendix A Cyber Security Strategy 2022 – 2025.

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Cyber Security Strategy

2022-2025

Protecting and Securing Our Digital Future

CONTENTS

	Page
1. <u>Foreword</u>	3
2. <u>Introduction</u>	4
3. <u>Purpose & Scope of Strategy</u>	5
4. <u>The Challenge we face as a Council</u>	6
5. <u>Our approach, Principles & Priorities</u>	7
6. <u>Implementation Plan</u>	8
7. <u>Critical Success Factors</u>	10
8. <u>Cyber Security Governance Roles and Responsibilities</u>	10
9. <u>Standards</u>	12
10. <u>NCSC: 10 Steps to Cyber Security</u>	13

1 Foreword

Information and data are vital to every part of Caerphilly CBC's ('the Council') business. As we continue with a digital programme that is transforming the way we work and how local people access information and services, we need increasingly robust Security measures to protect against cyber threats.

Across the globe, cyber-attacks are growing in frequency and becoming more sophisticated. The increased use of the internet caused by Covid 19 pandemic means that cyber criminals have become more active, and our exposure has increased. When cyber-attacks succeed the damage can be significant; with personal, economic and social consequences.

This Cyber Security Strategy ('Strategy') sets out our approach for protecting our information systems and the data we hold to ensure the services we provide are secure and our residents, businesses and stakeholders can safely transact with us. This includes achieving a balance of embracing digital opportunities, including making information more widely available and accessible, whilst ensuring that right levels of protection established.

This Strategy demonstrates our commitment and the key actions we will take to further establish a trusted digital environment for the Council. We will strengthen and secure the Council from cyber threats by increasing Security awareness throughout our workforce, investing in our systems and infrastructure, deterring our adversaries, and developing a wide range of responses, from basic cyber hygiene to the most sophisticated defences. Cyber-attacks will continue to evolve, which is why we will continue learn and to work at pace in an attempt to stay ahead of all threats.

The Council strives to be an innovative, forward looking local authority that is committed to modernising and perfecting our approach to Cyber Security. We will be bold in our approach, we will explore innovation and, if necessary, we will learn from our mistakes to ensure continuous improvement in delivering a secure and advanced Cyber Security Strategy.

This Strategy underpins and enables the Council's Customer and Digital Strategy, which continues to ensure we harness the benefits of technology to improve the lives and life chances of all local people. The measures outlined in this strategy will safeguard trust and confidence in the way we operate and deliver our services, supporting the Council to remain at the forefront of the digital revolution.

Cllr Sean Morgan
Leader of Council



Christina HARRY
Chief Executive

2 INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the Council's application of information and Cyber Security standards to protect our information systems, the data held on them, and the services we provide, from unauthorised access, harm or misuse. It is our Cyber Security commitment both to the

people we represent and the national interest; and emphasises the importance of Cyber Security in the role of all council staff.

What is Cyber Security?

Cyber Security is the practice of ensuring the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information using the technologies, processes, and people behaviour practices designed to protect the IT infrastructure, applications and data from attack, damage, or unauthorised access that we use in our everyday lives.

Attacks on Confidentiality – stealing or copying personal information.

Attacks on Integrity – seeks to corrupt, damage or destroy information or systems and the people who rely on them.

Attacks on Availability – denial of services.

Cyber Security refers to the body of technologies, processes, and practices designed to protect networks, devices, programs, and data from attack, damage, or unauthorised access. Cyber Security may also be referred to as information technology Security.

Cyber Security is important because, in order to effectively deliver services, the Council collects, processes, and stores large amounts of data on computers and other devices. A significant portion of this data is sensitive information, including financial data, personal information, or other types of data for which unauthorised access or exposure could have negative consequences.

The Council transmits sensitive data across networks and to other devices in the course of providing services. Cyber Security is the discipline dedicated to protecting this information and the systems used to process or store it.

Cyber Security is crucial in ensuring our services are kept up and running. It is also vital in ensuring the public trusts the Council with their information. A cyber-attack could have very serious consequences, both in terms of disrupting services, many of which serve our most vulnerable residents and through damage to the Council's reputation.

The Covid 19 pandemic has impacted on all areas of public and private life. Amongst other things it has forced a great deal more of our routine professional and personal interactions on-line and many more of us now work predominantly from home. This has presented new and lucrative opportunities to cyber criminals. Whilst much will return to normal in due course, the extent to which we exploit cyberspace and many of our working practice will not return to the pre-pandemic norm. Cyber Security has become, and will remain, a key responsibility for all of us, collectively and as individuals.

This Strategy is supported by a suite of operational policies and procedures.

3 PURPOSE & SCOPE OF STRATEGY

The Council seeks to deliver its digital strategy through transforming Caerphilly into a digital place and a digital Council. The scale of transformation represents an unprecedented culture shift for the Council, residents, partners and businesses.

The Council are dedicated to ensuring that all digital strategies are cohesive and have the same aim in mind, to be compliant, secure, and cutting-edge to ensure the Council are prepared for any obstacles or cyber-attacks in the digital world. A key area of focus is improving information assurance, risk management and care of personal data.

This Strategy has been produced in response to the increasing threat from cyber criminals and a number of successful and high profile cyber-attacks on public and private organisations. The purpose of the Strategy is to give assurance to residents and other stakeholders of the Council's commitment in delivering robust information Security measures to protect resident and stakeholder data from misuse and cyber threats, and to safeguard their privacy through increasingly secure and modern information governance and data sharing arrangements, both internally and with our partners.

The Council will continue its vision for developing and managing its interface with customers and its digital environment. Pursuing this vision against an increasingly complex public service landscape as we face substantial social, economic, and political challenges.

This Strategy supports that key area of focus and includes protecting an ever-increasing agile workforce, growth in the uptake of technologies such as cloud-based systems, internet-enabled services, mobile devices, high-speed broadband and together with the digital agenda on utilising/sharing more data of all forms to develop public services means that Cyber Security will be increasingly tested.

The Strategy is designed to further enhance and strengthen the Council's Security position. The Council has already built a model to ensure that it has a healthy and systematic Security posture that protects against most types of threats. The Model follows industry best practices such as the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) & Warning, Advice and Reporting Point (WARP) a community-based service where members can receive and share up-to-date advice on information Security threats, incidents, and solutions.

Through delivery of this strategy, the Council will comply with and embed the principles of 'Cyber Essentials Plus'; a government-backed, industry-supported scheme to help organisations protect themselves against common online threats. The Council will also follow the **"10 Steps to Cyber Security" framework published by the National Cyber Security Centre (included in Section 10).**

This Strategy will evolve so that it continues to support national strategies and legislation such as:

1. Digital Vision for Wales <https://gov.wales/digital-strategy-wales.html>
2. Digital Inclusion [Digital Inclusion Forward Look: towards a digitally confident Wales \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)
3. The Future Generations Act [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 – The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales](#)
4. Cymraeg 2050 strategy [Cymraeg 2050: our plan for 2021 to 2026 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)
5. NCSC Cyber Strategy [National Cyber Strategy 2022 \(HTML\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

4 THE CHALLENGE WE FACE AS A COUNCIL

The Council is using an increasing range of technology, from apps and the cloud to different devices and gadgets. Much of our business is done online such as corresponding with residents and local businesses, carrying out case work, and reviewing reports and papers for

Council meetings. This direction of travel is expected to continue and accelerate; making effective Cyber Security ever more crucial in protecting against new types of threats, risks and vulnerabilities.

Threats

Types of Threats

Cybercriminals and Cyber Crime - Cybercriminals are generally working for financial gain. Most commonly, for the purposes of fraud, either selling illegally gained information to a third party, or using directly for criminal means.

Key tools and methods used by cybercriminals include:

- Malware – malicious software that includes viruses, Trojans, worms or any code or content that could have an adverse impact on organisations or individuals
- Ransomware – a kind of malware that locks victims out of their data or systems and only allows access once money is paid
- Phishing – emails purporting to come from a public agency to extract sensitive information from members of the public.

Hactivism - Hacktivists will generally take over public websites or social media accounts to raise the profile of a particular cause.

When targeted against local government websites and networks, these attacks can cause reputational damage locally. If online services are regularly disrupted by cyber-attacks this could lead to the erosion of public confidence in using such services.

Hactivist groups have successfully used distributed denial of service (DDoS – when a system, service or network is burdened to such an extent by an electronic attack that it becomes unavailable) attacks to disrupt the websites of several councils already.

Insiders - Staff may intentionally or unintentionally release sensitive information or data into the public domain. This may be for the purpose of sabotage or to sell to another party, but often is due to simple human error or a lack of awareness about the particular risks involved.

Zero day threats - A zero day exploit is a cyber-attack that occurs on the same day a weakness is discovered in software. At that point, it's exploited before a fix becomes available from its creator. It is an attack that exploits a previously unknown Security vulnerability.

This poses a risk to any computer or system that has not had the relevant patch applied or updated its antivirus software.

Other types of Threat

Physical threats - The increasing reliance on digital services brings with it an increased vulnerability in the event of a fire, flood, power cut or other disaster natural or otherwise that impact upon council IT systems.

Terrorists - Some terrorist groups demonstrate intent to conduct cyber-attacks, but fortunately have limited technical capability. Terrorist groups could obtain improved capability in a number of ways, namely through the sharing of expertise in online forums providing a significant opportunity for terrorists to escalate their capability.

Espionage - Several of the most sophisticated and hostile foreign intelligence agencies target UK government and public sector networks to steal sensitive information. This could ultimately disadvantage the UK in diplomatic or trade negotiations, or militarily.

Vulnerabilities

Vulnerabilities are weaknesses or other conditions in an organisation that a hacker, nation-state, disgruntled employee, or other attacker, can exploit to adversely affect data Security.

Cyber vulnerabilities typically include a subset of those weaknesses and focus on issues in the IT software, hardware, and systems an organisation uses.

System Maintenance - IT systems should be updated and checked regularly and effectively. It is essential that the systems are fully updated, and appropriate fixes are applied. Poor setup, mismanagement, or other issues in the way an organisation installs and maintains its IT hardware and software components is a threat.

Legacy Software - To ensure that legacy systems have sufficient user and system authentication, data authenticity verification, or data integrity checking features that prevent uncontrolled access to systems.

Training and Skills - It is crucial that all employees have a fundamental awareness of cyber Security and to support this.

Risks

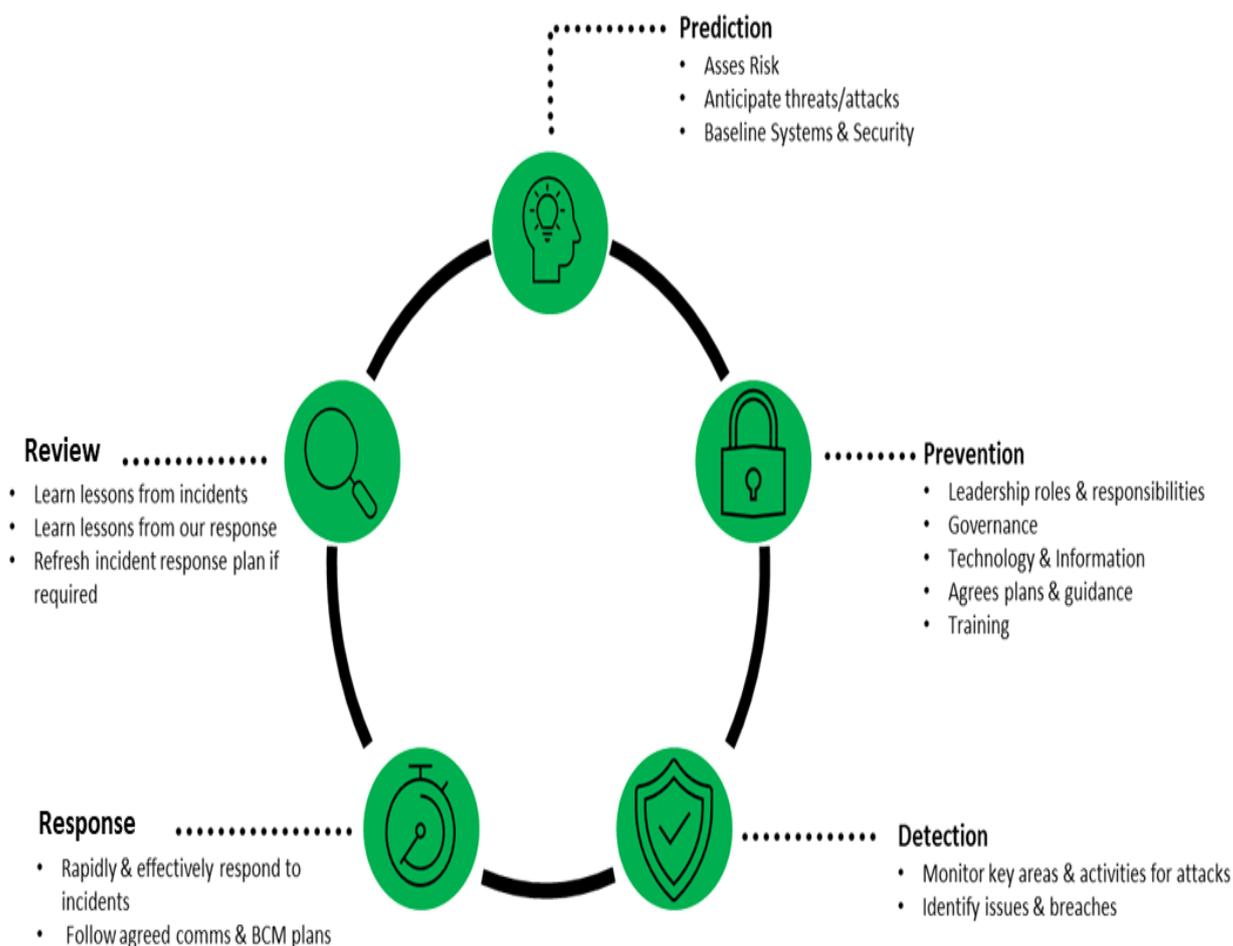
Cyber Risk Management is a fundamental part of the broader risk management to ensure cyber Security challenges are fully identified across the council and appropriate action is carried out to mitigate the risk.

5 OUR APPROACH, PRINCIPLES & PRIORITIES

To mitigate the multiple threats, we face and safeguard our interests in cyberspace, we need a strategic approach that underpins our collective and individual actions in the digital domain. This will include:

- A council wide risk management framework to help build a risk aware culture within the council, ensuring staff understand how to identify and manage risks.
- Cyber Awareness training to help mitigate insider threats, understand supply chain risks, and ensure all staff understand the issues and their responsibilities.
- Applying the Cyber Essentials scheme controls and conforming to appropriate frameworks to ensure that the council will be able to identify, mitigate and protect against information Security risks in a prioritised and resourceful fashion.

The Council will adopt the following approach shown in the diagram below:



6 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To adapt to the changing landscape and achieve our vision we will align with the National Cyber Security Strategy's approach to defend the Council and our residents' cyberspace, to deter our adversaries and to develop our capabilities.

Defend - The council will have the means to defend against evolving cyber threats, to respond effectively to incidents, and to ensure networks, data and systems are protected and resilient. It includes helping our residents, businesses and partners in gaining the knowledge and ability to defend themselves.

Actions:

- Implement firewalls and scanning services.
- Carry out health checks penetration test and cyber resilience exercises to test systems and processes.
- Meet compliance regimes, which require good cyber hygiene, to connect to government private networks, e.g. Public Sector Network (PSN).

- Work with partners across the public sector through participation in the Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership (CiSP), Warning, Advice and Reporting Point (WARP) and other networks.

Deter - The Council will be a hard target for all forms of aggression in cyberspace. This will involve detecting, understanding, investigating and disrupting hostile action against us.

Governance - Applying Cyber Security guidance, e.g. 10 Steps to Cyber Security and Cyber Essentials Plus

Technology information:

- Network Security.
- Users with wide ranging or extensive system privilege shall not use their highly privileged accounts for high-risk functions, in particular reading email and web browsing.
- Multi-factor authentication shall be used where technically possible, such as where administrative consoles provide access to manage cloud-based infrastructure, platforms or services. Multi - factor authentication shall be used for access to enterprise level social media accounts.
- Passwords for highly privileged system accounts, social media accounts and infrastructure components shall be changed from default values and shall not be easy to guess. Passwords which would on their own grant extensive system access, should have high complexity.
- Malware prevention.
- Removable media controls.
- Secure configuration.

Agreed plans and guidance.

Training and education so that all users can help detect, deter and defend against cyber threats.

Develop - The Council will continually develop our innovative Cyber Security Strategy to address the risks faced by our residents, businesses and community and voluntary sector. This includes developing a co-ordinated and tailored approach to risks and threats that we may encounter and mitigate potential vulnerabilities.

Actions:

- Develop and maintain risk management framework, internal control and governance for the prevention and detection of irregularities and fraud.
- Put in place processes, procedures and controls to manage changes in cyber threat level and vulnerabilities.
- Managing vulnerabilities that may allow an attacker to gain access to critical systems.
- Operation of the Council's penetration testing programme; and Cyber-incident response.
- Continuation of training for staff and elected members.
- Develop an incident response and management plan, with clearly defined actions, roles and responsibilities.
- Develop a communication plan in the event of an incident which includes notifying (for example) the relevant supervisory body, senior accountable individuals, the Council's Communications Unit, Local Resilience Forum (LRF), Welsh Government Cyber Resilience Team, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), Government Security

Group (Cabinet Office), the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) or law enforcement as applicable (not exhaustive).

7 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The Council is committed to delivering robust information Security measures to protect residents and stakeholder data from misuse and cyber threats, and to safeguard their privacy through increasingly secure and modern information governance and data sharing arrangements both internally and with partners.

To continue to provide assurance on the effectiveness and robustness of the council's arrangements for IT Security, the council will:

- Develop appropriate Cyber Security governance processes.
- Adopt a council wide Cyber Risk Management Framework (Cyber Essentials Plus).
- Develop policies/procedures to review access on a regular basis.
- Create a cyber-specific Business Continuity Management Plan and review the Council's Incident Plan to include emergency planning for a cyber-attack.
- Maintain, rehearse and regularly review an incident response and management plan, with clearly defined actions, roles and responsibilities. A copy of all incidents shall be recorded regardless of the need to report them.
- Set up playbooks to support test exercises on a regular basis; to ensure effective reaction to incidents when an incident occurs.
- Create test plans with Security testing as a standard.
- Reconcile current systems in place and last times these were reviewed (build into Enterprise Architecture).
- Review vendor management – process of assessments of third parties.
- Explore Active Cyber Defence tools and new technologies to ensure the Council has best solutions to match to threats.
- Apply the Cyber Security guidance – 10 Steps to Cyber Security.
- Continue to provide relevant Cyber Security training for staff and elected members.
- Apply a regular schedule of Cyber exercises, within the wider cycle of multi-agency incident response and recovery exercises.
- Comply with the Public Sector Network (PSN) requirements and the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS); a minimum requirement for all systems used, audit trails, deletion of data etc.
- Protect enterprise technology by working with specialist partners to develop model architecture and review audit logs to reduce chances of threats.

8 CYBER SECURITY GOVERNANCE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)

The Council's nominated Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) is the Head of Customer and Digital Services. The SIRO is accountable for the governance of Cyber Security and information risk within the Council. This includes ensuring that information governance risk is controlled in accordance with GDPR. However, whilst the SIRO is the nominated officer, responsibility for safeguarding information and information systems is shared across the organisation with all staff having a role to play.

Corporate Management Team (CMT)

CMT sponsor the Cyber Security Strategy and oversee the strategic structure through which the Council governs its information resources.

Digital Leadership Group (DLG)

The DLG provides strategic direction and decision making on the Council's digital strategy, Security, information governance, projects, initiatives, skills and policy.

Digital Solutions Board (DSB)

The DSB ensures all new ICT requirements for the Council are in line with the emergent ICT Strategy and Strategic Principles such as but not limited to Security standards.

Corporate Information Governance Unit (CIGU)

The group are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Cyber Security Strategy and monitoring its effectiveness.

Data Protection Officer (DPO)

The DPO complements the activity of and supports the Digital Specialist Security and Compliance, leading on non-technical aspects of data protection and providing assurance.

Information Asset Owners (IAO)

Information Asset Owners are established across the Council and are responsible for all processing of personal data within their business area.

All Elected Members and Council Officers

It is the responsibility of all elected members and officers to comply with the standards set out in this Cyber Security Strategy.

9 STANDARDS

Public Services Network (PSN) Compliance

The purpose of PSN compliance

The PSN uses a 'walled garden' approach, which enables access to Internet content and shared services to be controlled. This is because the Security of any one user connected to the PSN affects both the Security of all other users and the network itself.

The PSN compliance process exists to provide the PSN community with:

- Confidence the services they use over the network will work without problems assurance that their data is
- Protected in accordance with suppliers' commitments the promise that if things do go wrong, they can be quickly put right.
- Holding a valid PSN compliance certificate gives you our permission to interact with the PSN in a specific, pre-agreed ways.

Cyber Essentials Certification

What is Cyber Essentials?

Cyber Essentials is a simple but effective, Government backed scheme that will help protect the Council against a whole range of the most common cyber-attacks.

Cyber-attacks come in many shapes and sizes, but the vast majority are very basic in nature, carried out by relatively unskilled individuals. They're the digital equivalent of a thief trying your front door to see if it's unlocked. Our advice is designed to prevent these attacks.

10 NCSC: 10 STEPS TO CYBER SECURITY

The Council will follow the **“10 Steps to Cyber Security” framework published by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)** to ensure that technology, systems and information within the Council are protected appropriately against the majority of cyber attacks and enable the Council to best deliver its business objectives. The **“10 Steps to Cyber Security”** are as follows:

1. Risk management Regime - Embed an appropriate risk management regime following the corporate standard across the organisation. This should be supported by an empowered governance structure, which is actively supported by the board and senior managers. Clearly communicate your approach to risk management with the development of applicable policies and practices. These should aim to ensure that all employees, contractors, and suppliers are aware of the approach, how decisions are made, and any applicable risk boundaries.

2. Secure configuration - Having an approach to identify baseline technology builds and processes for ensuring configuration management can greatly improve the Security of systems. You should develop a strategy to remove or disable unnecessary functionality from systems, and to quickly fix known vulnerabilities, usually via patching. Failure to do so is likely to result in increased risk of compromise of systems and information.

3. Network Security - The connections from your networks to the Internet, and other partner networks, expose your systems and technologies to attack. By creating and implementing some simple policies and appropriate architectural and technical responses, you can reduce the chances of these attacks succeeding (or causing harm to your organisation). Your organisation’s networks almost certainly span many sites and the use of mobile or remote working, and cloud services, makes defining a fixed network boundary difficult. Rather than focusing purely on physical connections, think about where your data is stored and processed, and where an attacker would have the opportunity to interfere with it.

4. Managing user privileges - If users are provided with unnecessary system privileges or data access rights, then the impact of misuse or compromise of that users account will be more severe than it need be. All users should be provided with a reasonable (but minimal) level of system privileges and rights needed for their role. The granting of highly elevated system privileges should be carefully controlled and managed. This principle is sometimes referred to as ‘least privilege’.

5. User education and awareness - Users have a critical role to play in their organisation’s Security and so it’s important that Security rules and the technology provided enable users to do their job as well as help keep the organisation secure. This can be supported by a systematic delivery of awareness programmes and training that deliver Security expertise as well as helping to establish a Security-conscious culture.

6. Incident management - All organisations will experience Security incidents at some point. Investment in establishing effective incident management policies and processes will help to improve resilience, support business continuity, improve customer and stakeholder confidence and potentially reduce any impact. You should identify recognised sources (internal or external) of specialist incident management expertise.

7. Malware prevention - Malicious software, or malware is an umbrella term to cover any code or content that could have a malicious, undesirable impact on systems. Any exchange of information carries with it a degree of risk that malware might be exchanged, which could seriously impact your systems and services. The risk may be reduced by developing and implementing appropriate anti-malware policies as part of an overall 'defence in depth' approach.

8. Monitoring - All organisations will experience Security incidents at some point. Investment in establishing effective incident management policies and processes will help to improve resilience, support business continuity, improve customer and stakeholder confidence and potentially reduce any impact. You should identify recognised sources (internal or external) of specialist incident management expertise.

9. Removable media controls - Removable media provide a common route for the introduction of malware and the accidental or deliberate export of sensitive data. You should be clear about the business need to use removable media and apply appropriate Security controls to its use.

10. Home and Mobile Working - Mobile working and remote system access have become the norm since Covid 19, but they expose risks that need to be managed. You should establish risk based policies and procedures that support mobile working or remote access to systems that are applicable to users, as well as service providers. Train users on the secure use of their mobile devices in the environments they are likely to be working in.



CABINET – 30TH NOVEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE PROCUREMENT REFORM AGENDA AND TO EXTEND THE COUNCIL'S PROGRAMME FOR PROCUREMENT (STRATEGY) FOR A PERIOD OF UP TO EIGHTEEN (18) MONTHS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION & CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on the UK Central Government and Welsh Government Procurement reform agenda via The Procurement Bill and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.
- 1.2 To recommend extending the Council's Programme for Procurement ('Strategy'), **Appendix A** for a period of up to eighteen (18) months. This will allow the future Strategy to incorporate the requirements of The Procurement Bill and Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.

2. SUMMARY

UK PROCUREMENT BILL

- 2.1 On 11 May 2022, The Procurement Bill ('the Bill') was introduced in the House of Lords. The Bill is the next step in the Government's plan to reform procurement policy in the UK following Brexit. The Bill aims to establish a single legal framework for the award of public contracts, utilities contracts, concession contracts, and defence and security contracts by contracting authorities such as the Council. Many of the features of the new rules will be substantially the same as the current rules, but a number of significant changes are proposed.
- 2.2 It is anticipated there will be broader transparency obligations under the new rules, which should mean that it will be easier to find out information about planned and completed procurements. There will be enhanced powers to exclude suppliers from procurements with key changes including: the introduction of a central list of debarred suppliers and broader rights to exclude suppliers for prior poor performance (including failure to meet Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)) and fewer, more flexible award procedures.
- 2.3 The Bill still needs to pass through the Houses of Parliament and the Government has indicated that there will be a period of at least six months between the Bill becoming law and the new rules entering into force, which is likely to be during 2024 at the earliest. Since the introduction in the House of Lords in excess of 540 amendments to the Bill have been tabled.

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT (WALES) BILL

- 2.4 On 7 June 2022 the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill ('SPPP Bill') was introduced before the Senedd Cymru. The aim of the SPPP Bill is to establish a statutory Social Partnership Council, creates new social partnership duties on specified public bodies in Wales such as the Council, promotes fair work and creates a duty for socially responsible public procurement. Also, to improve the economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being of Wales (including by improving public services) by embedding the principle of social partnership in the operation of public bodies in Wales.
- 2.5 A socially responsible procurement duty will apply to certain public bodies such as the Council, who will be required to seek to improve economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being when carrying out procurement, to set objectives in relation to well-being goals, and to publish a procurement strategy. Public bodies will also be expected to carry out contract management duties to ensure that socially responsible outcomes are pursued through supply chains.
- 2.6 The socially responsible public procurement duties cover the full procurement cycle i.e. planning, procurement, contract management, review and compliance. Public bodies and Welsh Government will have reporting duties in relation to the social partnership duties and procurement duty. It is anticipated that the SPPP Bill will follow similar timings of The Procurement Bill becoming law and the new rules entering into force, which is likely to be during 2024 at the earliest.

PROGRAMME FOR PROCUREMENT ('STRATEGY') 2018-2023

- 2.7 The Council's Programme for Procurement ('Strategy') 2018-2023 was endorsed and implemented following a Cabinet meeting on 16 May 2018. The Council has been committed to ensuring that we achieve value for money from our third-party procurement expenditure. Having recognised the value of using procurement to support our wider cultural, social, economic and environmental objectives in a way that offers real long-term benefits to the Community we serve and the people of Wales whilst balancing the issues of Value for Money.
- 2.8 A living Strategy, which has evolved since 2018 in order to adapt to our ever-changing environment and the developing procurement landscape as a result of Brexit, procurement reform, best practice and Welsh Government's continuous reviews of procurement. Importantly the Strategy is fit for purpose in the current climate and continues to be relevant across a number of cultural, social, economic and environmental objectives.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet notes the current status of The Procurement Bill and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.
- 3.2 That Cabinet endorse the recommendation to extend the Council's existing Procurement Strategy for a period of up to eighteen (18) months.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To inform Cabinet of the significant changes to the procurement rules over the next

twelve (12) to eighteen months (18), which will impact the Council's approach to its third party spend across all Directorates.

- 4.2 To ensure the Council has a current and fit for purpose Strategy post May 2023 that will continue to support the Council's Wellbeing Objectives and Corporate plan.
- 4.3 To ensure the Council fully considers the requirements of The Procurement Bill and Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill in the next iteration of the Procurement Strategy.

5. THE REPORT

UK PROCUREMENT BILL

- 5.1 In December 2020 the UK Government set out proposals for shaping the future of public procurement with the publication of "Green Paper: Transforming Public Procurement", following Brexit. The UK Government believed the current procurement rules, which were derived from a patchwork of EU Directives were too restrictive and complex and this was an opportunity to overhaul the rules.
- 5.2 The UK Government is therefore aiming to create a regulatory framework which simplifies procurement processes, places value for money at the heart, and generates social value.

The reforms have also been shaped by:

- the UK's obligations as a member of the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Government Procurement;
- the UK's commitments under bilateral trade agreements, including the EU/UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement; and
- feedback from over 500 stakeholders (Including Welsh representatives).

- 5.3 The Bill aims to establish a single legal framework for the award of public contracts, utilities contracts, concession contracts, and defence and security contracts by contracting authorities such as the Council. Many of the features of the new rules will be substantially the same as the current rules, but a number of significant changes are proposed.
- 5.4 EU public procurement rules are based upon general principles derived from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union: transparency, equal treatment, non-discrimination and proportionality. The UK Government has chosen to maintain the principles of transparency, equal treatment and non-discrimination in the new rules. However, contracting authorities will also be required to have regard to a number of ambitious objectives when awarding public contracts, including value for money, maximising public benefit and integrity.
- 5.5 To enable procuring authorities to take these new objectives into account during procurements, the Bill introduces subtle changes to terminology and existing concepts. For example, the Bill requires contracts to be awarded to the Most Advantageous Tender, rather than the Most Economically Advantageous Tender. In addition, the Bill provides Ministers (Welsh Government) with the ability to publish a statement setting out the Government's strategic priorities in relation to procurement, to which contracting authorities must have regard.

- 5.6 It is anticipated there will be broader transparency obligations under the new rules, which should mean that it will be easier to find out information about planned and completed procurements. There will be enhanced powers to exclude suppliers from procurements with key changes including: the introduction of a central list of debarred suppliers and broader rights to exclude suppliers for prior poor performance (including failure to meet KPIs).
- 5.7 There will be fewer, more flexible award procedures. The current regime provides procuring authorities with a choice of five procedures to carry out competitive procurement exercises. This can cause confusion as different rules apply under each of those procedures with respect to matters such as minimum time limits, the structuring of the award phase, and the extent to which discussions and negotiations with bidders are permitted.

The Bill provides for two types of competitive tendering procedure:

- a single-stage tendering procedure without a restriction on who can submit tenders; or
 - such other competitive flexible procedure as the contracting authority considers appropriate, which may involve limiting the number of participants across multiple stages.
- 5.8 This means that contracting authorities will have considerable leeway to design procurements in a way that suits their needs, subject to ensuring consistency with the procurement principles and objectives. There will continue to be a special regime for certain social, health and education services, specifically identified by secondary legislation, which may be procured as 'Light Touch Contracts', leaving room for authorities to design procurement procedures that are more appropriate for these types of services. These Light Touch Contracts are still subject to the necessary safeguarding requirements.
- 5.9 Procurement is a devolved function and Welsh Ministers did have the ability to dis-apply the Bill. Representatives of Welsh Government and stakeholders across Wales have been extensively consulted on the Bill and Welsh policy drivers and initiatives have helped shape the Bill. Subsequently, in August 2021 Welsh Government's Finance Minister issued a written statement confirming that Welsh contracting authorities such as the Council will be covered by the Bill. However, there can be subtle differences with how the Bill is applied in Wales due to legislation and policy drivers such as the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill and Wales Procurement Policy Statement amongst others.
- 5.10 Further consultation with stakeholders is expected as the UK and Welsh Government develops secondary legislation and guidance to provide the additional detail on how the new rules will operate in practice. The Council as per other contracting authorities will need to consider the Bill carefully, as well as the secondary legislation and guidance when published. The UK Government has confirmed that there will be a period of at least six (6) months following the Bill becoming law and the new rules coming into force.

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT (WALES) BILL

- 5.11 The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill ('SPPP Bill') was introduced to by the Welsh Government before the Senedd, Cymru on 7 June 2022. It is intended to complement other legislation, specifically the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFGA 2015) and provides a framework for

enhancing the well-being of the Welsh people by improving public services through public partnership, promoting fair work and socially responsible public procurement.

- 5.12 The SPPP Bill establishes a statutory Social Partnership Council (SPC), creating new social partnership duties. The SPC will be made up of members from the Welsh Government, nine (9) representatives of employers and nine (9) representatives of workers in Wales, nominated by the Wales TUC. The SPC's core function will be to provide information and advice to Welsh Ministers on a range of matters included in the SPPP Bill. There is also a requirement to establish a public procurement subgroup that will aid the SPC in providing additional expertise and support about the functions placed on contracting authorities and Welsh Government under the Socially Responsible Procurement duties.
- 5.13 The SPPP Bill further establishes a statutory Social Partnership Duty that will apply to specific public bodies such as the Council, to improve the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being when carrying out procurement, with both workers and employers involved. It will require public bodies to seek consensus or compromise with their recognised trade unions or other representatives of its staff (where there is no recognised trade union) when setting well-being objectives and making decisions of a strategic nature under the WBGFA 2015. The intention is to promote co-operation, strengthen policy and improve outcomes, through dialogue between social partners.
- 5.14 There are two (2) specific contract management duties set out, to strengthen the link between procurement exercises requirements and due diligence in major construction supply chains and outsourcing contracts. This is in consideration of including social public works clauses and social public workforce clauses, within those specified contracts. The first duty is to strengthen the Workforce (two-tier) Code of Practice. It states that contracting and retendering processes involving staff transferring from public bodies should be carried out to ensure terms and conditions of staff are protected and pensions remain generally similar. It also states new joiners to a transferred-out workforce are employed on terms that are no less favourable.
- 5.15 Welsh Government are under a duty to publish model clauses and are currently running a number of workshops on developing associated clauses. If any relevant bodies decide they do not want to include the socially responsible clauses in outsourcing contracts, the SPPP Bill places a duty on those relevant bodies to notify Welsh Government of that decision well in advance of when the contract is advertised. The exception notices will be reviewed by Welsh Government representatives to assess whether it is reasonable not include the clauses and the SPC may also be consulted to provide external expertise.
- 5.16 The other contract management duty addresses the need for greater due diligence in applying socially responsible contract terms throughout supply chains specifically in the construction sector where there is a risk of poor compliance with social obligations. These include unfair and unlawful employment practices that can be hard to address when dealing with long and complex supply chains. The duty is similar to that referred to in paragraph 5.15 above, in that a relevant body must notify the Welsh Ministers, in advance, if they do not intend to include socially responsible clauses in major contracts.
- 5.17 Major contracts are defined as construction contracts or call-offs from frameworks with an estimated value of £2 million or more (including VAT). Where socially responsible procurement clauses are included in major contracts, these contract clauses must be extended through the supply chain and a process established to ensure it happens. This will give greater assurance to agreed standards, including for

workers and the environment. It also gives bidders more confidence that they and their competitors will be held to contractual obligations.

- 5.18 The focus is currently on the construction industry and on larger contracts in order to test the application of this duty and to make the best use of resources, but Welsh Government may extend this duty to other sectors and commodity areas in the future. Further consultation with stakeholders is expected as Welsh Government develops secondary legislation and guidance to provide the additional detail on how the new rules will operate in practice. The Council as per other contracting authorities will need to consider the Bill carefully, as well as the secondary legislation and guidance when published.

PROGRAMME FOR PROCUREMENT ('STRATEGY') 2018-2023

- 5.19 The Council's Programme for Procurement ('Strategy') 2018-2023 was endorsed and implemented following a Cabinet meeting on 16 May 2018. A living Strategy, which has evolved since 2018 in order to adapt to our ever-changing environment and the developing procurement landscape as a result of Brexit, procurement reform, best practice and Welsh Government's continuous reviews of procurement.
- 5.20 The Strategy details a clear structure for Leadership and Governance and highlights the tools which will facilitate the process with the Council. The Strategy has four (4) strategic themes which supports the Authority's Well Being Objectives and the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
- Culture
 - Economics
 - Environment
 - Social
- 5.21 A five (5) year timescale had initially has been set for the delivery of the Strategy, however, the key strategic goals were far reaching, and it was envisaged that the Strategy will take the Council beyond 2023 timeline.

Conclusion

- 5.22 There will be significant changes to procurement rules and the Council will need to consider both Bills carefully, together with any secondary legislation and guidance when published. There will be need to plan an approach on implementation and communication within the Council ensuring key constitutional documentation, systems, policies and procedures are updated before the new laws come into force.
- 5.23 The existing Procurement Strategy continues to be fit for purpose and can be extended beyond its current timeline of May 2023. The Strategy continues to demonstrate the Council's commitment in supporting wider cultural, social, economic and environmental objectives in a way that offers real long-term benefits to the Community we serve and the people of Wales whilst balancing the issues of Value for Money.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 All details stated within this report and Strategy are reflective of all issues known as of September 2022.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Strategy positively impacts all aspects of the IIA, however a full IIA will be completed in parallel to developing the new Procurement Strategy.
- 7.2 Procurement is one of the seven corporate areas for change in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('Act') statutory guidance and must be a key area of focus for public bodies in meeting their obligations under the Act.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected within this report.
- 10.2 The "Update on the Procurement Reform Agenda and to extend the Council's Programme for Procurement (Strategy) for a period of up to Eighteen (18) Months" came before the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 8 November 2022.
- a. One Member raised the introduction of a central list of debarred suppliers and broader rights to exclude suppliers for prior poor performance. The Member enquired if there was anything in the existing Procurement Policy which mirrored this aspect and enquired whether or not a supplier fined for falsifying records by another agency would be placed on the barred list for example. The Procurement and Information Manager advised Members that there was the ability to debar suppliers under the existing strategy and he also outlined how such contractors were obliged to prove that they could meet contractual regulations before bidding for any future work. Members also heard how the Council work in a collaborative way with other organisations across Wales as part of a procurement network. The Member thanked the officer and observed that he might have a private conversation with him outside of the meeting.
 - b. Having noted the content of the report, it was moved and seconded that the following recommendation be forwarded to Cabinet for approval. By way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 12 votes for, 0 against and 0 abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.
- 10.3 RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that they:
- a. Note the current status of The Procurement Bill and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.
 - b. Support the recommendation to extend the Council's existing Procurement Strategy for a period of up to eighteen (18) months.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Author: Ian Evans, Procurement and Information Manager;
evansi1@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property,
Christina Harray, Chief Executive,
Richard (Ed) Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services,
Elizabeth Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services,
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer,
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer,
Derek Morris, Contracts Manager,
Natasha Ford, Business Relationship Manager,
Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee (8 November 2022),
PDM (9 November 2022).

Background Papers:

Appendices:

Appendix A Programme for Procurement ('Strategy') 2018-2024

Caerphilly County Borough Council

Programme for Procurement 2018 - 2024

■ Culture ■ Economic ■ Environment ■ Social



1. Introduction

Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Council) has set out its vision for developing and managing the living environment that it aspires to create for the residents and businesses within the County Borough in its Well-being Objectives.

The procurement function will support the Council's Well-being Objectives and Welsh Government's programme for Governance with its Programme for Procurement.

The Council is committed to ensuring it achieves value for money from its third-party procurement expenditure, circa £251 million per annum. It also recognises the value of using procurement to support its wider Cultural, Social, Economic and Environmental objectives, in ways that offer real long-term benefits to the community it serves and the people of Wales, whilst balancing the issues of value for money

Our Programme for Procurement needs to be a living strategy, flexible, adaptable and alive to the changing environment; modular in nature so that it is easy to review and update annually in line with developments in the procurement landscape. Our approach will be continuous improvement to bring about real change and to improve the lives of those who live and work within our borough.

The Programme for Procurement will build on the Council's success to meet the overarching Well-being objective.

2. Definition of Procurement

Procurement is defined as the process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment. (1)

The Procurement function within the Council is a centralized team of procurement professionals. Welsh Government's fitness check concluded that the function was "***Mature with an overall maturity rating of developing towards advanced***".

(1) Procuring the Future, 2006

3. Procurement Leadership and Governance Structure

The leadership and governance structure for procurement within the Council is:-

Leadership through Cabinet Members and specifically the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property.

- A Corporate Procurement Unit, which sits within the Education and Corporate Services directorate.
- A professionally qualified Head of Procurement who oversees all procurement activities over £75,000, reporting to the Director for Education and Corporate Services
- Clearly defined processes and procedures along with formal delegation of authority in respect of procurement activities embodied in Standing Orders for Contracts, the Procurement Code of Practice and Financial Regulations.
- All procurement over £10,000 to be managed via our Proactis eProcurement system. A fully transparent electronic procurement system which is embedded for all procurement over £10,000 with built in procedures and controls which are aligned to predetermined authorisation criteria. All procurements under £10,000 are devolved for efficiency of process: with common and repetitive spend being managed by pre-established arrangements which have been set up for such purposes.

Strategic Theme – Culture

Strategy – the Council will manage all third party influenceable spend (including Commissioning) via open, fair and transparent procurement, applying the principles of the UK Procurement regulations. The Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, Social Services Act and Welsh Government’s Public Procurement Policy where applicable. Officers will work within the established governance structures of the Council with a clear understanding of the rules and regulations and the standards expected. Our approach will be one of continuous improvement with the goal of influencing the real change that the Council aspires to bring to the lives of those living and working in the county borough. The Council will apply a category approach based on directorate plans. The Council’s Supply Positioning Model, Appendix A will be used to plot financial value of the requirement against market risk to assist in the decision-making process whilst determining away forward.

Strategic Goals (what we want to achieve)	Steps already taken towards strategic goal	What success looks like/will be measured by?	How to be achieved	When
Officers will work within the principles of the Council’s Customer Service Standard for all customers	This is a new Standard to be adopted across the service area.	A uniform approach to servicing customer needs evidenced by annual customer survey scores. Measurement: by corporate score card.	Officer training and development. Standards to be embedded into the procurement processes Results monitored, measured and reported to SMT. Annual reviews	Implement December 2017. Yearly reviews.
3rd Party spend will be procured via National, Regional and local arrangements. Collaboration will be embraced where appropriate. Alternative delivery models considered when appropriate.	5-year procurement plan established. Use of collaboration where applicable and benefits are deliverable to the Council. Limited outsourcing and partnering approaches in place.	An agreed Gwent programme for procurement which supports National, Regional and Local procurement. Measurement by corporate score card, Council wide spend analysis tools which reports spend activity. With annual reviews. Develop collaborative working models with external (third party suppliers) where appropriate. To develop areas such as Information transparency – data sharing with suppliers. An understanding of collaborative models’ options to create financial benefits.	All Wales programme for procurement. WLGA Sourcing strategy. Collaboration – Developing new models for integrating and partnering with external contractors and service providers. Fit for purpose contracting models. The right model for the right environment.	Start 2017 with Annual reviews 2025 Phased approach required resource risk and knowledge risk to the type of contracting required

Page 18

		<p>Explore alternative collaboration models such as Virtual joint venturing, labour and process fluidity, operating/collaboration model fluidity.</p> <p>Measurement: within service improvement plan.</p>		
Project risk profiling and mitigation through the development and use of Supplier Positioning models, Dunn and Bradstreet searches and other risk mitigation strategies	Discrete qualitative approaches such as supplier audits, risk registers, heat maps etc.	<p>A developed set of quantitative risk metrics such as Total Cost of Risk at the supply chain, category and supplier level.</p> <p>Total risk mitigation investment across the supply chain.</p> <p>The right price of risk transfer to suppliers, customers and third parties such as insurance companies.</p> <p>Measurement: as part of service improvement plan and Key performance indicators</p>	<p>Manage procurement risk in a comprehensive, continuous manner with regular monitoring and assessment of high-risk factors.</p> <p>Risk mitigation and support via engagement with financial services companies.</p>	2025 – Need to understand this is a large change and will require a phased and control approach
We will be in touch with and promote the management of Procurement in the age of social transparency	Traditional procurement process, electronic and paper based. Limited exposure to social media reactions.	<p>A robust process and appropriate contracts documentation that mitigates against inappropriate social media and customer interactions</p> <p>Measurement: within service improvement plan</p>	<p>Effective communications and transparent processes.</p> <p>Policy/wording in the tendering process documentation prohibiting disclosure of information via social media or by other means</p>	phased approach to 2020
A modern, flexible and innovative procurement function staffed by procurement professionals with the knowledge, skills and expertise needed to challenge the status quo and support the business operations of the future across all disciplines	<p>Limited and reducing resource with limitations in knowledge of legal and finance so heavily reliant on others in these disciplines.</p> <p>Buying consortium dysfunctional and not value for money.</p> <p>Utilisation of the EU Directives Light Touch Regime (LTR), wider increased</p>	<p>A more rounded procurement capability with commercially skilled Procurement officers able to take balanced risk decisions that are supportive of change.</p> <p>Procurement specialists with broader financial toolset so that they are able to assess wider</p>	<p>Targeted development and support aligned to the business need.</p> <p>Training to include Self funding, direct borrowing, third party financing etc. Risk</p>	Phased approach to 2023

	use of Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS), Soft market engagement, market engagement activities	organisational issues. Procurement and finance to understand the different ways of financing each aspect of the supply chain for large complex project. Longer term stability in contracts that are flexible in nature. Service user, community and marketplace consultation / research to redefine needs and create opportunities for delivering social value. Measurement: through the service improvement plan and customer feedback.	management and profiling. Full engagement with market and stakeholders prior to tendering to establish appropriate and proportionate contracts. Wider use of innovative procurement tools, such as LTR and DPS processes.	
Where appropriate include Social Benefit Clauses in the Contract Terms and Conditions	Applied Community Benefits Clauses in relevant contracts (Core and Non-Core).	The establishment of a recording and monitoring system that ensures that where social benefits have been included in contracts, they are being delivered. More locally focused procedures for below threshold contracting. Measurement: through the service improvement plan.	Establish and define appropriate clauses, KPIs and recording and monitoring system – Wider use of CMM to Contract Manage. Adapt procedures to allow for a minimum number of quotations to be requested from local businesses alongside others. Ensure application of Future Generations Act (Wales) is considered where appropriate. Review TOMs Methodology is embedded where appropriate.	2017 with Annual reviews to ensure social benefits remains fit for purpose and in line with Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

Strategic Theme – Economic

Strategy – The Council will leverage the value of its third party spend to bring greater social and economic regeneration to the communities we serve. We will work to identify opportunities for local businesses to work with us; we will explore every opportunity to bring innovation into our procurement processes and practices in order to achieve better outcomes and greater social value for all our customers.

Constant drive for best value, taking a whole life approach which will explore opportunities for circular and foundation economies.

A circular economy is an alternative to a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose) in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extract the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recover and regenerate products and materials at the end of each service life. The Foundational Economy is a grand name for those business activities that we use every day and see all around us. It includes businesses like retail, care and food industries. We need to consider the wider application of such activities as mitigating effects of Brexit by establishing a secure basis of supply through our local economy.

Strategic Goals (what we want to achieve)	Steps already taken towards strategic goal	What success looks like/will be measured by?	How to be achieved	When
Build on our electronic systems to further streamline and improve processes and procedures to make the experience of doing business with the Council as efficient, easy and uncomplicated as possible. Our electronic procurement systems will be developed as dynamic information highways with information flowing into and out of the organisation, providing all parties with timely information that helps make our business interactions easier and more efficient. Development of the Council's Passport to Trade solution will form part of this process	Our eProcurement system is already used for 60% of the Council's tenders. A single corporate end to end eProcurement system has been in place for many years. All orders are sent to suppliers electronically and an increasing number of invoices are being received electronically. A fully integrated comprehensive Contracts Management system is in use. Use of Dynamic Purchasing Systems (DPS) and other methodologies such as Passport to Trade to reduce the burden on bidders through the use of technology.	Procurement requirements are proportionate and do not create unnecessary barriers to small or medium enterprises, social enterprises, and voluntary groups. Annual KPIs showing that the percentage of expenditure with local suppliers continues to reflect positively (subject to procurement activity in a given year aligning with the strengths of the local supply base). Robust system to manage and support full supply chain information flow. Innovative use and development of new technologies. Ease of use for suppliers. Measurement: through service improvement plan and key performance indicators reported to SMT via corporate scorecard	Through investment of time and resource and Closer working with our technology supply partners to embrace more agile and mobile solutions. Potential extension of the principles introduced through the DPS process to develop a Passport to Trade solution that minimises the need for suppliers to submit pre-qualifying information in successive tender bids.	phased approach to 2025

<p>Alongside the more traditional emphasis on cost and compliance in commercial decision making, we will more actively embrace wider factors such as economic development and social benefits.</p>	<p>Implementation of the Council's Community Benefits Model. Provision of supplier relationship support to help local suppliers prepare for doing business with us. The Council's commitment to developing and supporting the local economy.</p> <p>Other supportive tools such as Pre-Qualification Questionnaires and evaluation methodologies.</p> <p>Forward Works Plans established.</p>	<p>% of spend with the local supply chains monitored and benchmarked on an annual basis. Suitable and simplified KPIs developed and tested to ensure that measures taken are cost effective for both suppliers and for the Council. All contracts will be future mapped to identify where social value and well-being goals lie giving a better understanding of our contracts on the Forward Work Plans to earmark suitable contracts. Closer working links with commissioning. Measurement through the service improvement plan and corporate scorecard KPIs.</p>	<p>Robust social and economic methodologies that can evidence results. Commitment to the supply chain.</p> <p>Community Benefits Tool kit supporting the Community Benefits Model (WG Community Benefits Calculator where relevant). Contract Management. Future Mapping of Forward Work Plans.</p> <p>Evaluate and apply if appropriate. TOMs Methodology to ensure robust performance measure.</p>	<p>By 2020</p>
<p>Develop methodologies that demonstrate that the work undertaken by procurement creates and delivers greater value to the organisation when weighed against the financial cost of the function. Create a meaning of value which incorporates but not dominated by savings.</p>	<p>Limited appreciation and reporting of value. Established directorate work programmes and annual feedback. Entrenched view of the value that the procurement discipline delivers</p>	<p>Organisational acceptance that 'value' is more than savings. A more balanced understanding of supply chain value.</p> <p>Development of outcome based on commissioning.</p>	<p>Through closer working with Finance and other senior stakeholders and providing evidence to support a redefined understanding of value outcome-based contracting.</p>	<p>2018</p>
<p>Increased use of analytical expertise and data management to help achieve a target of 90% of spend with suppliers that we have contracts with.</p>	<p>Detailed knowledge of spend profile from Spike Cavell spend analysis. Currently developing more interactive spend analysis with Proactis tools. Access to current and historic spends analysis used to drive directorate plans which are in development</p> <p>Use of financial assessment tools e.g. D&B</p>	<p>Spend analysis and forward work programmes used to help identify significant areas of spend that needs to be better managed e.g. total value of "off contract" uncontrolled spend.</p> <p>Increased value of spend in the local economy - Categories of spend identified that could be bought locally. Promote this to the local supply chain and helped develop to be able to bid.</p>	<p>Proactis spend analysis, Robotic technologies Understanding and Training.</p> <p>Proactis spend analysis reporting tools.</p>	<p>2025 Progressive approach required. Work to start 2018</p>

		<p>Take a no purchase order, no payment approach.</p> <p>Automatic payment process.</p> <p>Measured though service improvement plan and corporate score card KPIs.</p>	<p>Introduce clear process and procedures for raising orders.</p> <p>Utilize systems to bring about automatic/lean payment systems.</p>	
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Strategic Theme – Environment

Strategy - The Council will recognise environmental issues and address them through the procurement process and procedures. We will strive to develop the procurement function in a way that balances economic and social values in equal measure, embracing sustainable development and putting The Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 at the heart of all procurement decisions. The Well-being and Future Generations Act defines Sustainable Development in Wales as: "The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals". We will do all we can to help the Council in its efforts to balance the five ways of working needed for Public Bodies to achieve the seven well-being goals set out in the Act.

Strategic Goals (what we want to achieve)	Steps already taken towards strategic goal	What success looks like/will be measured by?	How to be achieved	When
Responsible business through procurement activity that works to help and not hinder the duty of care incumbent on us to be fair and considerate in all aspects of our business activities.	Adoption of the Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Code of Practice and commitment to The Future Generations Act.	Full implementation of the Council's Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Code of Practice Action Plan. Tangible evidence that procurement activity is supportive of The Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act. Development of a circular economy as an alternative to the traditional linear economy of make, use and dispose. Measurement through service improvement plan	Include a copy of our Policy on Ethical Employment in all procurements along with appropriate supporting requirements in the tender documentation. Developing Pre-Qualification Questionnaires, Tender Quality criteria and Evaluation Methodologies that take account of the needs of Future Generations and the need to keep resources in use for as long as possible, extracting the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recovering and regenerating them at the end of each service life so that they go on to be of value in a different form.	2020

<p>Develop an understanding and strengthen procurement capacity to realise the value of utilising sustainability strategies in the way we do business</p>	<p>A standard pretender Sustainable Risk Assessment process adopted and applied to all appropriate procurements.</p>	<p>A more robust Sustainability Risk Assessment incorporated into the pre-sourcing phase of procurements with a greater emphasis on the need for sustainable alternatives to be specified within a broader definition of product requirements. Measured through service improvement plan</p>	<p>Review of the standardised approach already adopted and the development of more bespoke Sustainable Risk Assessments that addresses the need to promote sustainable alternatives in procurements prior to being issued to the market.</p>	<p>2018</p>
<p>Understand and manage the impact of globalisation and the consequences for our supply chains</p>	<p>Adoption of Ethical Employment in Supply Chains CoP Action Plan.</p>	<p>Developed buyers that are supply chain/market specialists who understand their area of expertise and are capable of maximising or minimising the impacts that trading in globalised markets can have on our supply chains.</p> <p>Contract Managers capable to ensuring that throughout the life of a contract it delivers the outcomes intended. Measured through service improvement plan.</p>	<p>Education and training in respect of implementation of the EESC CoP Action Plan and integration of the Code objectives into procurement standard documentation. Recognition of the need to actively review and manage contracts.</p>	<p>2020</p>

Strategic Theme – Social

Strategy – The Council will use its procurement processes to foster positive social change where appropriate. The Council has adopted the Ethical Supply Chain Code of Practice and we will apply this to foster fair working conditions for all. In addition to this we will embrace all current and future legislation or political change brought about by the Brexit process that will assist in delivering more social value to our communities. The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. As required by the Act, we will work as far as we are able in the arena of public procurement to achieve all of the goals that we are able to influence, not just one or two.

Strategic Goals (what we want to achieve)	Steps already taken towards strategic goal	What success looks like/will be measured by?	How to be achieved	When
Adopt all elements of the Ethical Supply Chains Code of Practice, ensuring that in all our procurement activity that we meet the commitments documented in the Caerphilly Code of Practice Commitments 'Action Plan'.	Code of Practice adopted, and Commitments Action Plan produced.	<p>Full acceptance and implemented Ethical Supply Chains Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible new KPI - % of contracts that have social value outcomes included? <p>Awarding of contracts taking into consideration Modern Slavery, Blacklisting, False Self Employment and Unfair use of zero-hour contracts. Acknowledgement of the importance of the many outcomes required not just best price.</p> <p>Measured though the service improvement plan.</p>	<p>WG Ethical Supply Chains Policy, Council Action Plan.</p> <p>Development of tender documentation.</p>	December 2018
Develop robust measures of social benefits to be able to track the success of outcomes achieved through procurement activities	We have been proactive in many areas including requirements for apprentices, local recruitment and training; packaging of contracts to make more attractive to local SMEs and VCSEs and pre-tender market engagement/ consultation. WG community Benefits tracker used. Limited or no measurement in place generally.	<p>Recognition within the Council that social benefits have a positive impact on communities and are to be valued. Customer satisfaction evidenced through surveys and case studies.</p> <p>Reported and measured though the service improvement plan.</p>	<p>Robust policy, terms and conditions and effective monitoring to ensure delivery.</p> <p>Review TOMs Methodology and apply where applicable.</p>	2018

Page 126

<p>Where appropriate, ask bidders to detail and demonstrate the social value outcomes and measures that they can deliver when providing the goods, services and works specified. Where appropriate, include weightings in the tender evaluation model to assess the social value offers submitted by bidders</p>	<p>Some use of weighting to date where core benefits are concerned. Lack of enthusiasm in the organisation for this type of approach</p>	<p>Bid evaluation model in use capable of quantifying and valuing that element of social value that is inherent in a suppliers tender bid. Greater acceptance of the value that more locally based trading arrangements can have on sustainability in our communities.</p> <p>Measured though our service improvement plan.</p>	<p>Development of appropriate weighting models for use in the tender process and evaluations.</p>	<p>2018</p>
<p>Business support to form an integral part of the procurement process</p>	<p>Steps taken towards the use of pretender technical dialogue meetings with the supply chain and client departments to understand market trends and strategies.</p>	<p>Standardised collaborative approach from clients and the supply chain to evidence social value.</p> <p>Measured thought service improvement plan and corporate score card KPIs.</p>	<p>More intelligent and dynamic engagement with market participants.</p>	<p>2018 with annual review</p>

Appendix A

Strategic Critical

Strategic Security

High supply risk

Strategic Security might be goods obtained from a monopoly supplier or items with a very tight or 'bespoke' specification. These items are critical to the operation, but are low in cost. For most councils this will include materials and parts used in property maintenance governed by old specifications and also some contract services such as specialist teachers and carers where there is a very high specification but a low demand.

Strategic Critical are categories that are high cost and either have a specialist nature or are sourced from a difficult market in which there are relatively few supplies or suppliers. These are critical to the overall profitability, competitiveness or capability of an organisation to deliver services. In most councils this will include a significant amount of spend on waste and outsourcing and social care, where specifications are tight and there is a supply shortage. From that base data, Caerphilly selected the categories that they felt were Strategic Critical to them. These are the categories that are of strategic importance to Caerphilly and have a high potential cost of replacement should they no longer be available. Caerphilly added a number of categories that did not appear in this quartile in the exercise carried out in the 10 LA's in the South East. These were included on that bases that they were of strategic importance due to the potential risk to health and reputation (e.g. food & drink) in the event of a supply chain problem.

Supply Positioning Model (Kraljic)

Low cost

High cost

Tactical Acquisition categories will be of low value and with a low business exposure because they have no special quality, safety, reliability or environmental implications and there are probably many suppliers in the market able to meet the demand. For the most authorities, this would include stationery items, IT consumables and some catering supplies.

Tactical Profit categories are of relatively high cost but where there are no quality, safety, reliability or environmental issues and where there are likely to be plenty of suppliers. Purchases here are unlikely to contribute directly to the provision of services and often include items such as vehicles, contract services, IT equipment and utilities.

Tactical Acquisition

Tactical Profit

Low supply risk

Appendix B - Procurement Strategy Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) listed below will be used to demonstrate how effectively the Council is achieving against the Strategic Goals. The KPIs will be subject to refinement by the Head of Procurement during the term of the Strategy.

1. Demonstrate that the Principals of the Customer Service Standards are being met via Annual Customer Surveys
2. % of Annual Corporate Spend with Suppliers based:
 - Locally, Caerphilly Borough;
 - Regionally, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal;
 - within Wales.
3. % Corporate Spend Channelled through Collaborative Arrangements
4. % Contracts Tendered Electronically across the Council
5. Spend via Purchase Card
6. e-Invoicing – No. of Suppliers participating
7. e-Invoicing – Value of Transactions
8. No. Contracts that include Community Benefits and/or Social Value Clauses
 - Core Clauses in Contracts, Measured via National Themes, Outcomes and Measurers (TOMs) Framework (or equivalent);
 - Non-Core Clauses.
9. No. Suppliers signed up to the Welsh Government Code of Practice, Ethical Employment in Supply Chains
10. % of PDR's undertaken in Procurement

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CABINET - 30TH NOVEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: EDUCATION STRATEGY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the revised Education Strategy 2022-2025 building on the successes of the Shared Ambitions Strategy which shifted decision-making from short-term to long-term and school improvement approaches from 'challenge' to 'support'.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval to formally adopt and subsequently launch the new Education strategy.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report introduces the new Education Strategy 2022-25 which is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The Education Strategy redefines the vision for all children, young people and adults accessing education in Caerphilly County Borough council. 'Pursuing excellence together' will further develop the culture of trust, strong working relationships and a passion for making a difference that have underpinned our collective response to the recent challenges. While learner aspiration can sometimes be constrained by circumstance, they should never be defined by it. Our new vision is a public commitment to continuously seek out, promote and share excellence throughout our education system in order to deliver sustained improvement over the coming years.
- 2.3 The Education Strategy reasserts the Local Authority's approach in identifying and resetting priorities based on high expectations and ambition for all learners (standards, progress, provision, wellbeing). It sets out to ensure that all stakeholders engage and adopt the vision, agreeing a common approach towards addressing the priorities identified in the strategy.
- 2.4 The Education Strategy seeks to reach agreement on a set of principles around how we work together to maximise efficiency and productivity. It also outlines a clear approach to the principles of Evaluation and Improvement.
- 2.5 Rigorous self-evaluation over the past year has led to the identification of twelve key

objectives for improvement over the next three years. These are set out in section eight of the attached Education Strategy.

- 2.6 In the Curriculum for Wales, Welsh Government sets out to establish a new kind of learning journey for children, pupils and young people. The Education Strategy sets out how this will be taken forward across all the stages of learning from 0 to 25 and beyond across Caerphilly.
- 2.7 The Education Strategy explores the roles and responsibilities of schools, and the key partnerships with the Education Achievement Service, local and regional services, schools, child-care settings and other educational settings, emphasising the importance of working together to understand and support the needs of all children and young people and the commitment to those who are most vulnerable.
- 2.8 The Education Strategy has been developed in consultation with Local Authority staff (education and cross-directorate), schools, parents and carers, pupils (mainstream, looked after, educated other than at school), young people 11-25, Trade Unions, governors, further education colleges, Careers Wales, social services and the Education Achievement Service. The key issues identified by each of these consultee groups are represented in the strategy.
- 2.9 The Education Strategy does not exist in isolation. It is shaped and supported by a range of internal strategies that complements and supports the ambition contained in this strategy. These form a complex network of interwoven strands and relationships that unify to achieve the main areas for development. These key strategies are described in section ten of the Education Strategy.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet approve the publication of the new Education Strategy 2022-2025.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Shared Ambitions Strategy set the foundations for sustainable improvement across Caerphilly's education system as well as embedding a set of behaviours that would support that development. As that Strategy draws to its natural conclusion, the new Education Strategy should rightly provide the platform for the next three years and with it our commitment to pursue excellence together.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The new Education Strategy 2022-25 sets out to identify and re-set the educational priorities for Caerphilly post Covid-19 and for the next three years.
- 5.2 The Education Strategy also outlines how we will know if we are making a difference to children and young people, through a set of principles for evaluation and improvement both at school and Local Authority level.
- 5.3 The approach fits coherently with the responsibilities linked to:
 - the Curriculum for Wales,
 - the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Tribunal Act (2018),

- the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act,
- Welsh Government Renew and Reform post-Covid-19,
- the Tertiary Education Bill,
- the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme,
- Children’s Rights in Wales,
- Flying Start and Childcare,
- Parenting & Inequality strategy and the universal offer of free school meals for primary pupils.

5.4 The strategy recognises the cost-of-living pressures being faced by families across the County Borough and it will seek to alleviate those and reduce the impact of poverty and disadvantage on the educational achievement of affected learners.

Conclusion

5.5 The LA is committed and ambitious in its approach to transforming the lives of children, young people and adults. This new Education Strategy for 2022-25 brings together the principles and values underpinning this ambition and keeps the progress of pupils and young people firmly at the centre. The approach reinforces the need for partnership working and a proactive approach to supporting all children, ensuring they are included and can achieve. The strategy renews the emphasis on support for vulnerable and disadvantaged learners who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and cost of living crisis.

5.6 This inclusive approach will continue to develop the excellent working relationships between the Local Authority, schools and other stakeholders and support the focus on raising standards for all.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been felt to be necessary in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 The approach being developed keeps children at the centre, promotes equality of opportunity, and reinforces the importance of partnership working to achieve our ambition.

7.2 The information gathered and reviewed as part of the Integrated Impact Assessment and through the consultation process supports the benefits of developing the approach to supporting children in this way.

7.3 Therefore, Members are asked to consider this Integrated Impact Assessment alongside this Report in support of progressing to implementation from the Autumn Term 2022.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The purpose of this report is to present a strategy that identifies the key priorities for the education service, our schools and our partners for the next three years. This will ensure that all financial spend appropriately supports activities and resources, resulting in an improvement in the performance measures outlined in appendix 1 of the strategy.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no specific staffing implications linked to this approach.

10. CONSULTATIONS

Education Scrutiny Committee 19th October 2022

- 10.1 Members stated that the report refers to a summary of roles and responsibilities of schools and key partnerships, including EAS and asked is it working effectively. Members were advised that it is working well at the moment, they are adapting practices and as a region looking at joint initiatives post covid. There are EAS monthly meetings and officers will use these to get the best possible support for Caerphilly. There are benefits to working as a region and there are challenges, but ultimately the responsibility lies with the LA to ensure that Caerphilly schools have the support they need.
- 10.2 Members discussed pupil attendance and the practice of sending letters to parents regarding attendance and asked if consideration been given to one-to-one discussion with parents to explain the importance of attendance and uncover any barriers. The committee were advised that attendance strategies are under constant review and previous work had put Caerphilly as 6th in Wales for best attendance. Overall schools want to get children into school, letters can work but in some situations may not be suitable. Education Welfare will look at some individual cases where pupils may have specific vulnerabilities.
- 10.3 Members asked what is the local context in terms of Youth service, as there is no mention of non-maintained youth provision which offers excellent drop in service. Officers acknowledged this point.
- 10.4 The scrutiny committee commented on the provision for 14 upwards and noted there is lots of excellent practice across Caerphilly, and the need to ensure it is shared.
- 10.5 In terms of Shared Ambitions members asked what guarantees are there around the expectation to track and map provision for vulnerable learners. Officers advised that when a strategy is devised it may not 100% reflect what is happening at the time and the aim is to support schools through a lot of changes and they want to see every school succeed.
- 10.6 Members asked if the 0% NEETS target is possible? The revised strategy includes ambition to reduce the number of NEET pupils in year 11. Officers have looked at the data and identified who can support the children at risk of becoming NEET. This includes Education Welfare, Community Learning and Youth service. Funding has been used to target key stage 3 pupils who are most at risk of becoming NEET.

- 10.7 Members stated that it is good to see the engagement with children and their requested learning, but will it include things like civic responsibilities, voting, politics etc. The committee were advised it is important to reflect the feedback from pupils and other stakeholders in terms of building the curriculum. The next stage is to hold events with schools to discuss the feedback.
- 10.8 Members queried the priorities and the lack of figures in appendix 1 of the strategy – what does good look like, would we need to have pre and post covid baselines. The scrutiny committee were advised that Welsh Government does not want data to be aggregated or used for accountability but there will be both qualitative and case studies to illustrate how the strategy is working.
- 10.9 Safeguarding – assurance was sought that where children are exposed to incidents of domestic violence that social services will report to schools so that teachers can ensure that children are supported. Members were assured that professionals have responsibilities under safeguarding to put the welfare of the child first.
- 10.10 The committee asked how we monitor the children who are educated outside mainstream schools. Members were advised that these number have risen since covid, we have employed elective home education advisory teacher whose role is to visit families and check on the education. We have reports back and keep in touch with the ongoing challenges they face but also offering a way back to schools. We have also provided some virtual learning for those who are educated off school sites and until the building is complete they are spread out across Caerphilly.
- 10.11 Members asked under Areas for Development – Healthy Food Choices, how will this be done and will it include teaching cooking skills. The committee were advised that the healthy schools team are proactive in this area and work to improve attitudes to food choices and getting physically active. The Health Research Network survey will focus on a range of issues related to well-being including food and fitness.
- 10.12 Members sought clarification on the expansion of Flying start and queried when the stages will be implemented and how long each stage will last. The committee were advised that the expansion will be phase one and will include the five communities of New Tredegar, to start from Monday next week. For phase 2, Officers advised they have received the guidance and the delivery plan and are currently waiting on Welsh Government to provide data on the numbers which will be needed to identify the areas. Phase two will not be the full flying start programme and will be purely the funded childcare provision, it was noted that in Caerphilly we have flexed the grants to make sure that all families can access the early intervention when they need it. The hope is that from March/April next year we will have more childcare provision rolled out. It was also explained that that we do not know yet how many stages there will be stage two will last until March 2024. We will start Stage three planning with Welsh Government, but there may be changes after the next Welsh Government elections. Overall it is envisaged to have a service for all areas in the next 5 years.
- 10.13 The scrutiny committee were glad to see the Learning Journey for adults and asked if there is funding. Members were assured that there is funding for the adult communities for learning, a bid has also been submitted to the Shared Prosperity Fund. We have Families First funding for essential skills, there are also training linked to regeneration projects and the employment team have funding from Welsh Government.

- 10.14 Members asked if children given the opportunity to have critical thinking/bias teaching so that they know to research different sources. Officer advised that this is more prevalent in the new curriculum with an emphasis on skills levels.
- 10.15 In terms of staff training, the scrutiny committee asked if consideration been given to resilience of staff cover, and also overcoming issues where some ALN children may prefer to be assisted by particular staff and this cannot be avoided during absences and training etc. Members were advised that the Act looks to offer more training but this needs to be balanced against not overloading staff, the aim is to offer tools to staff in a measured approach. The committee were informed that within early years they have flexed the grant funding to be borough wide from April last year, so they were able to put some provision in place but the numbers are still considerable. More children are being found with developmental delays which may be due to covid as well, from lack social interactions of parent toddler groups etc. The team is working with health and connecting with schools to try to mitigate the impact upon them.
- 10.16 Members asked if Early Years and ALN have had an increase in referrals post covid. It was confirmed that numbers are increasing and ideally early intervention would help children catch up. Unfortunately health visitor teams are carrying large vacancies and although there are lots of clinics including Saturdays there are a lot of pressure on assessments. There are waiting times for Paediatrics, for Speech and Language therapy, occupational therapy etc, all of these services are under pressure.
- 10.17 The committee asked if in order to help with exam stress, have there been opportunities for meditation or mindfulness at schools particularly during exam preparation. Members were advised that schools have counsellors who can offer these types of schemes including mindfulness.
- 10.18 Members asked what is being done to address the length of time for assessments post-covid. They were advised that there is a new assessment system with lots of changes, this means there is no longer a requirement for this to be carried out by Education Psychologists, which should mean improvement in the length of time.
- 10.19 Members asked if Welsh School participants have access to qualified youth workers who are Welsh speakers. Do we have numbers? It is confirmed that we don't have exact numbers but there has been a push to encourage Welsh learning in the team and there are targets in the service plan. Members also expressed concern that Welsh learners don't have local dialect. Officers acknowledged that many of these issues are difficulties and challenges that we are having in delivering the Welsh Strategic Plan.
- 10.20 The scrutiny committee expressed concern over low registration for Free School Meals and the potential impact upon family finances. Officers advised that they would like to see around 80% and there are plans to carry out some promotion to aim to increase numbers.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Education Act 1996
 Equality Act 2010
 United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child
 Inclusion and Pupil Support Guidance Welsh Government 2016
 Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act (2018)

Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021
Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022

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Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education & Achievement
Members of the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee
Steve Harris, Head of Corporate Finance
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Sue Richards, Head of Transformation and Education Planning & Strategy
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager
Kath Beaven, Lead for Wellbeing and Equity (EAS)
Debbie Hartevelde, Managing Director (EAS)
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services

Appendices

Appendix 1: Education Strategy 2022-25

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Contents

Foreword – Cabinet Member for Education

Vision – Chief Education Officer

1. The National Context
2. The Local Context
3. Regional Partnerships

4. Building on our successes - Shared Ambitions
5. Revision of the Education Strategy
6. The Principles of Evaluation and Improvement
7. The role of stakeholders in creating this strategy - #TeamCaerphilly

8. Main Areas for development

9. Learner Journey – from 0 to 25
 - Early Years
 - Learner Journey – School and other education settings
 - Support for young people in post-16 education
 - The Contribution of Caerphilly Youth Service
 - The role of the Education Achievement Service in supporting the learner journey
 - Learning throughout life

10. Key strategies that support the realisation of the Education Strategy
 - Strategy: Inclusion and wellbeing
 - Strategy: Support for pupils at risk of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
 - Strategy: Improving Pupil Attendance
 - Strategy: More Able and Talented
 - Strategy: Pupils' Acquisition of Digital Skills
 - Strategy: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032
 - The role of Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21st Century Schools)
 - Strategy: Medium Term Financial Principles

Afterword – Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services

Appendix 1: How we will measure our success – education directorate indicators.

Political forward: Cabinet Member for Education

I am elated to become the Cabinet Member for Education and Communities at a time when the Directorate is in such a good position and where education in Caerphilly is described as being in 'safe hands'. Also, during my induction period, I have enjoyed being 'a critical friend' during the self-evaluation process.

Obviously, there are challenges ahead following the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Cost-of-Living Crisis and the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales and ALN reform.

As a former school nurse and Healthy Schools Co-ordinator, I know how important health and wellbeing is to young people and staff attending our schools. So, when Professor Donaldson started talking about Wellbeing in the curriculum I was delighted.

Health and Wellbeing is not just about food and fitness and the pandemic has highlighted the need for our young people (and sometimes their families) to access schemes dealing with Mental and emotional health and wellbeing, personal development and relationships and substance use and misuse. We know that without the good foundational building blocks that our young people are unable to access the skills required to learn.

School staff are more aware of this than ever and are delivering schemes along with other professionals to address the needs of our young people and their families.

This new strategy will help facilitate health and wellbeing in the new curriculum and therefore help to repair the building blocks to enable our young people to learn and develop into responsible, well-developed citizens. It will also build on the successes of the Shared Ambitions strategy, providing a framework where all stakeholders in Education in Caerphilly can navigate the challenges ahead.

Carol Andrews

Cabinet Member for Education

Vision for education: Chief Education Officer

Learning has the power to transform the lives of children, young people and adults.

In Caerphilly County Borough Council, all those involved in this learning believe that a culture of trust, strong working relationships and a passion for making a difference, will lead to sustained improvement over the coming years.

We have great aspirations which are sometimes constrained, but never defined, by circumstance.

We will remain focused on providing our absolute best and will be unwavering in our commitment to excellence.

Pursuing excellence together.

Keri Cole

Chief Education Officer

1. The National Context

Welsh Government acknowledges the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent impact on children, learners and young people across Wales. Although focused on local needs within the Caerphilly Local Authority, this Education Strategy supports the national plans to 'Renew and Reform'.

Welsh Government, together with our own self-evaluation processes, suggest that the pandemic has affected some groups of learners more than others. Therefore, the nature of this Education Strategy needs to reflect this additional concern, recognising and supporting different groups of learners in the appropriate way. In particular:

- vulnerable or disadvantaged learners, and learners with ALN have not necessarily had access to the support they need; some may have faced challenges with distance learning, and some with readjusting to face-to-face learning. We need also to support those learners whose circumstances have changed during the pandemic, who may not have previously fallen into this category;
- learners in Early Years education are at a critical stage for language, social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Pupils risk missing key development milestones, which could impact on their emotional wellbeing, communication and learning development. They may have specific challenges in finding a sense of belonging in their schools or settings, or in being away from their families;
- an understanding that families may also be anxious to be separated from their children as they return to school and supporting wellbeing of both children and their families is paramount in a successful return to education with consistent attendance;
- learners in post-16 and transition and those moving into post-16 provision will be concerned with progressing to their next steps, as well as with their longer-term employability and skills. These learners will have experienced particular pressures and uncertainty, and their confidence will have been affected;
- specific challenges for Welsh immersion learners in English-speaking households, and learners transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7.

At the highest level, the ambitions of the strategy are shaped not just by local circumstances but by policies and strategies determined by national government. Among those cited in the

Education Strategy or that have a direct bearing on it are the Programme of Government, ALN reform, the new National Curriculum for Wales, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Welsh Government Renew and Reform post-Covid-19, the Tertiary Education Bill, the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, Children's Rights in Wales, Flying Start and Childcare, Parenting & Inequality strategy and the universal offer of free school meals for primary pupils.

2. The Local Context

Caerphilly Local Authority covers an area stretching from the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north, to Cardiff and Newport in the south. It is bordered to the west by Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff, and to the east by Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen local authorities.

The area lies at the heart of both the South Wales Valleys and the Cardiff Capital Region. The Caerphilly County Borough occupies some 108 square miles (28,000 hectares) of the Valleys area of South East Wales. It is a little over 18.6 miles long and nearly 11 miles wide and is formed by the valleys of three rivers: the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw. The County Borough has 180,000 residents living across a mixture of urban and rural communities.

Three quarters of the County Borough is used for agriculture and forestry.

There are around 23,000 statutory aged pupils attending schools across the Local Authority. Caerphilly learners account for around a third of the learners sitting external examinations at the end of key stage 4 across the region of South East Wales in any given year. Over 11,000 (8%) of young people (8-25) engaged with the Youth Service.

In Caerphilly there are:

Setting Type	Cymraeg	English
Primary Phase School	11	61
Voluntary-aided Primary School	0	1
Secondary School	1	10
3 to 18 School	0	1
Special School	0	1
Pupil Referral Unit	0	1
Further Education college		2
Registered Childminder	90	
Registered group-based Childcare provider	21	72

Non-maintained education provider	7	7
Youth Service	1	

The Early Years and Childcare team in education works across the Borough in partnership with the Health Board, voluntary organisations and others as part of a broader Early Years team across the borough. The team supports registered childcare providers, and commissions contracted childcare and education placements, as well as providing early intervention support for children and families with emerging needs.

The EAS, the education consortium for South East Wales, supports the role of Caerphilly Local Authority in delivering their statutory functions, addressing improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes.

There is Youth Work (Service) provision across the borough supporting both universal access and more targeted support for young people and their families, as well as continued delivery of quality library services and community centres.

Our Adult Education provision delivers quality learning opportunities across the Borough for individuals beyond school age.

There are significant levels of deprivation within the Local Authority with around 30% of statutory school age pupils living in 20% of the most disadvantaged areas in Wales. 14 of the 110 areas in the Caerphilly County Borough are in the top 10% of the most disadvantaged areas in Wales.

26.4% of Caerphilly pupils of statutory school age on roll are entitled to free school meals (taken from Pupil Level Annual School Census 2022).

Caerphilly continues to increase its homelessness prevention work and the number of young people supported to resolve homelessness issues via the addition of a dedicated project located within the Youth Service.

Caerphilly County Borough Council fully supports the Welsh Government's "Programme of Government" commitments to combat poverty and inequality. A Cost-of-Living Crisis Working Group is looking at all the current and potential funding streams to ensure the LA's response is effective, timely and efficient in supporting the increasing numbers of vulnerable people across the Borough. New projects include Caerphilly Cares – Community Cooking Champion, a project aiming to tackle Food Poverty & Insecurity throughout the Caerphilly County Borough by educating people on how to cook and prepare healthy nutritious food. Participants will then extend the training into their communities. There is a strong connection

between a good diet and the capacity of young people to learn. This aspect of CCBC's work links with the Welsh Government's policy, with Plaid Cymru, to create a universal free school meals offer to all primary pupils.

The Council has prioritised improving the education opportunities for all as one of its Wellbeing Objectives and has committed to an ambitious investment programme. The Sustainable Communities for Learning investment programme is a major, long term capital programme jointly funded with Welsh Government that aims to create a generation of 21st century schools. Band A of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme is nearing its end with three new schools built and three schools improved. Work is currently underway to deliver the equally ambitious Band B programme.

Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to working with other organisations in a range of partnerships. At all times it will seek to improve the outcomes and impact of the services provided through these partnership arrangements. Whether this is, for example, through the school improvement work with EAS or the collaborative arrangements amongst the County's school sixth forms. In some cases, this will be the provision of commissioned services and CCBC will ensure that, on behalf of its learners, any such services deliver on expectations.

3. Regional Partnerships

Caerphilly County Borough Council has excellent working relationships with the neighbouring local authorities and a range of other services across the South East Wales region. These partnerships provide cohesion and integration across the region and deepen the understanding of issues and the solutions and strategies that can be deployed to meet the challenges we all face in our region of South East Wales. As indicated, each of the partnerships has its own specialist area of focus.

Wider agencies can provide a source of advice, guidance and support that can be brought to bear on the successful delivery of the Education Strategy. These include the Welsh Local Government Association, the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (and its sub-groups such as Finance), the National Academy for Education Leadership, national associations for parents and governors as well as a broad range of national groups from Youth Services to Healthy Schools and Education in Welsh.

Among the key regional partnerships interacting with the Education Strategy is the EAS commissioned by five local authorities to deliver the regional school improvement service.

The Greater Gwent Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership Board is a key partnership body; established to lead and guide the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 in our region.

Under the banner of Gwent Safeguarding, the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB) undertakes its responsibilities in relation to the protection of children in our region, who are in need of care and support, from abuse or neglect and the prevention of any risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm.

The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal is a regional partnership with an ambitious investment programme designed to develop the transport infrastructure and connectivity as well as expanding employment and apprenticeships to positively promote regeneration of communities. It also promotes and supports the key business sectors in the region and aims to help expand the pool of skilled employees that the employers in these sectors really need.

The Early Years Integration Transformation Programme Steering group comprises the five local authorities, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Public Health Wales. This steering group oversees the implementation and evaluation of the midwifery and early years strategy and core programme to shape future integrated delivery, including identification and support for children with emerging needs and transition into school.

The regional and local networks are extensive and include the following:

- South East Wales Inclusion Group.
- South East Wales School Improvement Group.
- South East Wales Healthy Schools Group.
- National PHW Healthy Schools Group.
- The Community Safety Partnership.
- The Welsh Language Forum.
- The Welsh Education Forum.
- The Cost-of-Living Crisis Group.
- Careers Wales.

4. Building on our successes - Shared Ambitions

'Shared Ambitions: working together to achieve the best outcomes for our young people' was an ambitious strategy that outlined how the council worked with schools and partners to deliver a clear vision for improving attainment and achievement from 2019 to 2022. In December 2021, an external, commissioned review of the Shared Ambitions strategy identified the following features:

- There is a clear sense of ambition and school leaders feel inspired by the way corporate officers prioritise the needs of children and young people.
- Politically and corporately, there is a clear commitment to support the wellbeing of learners and staff; to ensure that every setting develops a learning environment that is inspiring and ambitious to each individual pupil or student; that is inclusive and supports the holistic needs of all learners; that delivers equality. There is a vision for how schools and education relate to economic growth and prosperity.
- The Local Authority was praised for its leadership and support during the pandemic. Actions have progressed during the challenging period of the Covid-19 pandemic. Relationships across the educational community in Caerphilly are very strong.
- Schools and services operate in an environment of significant commitment and trust.
- School leaders report that the strategy has framed local priorities effectively and has guided actions into realistic outcomes.
- Headteachers feel that the strategy provides consistency of approach and a strong sense of the educational community working together to deliver common aims.
- All senior school leaders and officers feel that the #TeamCaerphilly brand provides a powerful and meaningful umbrella term that brings the educational community together across the local authority.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted significantly on the ambition of the strategy, but senior leaders within schools were keen to acknowledge the heroic and tireless support they have received during the pandemic.
- The pandemic has focused activities around supporting vulnerable learners and in being more specific in identifying their needs, e.g., investment in technology.
- Headteachers felt that there was strong support for the Welsh-medium sector in the Local Authority.
- Learner participation plays an integral part in the management of education services in Caerphilly. Pupil voice is given a prominent role across settings.

The external report identified the following areas for further development:

- To become more effective, leaders should track and map the provision for vulnerable learners, reviewing how the information and data is utilised to carry out these key responsibilities.
- The Local Authority needs to consider how it will support children's and young people's views and voices to be heard and reflected in its strategies, self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.
- The Local Authority should consider setting a zero NEETs target and within a broader context.

5. Revision of the Education Strategy

This is a key moment in time for Caerphilly County Borough Council to renew its Education Strategy. The strategy will take account of the conclusions from the Shared Ambitions review, our own self-evaluation processes, external guidance such as Estyn and other crucial factors.

It will include the implementation of the new 'Curriculum for Wales' (2021) and Additional Learning Needs Act (2018), ensuring that support for schools and settings deliver on the high expectations set out by Welsh Government. The new strategy will also need to reflect the educational environment in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Local Authority must work effectively and efficiently with stakeholders and partners to ensure we address priorities and maximise impact.

The purposes of the strategy:

- Identify and reset priorities for the Local Authority (LA) post-covid, based on high expectations and ambition for all learners (standards, progress, provision, wellbeing);
- Ensure that all stakeholders engage and adopt the vision and strategy based on high expectations and ambition;
- Identify a common approach towards addressing the priorities identified in the strategy, including the implementation of the new curriculum and ALN reform;
- Agree a set of principles around how we work together to maximise efficiency and productivity.

6. The Principles of Evaluation and Improvement

Caerphilly Local Authority has a duty in respect of education based on section 22 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. This includes:

- A 'general responsibility for education' in their area by contributing 'towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education, and secondary education... are available to meet the needs of the population of their area'. [Section 13, Education Act 1996]
- A duty to promote high standards, and the fulfilment of learning potential, in the exercise of their education functions. [Section 13A, Education Act 1996]

Local Authorities 'maintain' schools, which means they have an interest in them being managed well, provide effective provision and achieve high standards of learning for all children, pupils and young people.

To achieve this, Caerphilly Local Authority uses effective ongoing self-evaluation and improvement processes to:

1. evaluate how the Local Authority is performing, covering all aspects of education over time, with an ongoing focus on learner provision and progress;
2. inform the processes for improvement – both priorities and actions;
3. support sustained improvements over time, not short-term 'quick fixes';
4. identify areas of strength to be shared with others;
5. promote professional reflection and discussion;
6. inform professional learning for all staff; and
7. improve the planning of Welsh medium education and Sustainable Communities for Learning programmes.

Our self-evaluation is most effective when it:

- focused on improvement for children, pupils and young people;
- is continuous and aligned with processes for improvement;
- is reflective, honest and inclusive, using rigorous evidence-based approaches that take in a wide range of views from across the school (including learner voice), the wider community and peers;
- uses evidence-based practice to innovate and improve;
- uses data proportionately alongside first-hand evidence, to evaluate own strengths and areas for improvement;
- shares effective practice within and between schools and other settings;
- retains existing effective practice;

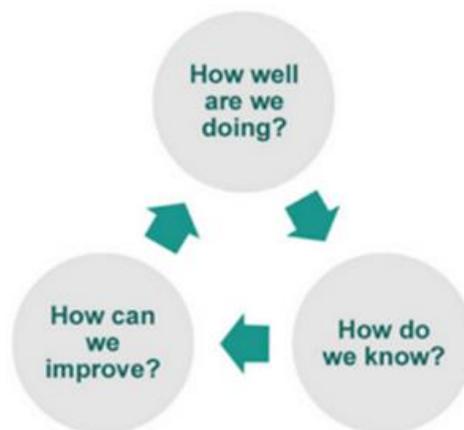
- involves all children, pupils, young people, staff, parents/carers, governors and other stakeholders;
- includes collaboration with peers to support their own and others' practice; and
- keeps progress against improvement priorities under review.

How we use information to evaluate how successful we are ?

Since Shared Ambitions was introduced, the Council has changed the approach to the collection, scrutiny and overall purpose of data. This is in line with principals promoted as part of the Education in Wales: Our National Mission agenda. Specific reference can be located in a range of sources including:

- New National Evaluation and Improvement Resource (Education Wales)
[The national resource: evaluation and improvement - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales/government/education/national-evaluation-and-improvement-resource)
- New arrangements for the inspection of schools and PRUs (Estyn).
[Our new inspection arrangements for schools and PRUs | Estyn \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales/government/education/inspection-of-schools-and-prus)

This redefined purpose to the use of data is firmly embedded with the Local Authority self-evaluation and improvement planning policy and process. In basic terms, this can be represented by the diagram below:



To achieve the above, a range of approaches are required to gather reliable evidence. All data should be used proportionately, and where possible, triangulate evidence. The use of data to determine support for schools should not be the responsibility of senior leaders only, but part of daily practice for all.

The above approach leads the Local Authority to consider the indicators we use to create an accurate profile of an improvement journey. We aim to ensure that we maintain a mature

and nuanced understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement, of an educational setting or service, that will ensure that the support we offer is appropriate and effective.

7. The role of stakeholders in creating this strategy - #TeamCaerphilly

An inclusive ethos that values the views, engagement and participation of all stakeholders is central to ensuring the success of this strategy. The vision and objectives for improvement will only be achieved when everyone works together to achieve our ambition for all learners.

In readiness for the strategy, a range of stakeholders were engaged to genuinely understand the successes, challenges and barriers to success for all children, learners and young people accessing education and support in Caerphilly. The following views will also be used to hold the education directorate to account throughout the three-year duration of this strategy.

Stakeholder group	Event	Key Issues
Pupils	School council engagement sessions.	<p>Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for creativity, autonomy, active choices • More focus on science and design technology • Variety in how lessons are taught - group discussions, independent learning, presenting, teacher guidance and modelling • More opportunities to learn outside • More visitors that enhance curriculum experiences <p>Active role in the life of the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active role in decision making including themes and topics delivered through the curriculum • Opportunities to feed their experiences/views to senior leaders and Governors • Genuine pupil voice/being listened to • Incorporating LGBTQ • Support for mental health sessions • Active school councils consisting of pupils with specific backgrounds (FSM, non-FSM, young carer, CLA, LGBTQ) • Improving the school environment
Looked after pupils	Learner Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being included in decision making and planning • Key adults in school to support well-being • Support with their learning • A wide range of opportunities; academic and extra-curricular

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual pathways for social and emotion growth as well as learning • Developing a sense of belonging within in a school community
Pupils educated outside a mainstream setting	Learner voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal opportunity to curriculum choice and resources • Vocational element • Involvement in what they are being taught and how they are being taught • Individual pathways, door left open back to school if appropriate • Opportunities for work experience
Young people 11-25	Ten open access youth work settings and groups including LGBTQ+	<p>Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to broad curriculum with excellent teachers • Focus on practical activities, including art, music, cooking, sport, design technology, construction, mechanics • Involvement in developing the Curriculum for Wales • Active participation in what is taught • Learn more about the wider world • Learn about financial management including pensions, tax, credit, mortgages • Commitment to raising awareness about the environment • Relationships and sexuality education • Substance misuse • Life skills that prepare for the future • Stimulating, fun lessons where pupils take an active role. More discussion, group-based lessons • Visits to colleges to prepare for transition <p>Wider school issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More involvement in decision making • Positive relationships between staff and pupils based on mutual respect
Parents/carers	Three workshops with parent groups across Caerphilly borough.	<p>Parents/carers want the following for their children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy, confident children • Wellbeing of children strong focus in schools • Inclusive environments with positive relationships • More opportunities for play • Access to digital resources • Stronger transition between schools for children and their families • Greater empathy towards individual family's needs • Strong communication between parents and setting, both written and verbal • Recognising all children's strengths – not just academic achievement

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to deliver consistent approaches to learning between home and school • Building bridges between parent and school to form holistic community • Equity for all pupils – regardless of background • A curriculum to meet individual needs • Pupil voice genuinely a feature of schools and makes a positive difference to school life • Positive strategies to manage behaviour including restorative approaches
Governors	Governor network session – 60+ Governors attended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having access to a range of internal and external evidence to verify and improve evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development • Strong, productive relationships between the Governing Body and senior leaders to appropriately support and challenge • Highly effective induction and ongoing training for Governors to undertake role effectively • Support to prioritise training to effectively fulfil role • Support for all pupils, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds • All pupils to have access to digital resources • Governors to have excellent knowledge of ALN reform and Curriculum for Wales to undertake role effectively. This is not simply an introduction to the curriculum but a more robust understanding to allow appropriate challenge and support • Strong network of Governors including support through mentors and peer networks <p>The following areas should be main areas for development in the strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrowing the attainment gap between FSM and non-FSM • Attendance • Safeguarding • Inclusion and Accessibility • Wellbeing • Digital Equality, IT • Reading and Writing skills • Support for parents to reinforce learning at home
Cross-directorates (e.g. sport, digital, catering)	Meetings through the calendar year with managers and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross motor skills – system to track the progress of pupils • Physically active pupils, especially girls' participation in extracurricular sport • Effective Implementation of physical activity within the new curriculum • All pupils having access to swimming lessons • Pupils having access to cycling proficiency lessons

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil/device ratios – all pupils have access to digital resources to make strong progress in their learning • Robust infrastructure to support the increased use of technology in school environments • Utilisation of IT investment on standards and provision • Utilisation of IT to enhance introduction of new curriculum • Utilisation of IT to support all learners, including ALN and MAT • Sustainable financial plans to ensure strong investment for the future • Revisit the approach to encourage pupils to eat healthier during the school day
Schools	Headteacher cluster meetings Professional discussions meetings	<p>Staffing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient workforce • Focus on staff wellbeing <p>Curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful implementation of Curriculum reform and ALN reform that has tangible benefits for all learners • Effective common approaches to assessment within and across clusters of schools • Strong peer networks built on collaboration, support and accountability (especially within clusters across primary and secondary) • Focus on basic skills affected by the covid pandemic (oracy, reading, writing, numeracy, digital) • Support for pupils attending Welsh medium schools where English spoken at home <p>Wider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective multi-agency working to improve outcomes for learners • Excellent pupil attendance
Further education colleges	Stakeholder meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing good relationships with schools over ALN learner transitions and improving the efficiency of the Multi Agency Transition Support Meetings • More comprehensive sharing of pupils' information prior to transition to ensure appropriate support is in place including contacts for agencies involved with particular learners • Identification of a single lead worker for these learners • Improved partnership and collaboration over transition events including co-ordinated calendars of activities

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening relationships with schools post-Covid • Key challenges seen as: resilience, mental health & wellbeing, social skills, financial pressures, exam skills, confidence
Careers Wales	Stakeholder meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More consistent provision of pupil information especially predicted grades • Continued positive engagement with schools and the Youth Engagement and Progression Co-ordinator • Easier access to pupils and facilities for group work • Encourage schools to go for the new version of Careers Mark • Would like to see wider use of work experience
Local Authority education staff	Stakeholder meetings during 2021-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups • Commitment to basic skills • Focus on all aspects of AOLEs • Raise the profile of expressive arts within the new curriculum
Social Services	Stakeholder meeting April 2022	<p>Partnership working with schools and Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint meetings to share knowledge and expertise • Build effective working relationships with schools including headteachers, ALNCo's, learning support assistants and the Designated Safeguarding lead person • Hold key meetings in term time so schools can be represented • Build excellent lines of communication <p>Building confidence in operational practice with schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop safeguarding training so that staff in schools have confidence in their roles, especially the Designated Safeguarding Person; • Support schools in understanding the level of concern that requires reporting, the timeliness of referrals and how they manage disclosures. <p>Other aspects of service improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the effectiveness of discussions where panels are considering pupils with safeguarding issues • Minimise the time between exclusion and the provision of work to avoid disengagement from education • Improving the opportunities, especially in non-mainstream settings, for young people to be prepared for transition to adult life • Further improve the ability to make referrals if there are concerns for pupils not attending a school setting

EAS		<p>Work with the Local Authority with the aim of transforming the educational outcomes and life chances for all learners across Caerphilly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure successful learning experiences and high levels of wellbeing, particularly for those learners facing the greatest challenges; • Build effective networks of professionals across the five local authorities and beyond, and working together to improve leadership, teaching and learning and; • Attract and retain a team of outstanding people who embed our core values in their work and share a passion for excellence.
Union representatives	Stakeholder meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the most vulnerable • Support for more able and talented learners • Understand the role that education plays in social mobility • Ensuring the children from disadvantaged backgrounds reach their full potential
Corporate Management Team		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In support of the key priorities for improvement • Recognise the role that stakeholders play in the success of the strategy • Recognise the link between education and employability skills and the future success and wellbeing for all residents living in Caerphilly • Ensure ongoing funded projects are recognised in the strategy; e.g. 'Multiply' project to support adult numeracy.
Scrutiny		To be received

8. Main Areas for development

Over the last twelve months, the Local Authority has undertaken a rigorous self-evaluation process to identify the main objectives for improvement over the next three years. We believe that prioritising the following areas will result in the Local Authority meeting its aspiration and ambition for all learners and satisfying the emerging themes from the stakeholder engagement sessions.

The objectives below will be reflected in the updated corporate and education plans, which will be used to hold the education directorate to account.

Objective	Rationale
Continue to provide robust approaches to safeguarding of children and young people based on emerging needs and demands as an outcome of the Covid-19 pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding continues to underpin all priorities to ensure there are robust systems and practice across the Education Directorate and schools. • There are several areas of focus post-pandemic, including continued advice and support to all education staff, increased training provision and auditing safeguarding arrangements across schools/settings. • Research shows that there was an increase in domestic abuse in households during the pandemic, resulting in increased operation encompass alerts to schools and a significantly higher number of referrals. • Physical interventions have increased in provisions that provide tailored support, which could indicate an impact on wellbeing needs of the more vulnerable learners following the pandemic.
Equip leaders with the skills to have a significant impact on progress, attainment and provision and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspirational leaders effectively fully achieve the vision of #TeamCaerphilly (based on collaboration, inclusivity, engagement, and support). • Leaders include (but not limited to) Governors, councillors, headteachers, senior leaders, teachers, youth workers, team leaders, learning support assistants, mid-day supervisors, setting based administrative staff, young people, pupils and education staff.
Ensure the effective implementation of Curriculum for Wales .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New curriculum is statutory from September 2022 for many year groups. • Emerging evidence indicates that effective implementation of the revised curriculum improves standards and accelerates learner progress.
Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic has had an impact on learners and the attainment of particular groups especially the most

<p>In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accelerate the progress of pupils who receive education outside a mainstream setting (EOTAS/EHE) - Reduce the number of young people post-16 without access to education, employment or training (NEETS). - Implementation of the ALN Act. 	<p>vulnerable and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition that the pandemic has adversely affected vulnerable groups of pupils. • Learners accessing education outside mainstream school settings require the same levels of high-quality education and curriculum entitlement as their peers, particularly following the disruptive consequences of the Covid pandemic. • The impact of the pandemic means that the reduction in the number of NEETS over time (2.6% in 2016/17, falling to 2.2% in 2020/21) could reverse unless we ensure effective coordinated support between the education authority and partners.
<p>Improve pupil attendance and reduce exclusions, with particular focus on vulnerable groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of covid-19 has had a detrimental effect on pupil attendance. Data are currently around 6% lower than prior to the pandemic. • Focus will be given to reducing persistent absenteeism among vulnerable groups and disadvantaged learners. • Overall, pupil exclusions across the Local Authority are too high. Challenges remain around the number of permanent exclusions. • Supporting the wellbeing of learners and families to reduce anxiety is a specific area of ongoing work.
<p>Further improve provision and support for young people (post-16)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a need to strengthen collaboration and practice across our post-16 partnerships to ensure learners make appropriate choices with helpful advice and support.
<p>Close the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence from local, regional and national sources indicate a strong link between deprivation and under-achievement. • Lack of progress in closing this attainment gap over the last decade particularly at key stage 4.
<p>Improve digital skills for all learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum for Wales – focus on learners being digitally competent is a central feature of Curriculum for Wales. • Ensure all schools have the training and tools available to best prepare their learners for life inside and outside the classroom. • Ensure that Edtech funding provides values for money. • Work with families to support vulnerable learners where there is a lack of funding in the home for Wi-Fi

	/data or a lack of technical expertise to support their children.
Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in Welsh medium by 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation that there is an increase in the numbers of nursery and reception pupils receiving their education through the medium of Welsh. • Children require continued support to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another. • More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school. • There is recognition of the need to provide effective provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). • Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.
Support pupil wellbeing by improving attitudes to healthy food choices and active fitness	<p>Local Authority School Health Research Network data (2022) has identified the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of pupils consuming high sugary/energy drinks per day. • Pupils' low consumption of drinking water during the school day. • Less than expected number of pupils eating 5 fruit or vegetables a day. • Increased number of pupils being inactive for 7+ hours a day.
Ensure the most vulnerable families including those in poverty , can access support to give their child the best start in life .	<p>Increase the access to support by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the reach of Flying Start programme through phase 1 expansion from Sept 2022. • Increasing universal part time funded 2year old childcare placements in future phases. • Increase the Childcare Offer for students in HE/FE from Sept 2022. • Increase take-up across the borough to early language support, child development support and family support by maximising funding streams. • Increase accessibility of information available through the Early Years and Childcare website and the Dewis database. <p>A revised curriculum for non-maintained settings must be effectively implemented to meet the needs of all children accessing this provision.</p>
Through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme ensure that the County Borough provides sufficient school places to meet demand as well as upgrading/replacing school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within school catchment areas, meet the expectations of parents and governors for school places in all Welsh and English maintained settings across the County Borough. • CCBC needs to reduce surplus capacity in English-medium schools whilst at the same time increasing

<p>accommodation, as appropriate, so that schools are fit for purpose in the 21st century.</p>	<p>capacity in Welsh-medium schools in line with the WESP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned increases in specialist places for our most vulnerable learners to meet the continuing rise in demand. • The programme needs to continue to renew or replace, where appropriate, existing school building stock with fit for purpose 21st century accommodation thus contributing to the transformation of learning environments alongside the introduction of the new national curriculum in Wales.
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9. Learner Journey – from 0 to 25

The new Curriculum for Wales sets out to establish a new kind of journey for children, pupils and young people whereby they can develop a deeper knowledge of the learning continuum and the range of skills needed for their journey 3 to 16 and then beyond. At the heart of this journey is the development of the Four Purposes whereby learners are supported to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

The journey will be the progression made by each learner aged 3-16, framed by the 27 'What Matters' statements. These are developed within the context of the six areas of learning experience. The sections that follow set out how those learner journeys will be developed in practice.

An important element in the journey will be to ensure there are consistent and effective transition processes between each phase providing high quality experiences for learners. Smooth and well-informed transitions, under-pinned by strong partnership work between phases, will help learners towards achieving ambitious targets for each stage of their development. This may also require putting in additional support or more extended preparation to meet the needs of individual or groups of learners.

Below is the link to the Curriculum for Wales guidance:

[Introduction - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

9.1. Early Years

In Caerphilly borough we want every child to have a good start to their learner journey regardless of where they live. We want children to be happy, healthy, and resilient which includes having healthy secure relationships with consistent caring adults, who can support their child's development opportunities, in a safe enriching home environment.

Sometimes adults need support to give their child a good start. The early years team will be there with the family when needed on their journey from the antenatal period throughout their early years and through key transition points. Early years will promote accessible information online and through the multiagency team who will offer the right support at the right time by the right person for the family especially for those most vulnerable families including those living in poverty and digitally excluded. Support may be virtual, in person in the community or in the home depending on the needs of the family.

The Early Years team includes everyone working with families from antenatal to 7 years, for example, midwifery, health visiting, school nursing, speech and language as well as other health specialists, childcare, schools, family support and early intervention teams. The whole workforce will need coordinated cross-agency regional continuing professional development opportunities to ensure they are skilled to meet the needs of the whole family through a What Matters approach to develop inclusive provision. This will include using the specialists in early years to upskill the rest of the team.

Our purpose is to ensure the most vulnerable families, including those in poverty, can access support to give their child the best start to their early years.

We will increase the access to support by:

- Increase the reach of the Flying Start programme through phase 1 expansion from Sept 2022.
- Increase access to the universal part time funded 2year old childcare placements in future phases of expansion, including Welsh medium, throughout the lifetime of this Strategy and as Welsh Government funding expands.
- Increase access to the Childcare Offer for students in HE/FE from Sept 2022.
- Increase access across the borough to early language support, child development support and family support by maximising funding streams.
- Increase accessibility and breadth of information available through the Early Years and Childcare website and the Dewis database.

[Home - Caerphilly Early Years Caerphilly Early Years](#) / [Hafan - Blynyddoedd Cynnar Caerffili Blynyddoedd Cynnar Caerffili](#)

'every child should have access to a good, positive education experience that is varied, holistic and can take account of individuals views and interests' – parent

9.2. Learner Journey – Schools and other education settings

Three-year milestones have been devised to support schools to self-evaluate their development journey and implementation of the new curriculum. These will enable schools to embrace the four purposes at the heart of curriculum reform.

The formation of this self-evaluation framework was created in consultation and collaboration with school improvement partners (EAS) and then senior leaders across Caerphilly from several settings. The principals within this framework can also be used across other educational settings.

School senior leaders can use the document to track their progress towards the indicators. As mentioned previously, self-evaluation is most effective when it is continuous and aligned with processes for improvement, uses evidence-based practice to innovate and improve, and shares effective practice within and between schools and other settings.

The indicators were informed by current Welsh Government guidance.

[School improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

[Embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental wellbeing](#)

Three Year Milestones - School Development Journey

1. Leadership

	Developing	Creating	Establishing	Embedded	Modelled
Establish a school vision which incorporates Curriculum for Wales.	Principles for a school vision are shared with stakeholders and align to LA and regional Frameworks.	Create a shared vision from all stakeholder feedback.	The school and wider community adopts the vision through the day to day running of the school and whole school planning and policies.	The school and wider community adopts the vision through the day to day running of the school and whole school planning and policies.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how the stated vision has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.
School staffing structure effectively supports Curriculum for Wales.	Schools identify a management, teaching and support staff structure in place to meet the needs of Curriculum for Wales.	Where relevant, with the Governing Body share potential developments to staffing models.	Implement what is fit for purpose to meet the needs of the learner, curriculum and offers value for money.	Implement what is fit for purpose to meet the needs of the learner, curriculum and offers value for money.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how the Curriculum for Wales has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.
School Development Plan (SDP)	The school has a clear self-evaluation (SER) and SDP approach which identifies school, local and national priorities.	The school works with cluster and external partners to develop the National Evaluation Improvement Resource (NEIR) approach to self-evaluation. In particular the use of first-hand evidence.	The SDP specifically addresses the short- and long-term school improvement priorities.	The SDP specifically addresses the short- and long-term school improvement priorities.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how the SDP has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.

Strong strategic leadership by Governors	Governors have appropriate support, mandatory training and wider training to fulfil their role as an effective governor.	Governors have a meaningful role in developing the school vision, committees, policies and school development planning.	Governors (with the Headteacher) formally review performance management (PM), Staffing, Curriculum, provision and building/ resources.	Governors (with the Headteacher) formally review PM, Staffing, Curriculum, provision and building/ resources.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how Governance has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.
Transition	Child Looked After (CLA) and Cluster plan is submitted to the EAS annually.	Ensure the Transition Plan reflects all school needs, LA and national priorities and is shared with stakeholders.	There is a progressive development towards enhanced Curriculum for Wales planning and delivery (Reception – Year 8) which broadly aligns across the cluster.	There is a progressive development towards enhanced Curriculum for Wales planning and delivery (Reception – Year 8) which broadly aligns across the cluster.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how Transition has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.

2. *Provision/pedagogy*

	Developing	Creating	Establishing	Embedded	Modelled
Improve the provision for Areas of Learning Experiences and skills including 1.Specialist Teaching	Audit of staff skills and qualifications. Audit of facilities and resources (fit for purpose).	Professional learning plans identify training needs for staff to meet curriculum needs and training events.	Nearly all staff are trained to provide high quality teaching and learning to meet the needs of the curriculum.	Resources and buildings are fit for purpose and the infrastructure plan is monitored annually.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how provision development has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.

2.Learning Environment					
The curriculum is appropriate for learners meeting their needs with the Curriculum for Wales and GCSE specifications	Curriculum Audit of the What Matters Statements, Learning descriptors and progress steps from R – Y11 for all AoLEs along with the 4 purposes.	There is a progressive development towards enhanced C4W planning and delivery demonstrated through curriculum planning and first-hand evidence.	School has a strategic approach to managing the integration of AoLE Principles of Progression, cross-cutting themes and authentic learning.	The school self-evaluates the quality of curriculum and implements refinements.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how provision development has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.
Robust tracking of progression for all learners for all AoLEs/ Subjects.	The school has a clearly defined assessment policy.	The school develops systems to collect Quality Assurance (QA) for teacher assessment information.	The school uses tracking systems to identify underachieving learners and implement interventions.	Implement moderation activities across clusters/ regions.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how assessment and tracking has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.
The school effectively delivers the skills framework across the school.	Stakeholders have a clear understanding of the skill framework (Literacy, Numeracy, DCF & Welsh)	Teaching and learning policy has a specific - skills section.	Schools implement whole school strategies, including any external resources.	The planned delivery of skills and progress is recorded (tracked) for all learners.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how skills have impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.

3. Professional Learning

	Developing	Creating	Establishing	Embedded	Modelled
The school creates a high-quality workforce (teaching, non-teaching and leadership) to meet the needs of the National Mission 2022 and beyond.	School has a strategic approach to professional learning on key areas i.e. 1. Teaching and Learning (Recognised monitoring approaches) 2. Leadership/ National Mission 3. Wellbeing (staff and students)	Professional learning plans identify training needs for staff to meet curriculum needs and training events.	The professional learning experience is evaluated (from the plan) against impact in the class/ area of development to inform current and future whole school planning.	The professional learning experience is evaluated (from the plan) against impact in the class/ area of development to inform current and future whole school planning.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how Professional Learning has impacted on stakeholders and the wider community.

4. Quality of Teaching

	Developing	Creating	Establishing	Embedded	Modelled
Teaching & Learning	The school has revised the 2022 teaching and learning strategy/policy which is understood by all stakeholders, e.g. Use of 12 Pedagogical Principles.	The Professional Learning (PL) plan identifies and supports the development of teaching and learning.	There is an effective QA cycle which monitors the quality of teaching and learning.	Leaders / strong innovative practitioners support other colleagues (in school and regionally) in need of further support.	Schools can demonstrate how the quality of teaching and learning has impacted on learners.

5. Wellbeing

	Developing	Creating	Establishing	Embedded	Modelled
Attendance	School has a robust attendance policy that aligns to LA (Education Welfare Service) and WG statutory guidance. This is communicated clearly with all stakeholders.	The school tracks learner attendance and intervenes at agreed stages (Policy).	The school develops a wider range of support and challenge strategies.	The school develops a wider range of support and challenge strategies.	Schools can reference a range of examples of how the management of attendance has improved learner attendance at an individual and whole school level.
Tracking of Wellbeing and Provisions	<p>The school has a scoping approach to identify those in need of wellbeing support and required initiatives and provision</p> <p>Student Voice/ Surveys/Focus groups</p> <p>The school is also utilising the WG Whole-School Approach (WSA) to Wellbeing Self-Evaluation Tool to identify wellbeing priorities and appropriate provision to address these</p>	The school uses wellbeing data and other sources (e.g., Spiral of Inquiry approach and WG WSA Self-Evaluation Tool) to create a school action plan.	The learners' wellbeing needs are identified, appropriate provision/intervention is put in place (as identified from the 'Supporting Wellbeing and Positive Relationships Toolkit' in the Inclusion Compendium / advice from the Educational Psychology Service (EPS)) and learner outcomes are monitored against intervention.	The learners' wellbeing needs are identified, appropriate provision/intervention is put in place (as identified from the 'Supporting Wellbeing and Positive Relationships Toolkit' in the Inclusion Compendium / advice from the Educational Psychology Service (EPS)) and learner outcomes are monitored against intervention.	<p>Schools can reference how the action plan (and for example, spiral of inquiry) has impacted on improving learner wellbeing.</p> <p>Schools can reference through, for example, their Spiral of Inquiry(s) and WSA to Wellbeing Self-Evaluation Tool how they have identified appropriate initiatives and implemented these to impact on the wellbeing of key stakeholders and the wider community.</p>
Staff Wellbeing	The senior leadership team is aware of the challenges facing staff and implements	The school develops scoping strategies, such as using the NEIR and WSA to Wellbeing Self-evaluation Tool and	The school implements strategies within Teacher/ LSA conditions to support staff wellbeing	The school implements strategies within Teacher/ LSA conditions to support staff wellbeing	Schools effectively manages Professional Standards and WG Workload Charter to create the best possible

	<p>approaches to support the workforce.</p> <p>The school through consultation with the EPS can identify and source (from the EPS) appropriate wellbeing support for staff</p>	<p>developing working groups.</p>	<p>The school is accessing available support from the EPS (e.g., staff wellbeing training, 6-week staff wellbeing programme, half-termly supervision groups) and signposts staff to external agency support (e.g., Care First - Employee Assistance Programme; Education Support)</p>	<p>The school is accessing available support from the EPS (e.g., staff wellbeing training, 6-week staff wellbeing programme, half-termly supervision groups) and signposts staff to external agency support (e.g., Care First - Employee Assistance Programme; Education Support)</p>	<p>education environment for our learners</p> <p>Schools can reference the staff wellbeing support in place in their WSA to Wellbeing Self-evaluation Tool</p>
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9.3. Support for young people in post-16 education

The learner journey, in preparation for post-16, starts with early exposure to impartial advice and guidance about the wide range of possibilities for future progression. This, in turn, will support good decision making by our learners so that they can make a successful and sustained transition at age 16 because they had been able to choose the progression pathway that was right for the individual.

In following the refreshed guidance on Careers and Work-related Education (CWRE) as a cross-curricular theme in the new national curriculum, learners will be exposed to careers guidance in varied forms from 3 to 16 and beyond. All our subject staff, primary and secondary, will need to be capable of including aspects of CWRE in their programmes of learning.

In CCBC's post-16 provision, the sixth-form partnerships will be underpinned by agreements set out in joint memoranda of understanding including:

- The principles of strong partnership working;
- The breadth of the curriculum choice;
- The commitment to and monitoring of the quality of provision alongside mechanisms for improvement;
- The co-ordination of activities and processes across the partnerships that will provide an equity of experience to our learners across the Local Authority.

We will work with our wider partners, including the colleges and work-based training providers, to ensure that there are strong vocational routes available to our learners that are matched to their desires and aspirations as well as the employer needs across our Cardiff City Region.

To support some of the most vulnerable learners who want to progress to college a post-16 transition protocol has been developed. This aims to ensure that vulnerable learners (e.g., those with ALN, at risk of becoming NEET, CLA, or with mental health needs) are supported to have an enhanced transition to college. Enhanced transition includes enhanced careers input in year 10, support with the college application, visits to post-16 destinations, a Multi-Agency Transition Meeting (MATSM) in which college staff are present and, if required a person-centred planning meeting. The MATSM and PCP meetings ensure that key information is shared to enable college staff to gain a good understanding of pupil needs so that the college setting can put the appropriate support in place to meet those needs.

Support will continue to be provided by the Youth Service, Inspire to Achieve, Inspire to Work, Communities and Careers Wales to help learners make the right choices and to provide that support, if and when learners need to switch pathways, all the way from 16 to 25.

Therefore, our aims for post-16 are:

- Support the continued development of sixth-form partnerships and collaboration that deliver a breadth of curriculum choice for our learners and high-quality provision.
- Work with our wider partners including the colleges and work-based training providers to ensure that we have vocational progression pathways where our learners can develop the skills they need for employment in the 21st century.

To support learners on their journey, we have developed the 'Caerphilly Pathways' website providing comprehensive advice, guidance and support for all aspects of available post-16 education, apprenticeships and training. The website can be accessed below:

[Welcome to Caerphilly Pathways](#)

[Croeso i Lwybrau Caerffili \(caerphillypathways.co.uk\)](http://caerphillypathways.co.uk)

9.4. The Contribution of Caerphilly Youth Service

Caerphilly Youth Service's vision is for young people to have enjoyable experiences, feel valued and listened to, and to learn, achieve and aspire to do well now and in the future. To realise this, the following principles are applied:

- Participation - making young people feel valued and listened to, and for them to learn to achieve
- Informal educational - providing experiences that enhance young people's personal development
- Key transition support, including support activity that reduces the likelihood of NEET status
- The development of intellectual, practical and creative skills
- Understanding that individual young people have very different life experiences and chances
- Prevention of exclusion/promotion of inclusion (community/school/society)

Key Youth Service planning

- Service restructuring to provide more responsive and flexible forms of youth work – all in the context of post- Covid reignition and recovery
- Whole service focus on the reduction of NEETS
- Greater harmonisation of educational delivery with secondary schools (specific reference to wellbeing curriculum strand)
- More effective combination of universal access youth work for 11–25-year-olds and targeted, specific project work with young people

Through the key Youth Service curriculum areas (life skills, recreation, health and wellbeing, citizenship and creativity), youth workers engage and educate young people in all aspects of their lives. Provision is delivered through a wide variety of methods such as detached and outreach, premises-based and digital work. This will enable young people to engage in their education by means that best suit their individual circumstances.

It is important that school-based staff have a good understanding of the breadth of the youth work offer. Equally important is that youth workers become familiar with the organisation of schools and how best to complement the work of teaching staff in delivering the new curriculum.

The priorities of the youth service are to:

- Secure the engagement of learners through a range of youth work methodology that is best suited to their needs and interests.
- Provide opportunities for learners to achieve formal accreditation through voluntary participation in programmes of learning.
- Provide experiences and opportunities for learners to achieve non-formal accreditation.
- Support learners to develop soft skills through a variety of enriching and beneficial experiences and opportunities.

9.5. The role of the Education Achievement Service (EAS) in supporting the learner journey

The EAS delivers, through an agreed Business Plan, a wide range of school improvement services to all schools (all key stages, including all through schools and special schools), pupil referral units and funded non-maintained nursery settings on behalf of Caerphilly LA.

This plan supports the role local authorities have in delivering their statutory function, addressing their individual improvement priorities and promoting improved pupil outcomes. This Business Plan spans a three-year period and will be subject to an annual review and updates to the annual programme.

The delivery model for the Business Plan is on a regional basis, the individual requirements and trends across Caerphilly will continue to be met through bespoke work with each school and alongside the Local Authority.

All Caerphilly schools will continue to be provided with a support package that complements the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (outlined below):



Universal Support:

All schools will receive a universal offer of a set number of days to work with their School Improvement Partner (SIP). This will include professional dialogue to agree support and improvement priorities, plus allow additional days for activities that supports self-evaluation. In addition, schools have access to a wide range of professional learning opportunities and professional networks across a range of areas including school leadership, support for teaching and learning and support for wellbeing.

Targeted Support:

In addition to the universal support, schools can access a range of targeted support for a specific school improvement activity. This could include:

- additional School Improvement Partner allocation;
- peer/school-to-school working on an agreed priority e.g. improving teaching;

- advisory support for subjects and/or areas of learning (AoLE);
- shorter term activity e.g. INSET delivery;
- focused Learning Network School subject /AoLE work brokered by the SIP or subject adviser.

Bespoke/specialist support:

Bespoke support days will be negotiated as part of the professional discussion and will be differentiated according to need. This support will usually be over a sustained period of time and will be gradually tapered off when impact is noted and improvement is embedding. This can include intensive, holistic and ongoing work with a focus on leadership and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

9.6 Learning throughout life

The first of the Four Purposes that underpin the new Curriculum for Wales states that learners are supported to become *“ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives”*

In the preceding sections the part played by Early Years, schools, post-16, the Youth Service and EAS have been laid out. But, as Welsh Government has set out, learning is not intended to stop at 16, 18 or 25 but should continue throughout life.

CCBC supports this continuation of the learning journey throughout its residents’ lives.

The Caerphilly Adult Community Learning Service (CACLS) has a key role in supporting the learning journey. It meets the needs of individuals and communities through its own services and by working with a range of partners to provide both accredited and non-accredited courses. The offer has an extensive range of provision covering literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, Essential Skills, ESOL, Independent Living Skills and short vocational courses. The CACLS operates out of many different settings right across the County Borough and engages with hundreds of adults every year with particular efforts to work with those adults that are traditionally hard to reach.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on CCBC’s communities has meant a break or cessation of learning activity for many adults. CACLS is making use of additional Welsh Government funding, through taster and hook activities, to re-engage adults in their learning journey following this disruption.

Over the next three years, CACLS will also be taking advantage of the new Multiply programme and funding. Working with a range of partners across the region, this programme will provide free courses designed to help transform the lives of adults across the County Borough by improving their functional numeracy skills through free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses. These will be delivered in a variety of settings from community facilities to online courses.

The Caerphilly Library Service (CLS) also plays a vital role in individuals' learning journeys supporting residents from "the cradle to the grave". Through its holistic and modern library service, CLS aspires to enhance residents' health and well-being, productivity and economic activity, learning, skills and social interaction.

CCBC libraries are trusted, safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces designed to encourage and promote the enjoyment of reading, learning, creativity, culture, imagination and play.

Every effort is made to:

- provide up to date information and guidance;
- provide children and young people with an engaging and relevant offer;
- ensure provision continues to meet and support both current and future needs;
- have a library stock and resources that are available for loan in support of the new Curriculum for Wales.

CSL libraries embrace technology and digital formats, supporting greater inclusivity and helping to bridge the digital divide.

CLS engages with a number of bilingual activities and initiatives in to bring enjoyment to the reading process and support language development for all ages.

The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme is a long-term capital investment programme to improve the quality of school buildings. The detail of CCBC's programme is set out in section 10.7 of this Education Strategy. Investment Objective 2 of the programme places emphasis on ensuring the use of facilities is maximized, a key priority being community use. In Caerphilly this may involve the use of sports or leisure facilities or hosting adult and community learning.

10. Key strategies that support the realisation of the Education Strategy

Caerphilly County Borough Council's Education Strategy does not exist in isolation. It is shaped and supported by a range of internal strategies that complements and supports the ambition contained in this strategy. These form a complex network of interwoven strands and relationships that unify to achieve the main areas for development.

10.1. Strategy: Inclusion and wellbeing

Education in Caerphilly is based on an inclusive ethos emphasising the right of everyone to be treated fairly, regardless of protected characteristic. This is underpinned by the principles of ensuring that all learners have a sense of belonging and will be supported to participate and achieve to the best of their ability.

The Council recognises that health and wellbeing are essential agents for learning and therefore the focus is on ensuring that this is placed at the centre of developments to support children, families, communities and education providers.

Organisational and cultural change is supported by high quality leadership and effective management which promotes inclusive policies and practice. A drive to improve outcomes for children and young people provides opportunities and challenges and the Inclusion Compendium demonstrates the Local Authority's approach to these.

Compendium

The Local Authority's Inclusion compendium provides a comprehensive suite of documents underpinned by the Inclusion Strategy. The strategy is aligned with the strategic direction of the Education Directorate and other linked strategies and policies, for example the authority's NEET strategy.



Priorities for the inclusion team:

The focus across the Inclusion teams is on ensuring the LA is compliant with statutory responsibilities (Implementing the ALN Act), and that children's wellbeing is central to everything we do. We are committed to working in partnership with schools, families and outside agencies (e.g. health and social care) to support vulnerable children and families and those who are at risk of becoming disengaged to ensure that children's additional learning needs are well understood, positive and supportive relationships are developed and that children have the right additional learning provision in place to enable them to make progress with their learning and development.

The Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) approach supports the development of a portfolio provision, with clear leadership to ensure accountability and performance, which will support the successful implementation of the ALN Act and 'Curriculum for Wales' which aims to ensure that all learners make progress.

'Children should always be proud of what they do and what they achieve no matter age or ability'. Parent

10.2. Strategy: Support for pupils at risk of 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET)

In Caerphilly, the authority's NEETs reduction arrangements are coordinated by the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF), embedded in the Youth Service but working in partnership with all educators and other agencies that have a positive influence on learners' lives. The related NEET strategy, developed in collaboration with all stakeholders, promotes a number of actions in relation to its main priorities – the YEPF develops and reviews the associated actions.

The current priorities are detailed below:

- Identify young people most at risk of disengagement
- Better brokerage and coordination of support
- Stronger tracking and transition of young people through the system
- Ensure provision meets the needs of young people
- Strengthen employability services and opportunities for employment
- Greater accountability for better outcomes for young people

10.3. Strategy: Improving Pupil Attendance

Prior to the pandemic, the Education Welfare Service (EWS) developed a range of strategies to support and improve attendance across the Local Authority. As a result, attendance in primary schools improved from 94.5% in 17/18 to 94.7% in 18/19, whilst attendance in secondary schools improved even further, from 93.4% in 17/18, to 94.0% in 18/19. The rates of persistent absenteeism had also dropped by 1.2% over three years in secondary schools, from 5.4 % to 4.2% and are now in line with the Wales average. In primary, however, figures rose slightly by 0.2% over the three years from 1.6% to 1.8%.

The improvement at secondary in 17/18 saw a rise in the All-Wales attendance rankings from 21st to 14th. The following year saw a further rise to joint 7th attendance data nationally. Although there have been no statutory returns relating to attendance since the pandemic started, unverified data collections suggest that attendance has declined by 4+% in primary schools, and by 8+% in secondary schools. National figures report similar declines.

Moving forward, the Education Welfare Service will aim to support schools to ensure that school attendance is a main area for development in all schools. Managing attendance is a task that requires commitment from all staff employed within the school/EOTAS provision, together with governors, parents and carers, pupils and the community in which the school is located.

Focus will be given to disadvantaged, vulnerable learners and pupils who are absent for long periods of time, which will be informed through regular data collections. The Local Authority will support schools in re-establishing policies and procedures in managing attendance, as well as carrying out focused casework with individual families and pupils.

'If every child was treated as an individual, they would realise that one size does not fits all, please see them as individuals and not a conveyor belt'. Parent

10.4. Strategy: More Able and Talented (MAT)

All young people have the potential to be more able and /or talented, and therefore, everyone should have access to opportunities that can support this vision. A key focus is to meet the needs of children who challenge, surprise and make demands on our knowledge, expertise and resources. For the staff in schools and across the Local Authority, the continuing critical task is to identify our MAT children and set in place support that helps them maximise their potential.

CCBC will continue to support schools to identify MAT learners, help them understand their needs and share knowledge of the strategies and resources that will help these children realise their potential. The active engagement of learners in this process along with their parents/carers and a wide range of external agencies will all be critical in helping MAT learners to succeed.

Further, CCBC will also provide support for the development of school-based MAT policies. Schools will be encouraged to take advantage of a wide range of opportunities, resources, strategies and advice through engaging with EAS, the Seren networks and a range of agencies outside school. CCBC will provide professional development opportunities for school staff to facilitate schools' actions in these areas.

CCBC will share its knowledge of resources and best practice through a range of networks. In addition, partnership projects will be developed through the Local Authority's Arts, Music and Sports Development teams supported by external partners such as UWIC and ACCAC.

The implementation and the success of the County's MAT policy will be monitored and evaluated using data on attainment and feedback from key stakeholders. This will include a reflection on the quality and impact of professional development, references to MAT in school annual reviews and observations from external bodies such as Estyn.

10.5. Strategy: Pupils' Acquisition of Digital Skills

Our vision is to ensure that all our schools have the training and tools available to best prepare their learners to become digitally competent within their educational setting and outside of the classroom. In Caerphilly we believe we have a moral imperative to continually strive to develop and enhance digital skills so we can better equip our learners of their future lives.

To achieve this vision in schools we must:

- provide educators with access to a range of career-long professional learning opportunities which will allow them to make the most of effective use of digital technology;
- support schools with the purchase of cost-effective ICT equipment, with a suitable lifespan, through the EdTech programme. The aim is to enhance digital teaching and learning through the development and delivery of the new curriculum
- provide timely support to ensure the effective use of equipment in schools;
- provide web filtering controls to ensure users are safe online.

The main principles:

Leadership		
<p>Empower leaders to drive innovation and invest in digital technologies.</p> <p>Provide access to a range of career-long professional learning opportunities for educational leaders, allowing them to make informed decisions about the best use of digital technology to enrich education and promote digital skills development.</p> <p>Actively share knowledge and examples of how digital technology can enrich education and facilitate digital skills development across education settings</p>		
High quality learning	Effective and efficient infrastructure	High quality IT support
<p>Delivering continuity and stability of the learning experience, facilitating student progress and success, both at home and in the classroom.</p> <p>High levels of student engagement, with students empowered to take ownership and control of their learning.</p> <p>Ongoing tracking of student experience, with both teachers and students using this information to evaluate outcomes and inform strategies for success.</p> <p>Inclusion and equity for all learners. The unique flexibility offered by digital technology allows educators to tailor their approaches to best suit individual learners.</p> <p>Ensuring learners have the appropriate skills to access appropriate content but remain safe online.</p> <p>Developing creativity using digital resources.</p>	<p>An effective network infrastructure that facilitates and underpins teaching and learning across the Local Authority.</p> <p>Appropriate connectivity with adequate bandwidth, with the ability to scale when digital needs change.</p> <p>Adherence to web filtering standards</p> <p>Effective access to HWB and all other Cloud based teaching and learning resources.</p> <p>Consideration of the home environment and access to data / Wi-Fi especially with the cost-of-living considerations and those more vulnerable learners living in poverty.</p>	<p>Intelligent client function acting as the conduit between Digital Services and Schools ensuring Welsh Government's Education Digital Standards are being achieved.</p> <p>Dedicated support team providing timely remote and onsite support to ensure essential equipment is always available.</p> <p>Provide appropriate web filtering controls to ensure the Internet Users are safe online.</p> <p>Assist schools to achieve efficiency savings without affecting learner outcomes by using the Hwb/EdTech programme to ensure that staff and learners have equality of access to fit for purpose ICT equipment, that provides a standardised and consistent experience across all schools.</p>
Digital competence in the classroom	Migration to the HWB digital platform	Safeguarding of online services and school data
<p>Enabling teachers and learners to become efficient digital skills practitioners.</p> <p>Resourcing and supporting Digital Schools through the efficient deployment of devices and technologies.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government's cloud-based services within the HWB digital learning platform will support future learning developments in the classroom and home.</p> <p>Secure storage of school data.</p> <p>Enable the decommissioning of physical infrastructure in the future.</p> <p>The HWB platforms and resources support a national approach to planning and delivery.</p>	<p>Keeping learners and staff safe online</p> <p>Ensuring schools' data, systems and services are secure.</p> <p>Protecting the integrity of devices and applications.</p> <p>Established cyber defences across school hardware including on school owned devices.</p> <p>Maintained security configuration for all devices.</p>

10.6. Strategy: Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 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 WESP will support our aspirations for the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act for a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language regardless of 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 main overarching aim of the plan is to increase the number of Welsh language speakers and the opportunities to use Welsh in our communities. Therefore, we have a minimum target of 26% for learners in year 1 by 2032 which has been set by Welsh Government in order to meet the national 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 target.

The seven outcome areas for the WESP each have high level targets sitting underneath them with a more detailed annual plan towards meeting the milestones towards 2032.

- 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

Generally, there will be a need to expand our Welsh medium provision across all phases, childcare, primary and secondary to meet this target, and we need to get our starting point right in the early years to stimulate Welsh language development. There will also be the need to expand our Welsh speaking workforce to deliver the provision needed. In addition, there are a substantial number of other actions highlighted at the end of each of the seven outcome areas of the plan and detailed annual task plans to take forward the work needed, while working in partnership with all members of the Welsh Education Forum and Welsh Language Forum.

10.7. Strategy: Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21st Century Schools)

The 21st Century Schools programme is a major, long-term, strategic capital investment programme, creating sustainable schools. Welsh Government has recently changed the programme name to '**Sustainable Communities for Learning**' embracing the wider use of schools from a community usage perspective.

Caerphilly County Borough Council has a clear vision for modernising education and improving outcomes for children, pupils and learners. Among the challenges being met through the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme are the rationalisation of secondary and primary schools, the removal of significant surplus places, review of post-16 education, single sex education and developing Welsh-medium provision in the County responding to the targets set by Welsh Government 'Cymraeg 2050' and in line with Authority's own Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Strong leadership at all levels across CCBC combined with an emphasis on learner centric provision and a sharp focus on self-reflection and improvement, together with an emphasis on developing more dynamic data analysis, will further strengthen planning processes for better investment outcomes over the short, medium and longer term.

The 'Band B' programme of proposals, with an envelope of £78 million Capital and £32 million Mutual Investment Model (MIM), has now been identified. At this stage these are only proposals subject to individual business case approval and consultation with all key stakeholders which will play a critical part of the process as the plans develop over the next few years. The 21st Century Schools team has worked hard to develop new ways to facilitate more effective consultation and engagement with communities as we move forward in

reshaping the educational estate. In bringing forward any proposal, suitable arrangements will be made to consult and involve pupils throughout the process and post occupancy.

The Band B programme will deliver further innovative, flexible and adaptable approaches to addressing the challenges moving forward, which include achieving net zero school building programmes, managing the current economic and supply chain issues as well as the availability of specialist contractors and responding to inflationary pressures. Investment in staff development in the areas of accelerating decarbonisation and through undertaking Level 7 NVQ Diplomas in Strategic Management will support this work.

The programme will be continually monitored and reviewed to ensure it meets the vision and changing needs for education within Caerphilly. Currently the key priorities are:

1. Reducing the number of poor condition schools
2. Ensuring that we have the right size schools in the right location
3. Providing enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education
4. Ensuring the effective use of the educational estate for use by both Schools and the wider Community
5. Working towards Net Zero Buildings in line with Carbon Reduction commitments
6. Delivering against Well-Being Outcome 1 of the Council's Place Shaping Programme

Investment will continue to be made in Welsh-medium provision in response to targets from Welsh Government. There is a challenging juxtaposition between expansion of this provision and the need to reduce surplus places overall across CCBC.

Exciting proposals have been set out within the Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Programme. These improvements to the Educational Estate will contribute to delivering the aspirations of CCBC's Wellbeing Outcome 1 and will be a key area of focus moving forward. Future workstreams will include:

- The relocation and expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon which is now underway
- The extension and refurbishment on Llanfabon Infants site to accommodate a new Primary School provision through the amalgamation of Llanfabon Infants and Llancaeath Junior Schools
- The refurbishment of a former school site to create a fit for purpose Centre for Vulnerable learners
- The creation of additional specialist provision through the expansion of Trinity Fields School

- The conclusion of the review of sixth form provision, single sex provision and surplus places
- The continuing review of childcare and ALN provisions in the area to be included for all projects

10.8. Strategy: Medium Term Financial Principles

The Education Finance Team work to support schools and other educational learning settings in their endeavour to achieve the ambitions laid out in this strategy. Strong financial management by Budget Holders, Service Managers, Headteachers and Governing Bodies will make a strong contribution to the most effective use of funding and provide value for money. This will support the quality of provision, e.g. through investment in staffing and other resources. Finance related discussions will:

- consider the impact on the learner and any other stakeholders, seeking to protect the most vulnerable or disadvantaged wherever possible;
- consider the most effective way to support schools with future financial planning, ensuring headteachers and senior leaders receive expert advice;
- provide clear and helpful guidance with the implementation of new and existing grants;
- continue to offer support in managing the impact of the pandemic on school budgets;
- provide bespoke support to schools that are facing increased budget pressures that could lead to a review of staffing structure;
- agree methodology to ensure current funding mechanisms are fit for purpose. This includes funding related to post-16 education and for pupils with additional learning needs;
- work alongside schools to reduce surplus balances over a two-year period (in-line with the School Funding Regulations), ensuring value for money;
- ensure appropriate consultation, with open and transparent discussion.

Afterword: Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services

When the Council launched the Shared Ambitions Strategy in 2019, it felt like a watershed moment for the Local Authority and the Education sector in Wales as a whole.

The Strategy was, in my view, a brave and courageous step for the Council. It was a deliberate and calculated attempt to drive improvement across Education in Caerphilly on our terms and with our own very specific context in mind and to put in place the foundations for long term success.

Over the previous decade, the Education system across Wales had become a highly pressurised environment. The publication of school league tables, the introduction of school improvement consortia and the annual benchmarking of pupil results, all of which were intended to drive up standards, had begun to drive behaviours that were limiting progress.

Even the introduction of school categorisation, a move designed principally to ensure that schools were able to access the right amount of improvement support, became a mechanism for ultimately judging school performance.

This, in turn, meant that schools who really did need help were less likely to be totally honest about the amount of help they needed because of the associated implications of being categorised as a red school. Phrases like “Schools Causing Concern” also did little to encourage schools in need of help to step forward and seek it.

The pressure to perform was relentless. Decision-making seemed to be focused on short term success. The challenges associated with underperformance had the potential to quickly spiral and be very difficult to overcome. One bad set of results could negatively impact highly successful careers and could set progress back years.

It was clear that the system needed a reset and that the Shared Ambition Strategy was Caerphilly’s opportunity to do this for its own environment.

The strategy had “Working together to achieve the best outcomes for our young people” at its core. This signalled our intention for contributors right across the system to collaborate in the best interests of the wider team rather to compete.

It centred on five transformational themes that were considered paramount to the long-term improvement of the life chances of our young people. It gave a green light to create a positive and progressive environment where everyone felt trusted and empowered but, perhaps more importantly, protected.

It shifted decision-making from short term to long term and school improvement approaches from 'challenge' to 'support'. It also clarified the roles and responsibilities of everyone within the system, something that has again proven very helpful.

Little did we know when the strategy was signed off in 2019 that a year later we would be in the midst of a global pandemic. While the metrics associated with our early progress could not confidently be validated throughout that period, the 'togetherness', 'open and honest communication' and 'purposeful leadership' that the strategy called for, was witnessed and harnessed by our incredible staff every single day.

TeamCaerphilly has never been stronger and neither has our foundation for ongoing success.

That makes our next step and the successful delivery of this strategy even more important. We are attempting to recover from the negative impact of the global pandemic on our learners. Some of these may not truly be known for many years.

For this reason, the strategy has been built from the ground up by the very people that will implement it and those that will be affected by it.

It has been developed on the basis of extensive consultation and with a view to ensuring we move forward collectively from the strong foundations forged by Shared Ambitions and embodied throughout the pandemic by our amazing staff.

By 'pursuing excellence together' we move forward with the next phase of our improvement journey with a view to giving our pupils and their communities the tools they need to have the very best chance of success in their lives.

Richard Edmunds

Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services

Appendix 1: How we will measure our success – education directorate indicators.

The table below shows the performance indicators for the services within the education directorate. They will be used as part of the local authority's ongoing self-evaluation and improvement planning cycle. The indicators will hold services to account and identify priorities. The data will be presented to scrutiny and cabinet committees to consider the impact of the strategy.

Service	Performance indicators	Links to the education main areas for development:
Adult/Community Education	Total participation Total number of participants currently engaging Gaining a qualification Work experience/volunteering Participants gaining employment following vol. placement Gaining employment Engaged in job search upon leaving	Improve digital skills for all learners
ALN	Number of Statements issued within statutory timescales (including exceptions) – academic year Number of IDPs issued within the statutory timescales (including exceptions) – academic year Number of Dispute Resolution meetings held in an academic year Number of Appeals to Educational Tribunal for Wales (ETW) each academic year Tracking of Accelerated Learning Programmes against each learner The proportion of out of county placements compared to in county No of pupils with ALN in specialist placement against those attending mainstream provision Transition / Amendments to Statements / IDPs within statutory timescales (Statements)	Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners. Implementation of the ALN Act . Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in Welsh medium by 2031
Attendance	% Attendance of all pupils % Attendance FSM % Attendance CLA	Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners

	% Attendance persistent absenteeism	<p>Improve pupil attendance and reduce exclusions, with particular focus on vulnerable groups</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty</p>
Children Looked After (CLA)	<p>Number in post 16 in education</p> <p>KS4 outcomes – qualitative statement</p> <p>Qualitative Statement, stakeholder feedback</p>	<p>Ensure the effective implementation of Curriculum for Wales</p> <p>Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners</p>
Early Years	<p>Number of families we worked with</p> <p>Number and percentage of families we made a difference for</p> <p>Number and percentage of children who started school nursery at the right time</p> <p>Number and percentage of families receiving support in a timely manner</p> <p>Qualitative satisfaction survey results</p>	<p>Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty</p> <p>Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in Welsh medium by 2031</p> <p>Ensure the most vulnerable families including those in poverty, can access support to give their child the best start to their early years</p>
Educational Psychology	<p>Qualitative statement – impact of support on service</p> <p>Pre-and post-measures of pupil wellbeing following interventions</p> <p>Qualitative statement on behaviour (based on behaviour reviews in schools)</p>	<p>Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners</p> <p>Improve pupil attendance and reduce exclusions, with particular focus on vulnerable groups</p>
EOTAS	<p>Attendance at EOTAS in comparison to in school</p> <p>Progress at EOTAS provision - qualitative</p> <p>Number of pupils successfully reintegrated into schools</p> <p>Number of NEETS leaving</p> <p>EOTAS provision</p>	<p>Ensure the effective implementation of Curriculum for Wales</p> <p>Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners</p> <p>Accelerate the progress of pupils who receive education outside a mainstream setting (EOTAS/EHE)</p>

Finance	Review School balances	Close the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty
Healthy Schools	% of schools that have achieved the National Quality Award 'School Health Research Network' health and wellbeing data for the authority % of schools engaged with Young Carers provision	Ensure the effective implementation of Curriculum for Wales Support pupil wellbeing by improving attitudes to healthy food choices and active fitness
Impact of the implementation of the new curriculum on standards and provision	Impact of the new curriculum – qualitative statement Emerging themes from ESTYN inspections SDP priorities across all schools (EAS focus) Outcomes from thematic reviews	Equip leaders with the skills to have a significant impact on progress, attainment and provision and wellbeing Ensure the effective implementation of Curriculum for Wales Close the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty Improve digital skills for all learners Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in Welsh medium by 2031
Inclusion	Number of permanent exclusions Number of fixed term exclusions Number of days lost Number of pupils receiving fixed term exclusions Number of exclusions spilt into gender Number of exclusions for pupils in receipt of free school meals Number of exclusions for pupils with ALN Number of exclusions for pupils with 'looked after' status	Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners Implementation of the ALN Act Improve pupil attendance and reduce exclusions , with particular focus on vulnerable groups.
Libraries	Welsh public library standards (WPLS)	Improve digital skills for all learners

NEETS	<p>% of 'at risk' NEET young people with a destination at the point of leaving compulsory education</p> <p>Number NEETS identified as free school meals and/or looked after</p>	<p>Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners</p> <p>Reduce the number of young people post-16 without access to education, employment or training (NEETS)</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty</p>
Music	<p>Accreditations</p> <p>Participation of pupils in receipt of free school meals</p> <p>Engagement with more able and talented activities</p>	<p>Ensure the effective implementation of Curriculum for Wales</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty</p>
Post 16	<p>Annual recruitment into the 6th Form</p> <p>Retention rates – year 12-13</p> <p>Destinations</p> <p>MAT pupils attending universities</p> <p>Standards of achievement post 16</p>	<p>Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners</p> <p>Further improve provision and support for young people (post-16)</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty</p> <p>Reach the target of 26% of year 1 pupils in Welsh medium by 2031</p>
Youth service	<p>Number of young people engaged in the service</p> <p>Number of contacts with the registered young people projects – average contact per person across the service</p> <p>% of YP that achieve local accreditation</p> <p>% of YP that achieve national accreditation</p> <p>% of young people who express satisfaction with quality of service</p>	<p>Accelerate the progress of vulnerable learners</p> <p>Close the gap in attainment between those learners from low-income backgrounds and those who do not live in poverty</p>
Additional stakeholder feedback	<p>Headteacher survey</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback linked to education strategy</p> <p>Youth forum priority progress</p>	



CABINET – 30TH NOVEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: CHRISTMAS CLOSEDOWN

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet's agreement for the Christmas closedown arrangements for 2022 and for the years thereafter.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The Council has in previous years implemented a closedown for offices over the Christmas period. This report recommends the closedown again for 2022 and the years thereafter.

2.2 This report only applies to Council Staff employed under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 and for whom the Council has the power 'to appoint and manage staff on such reasonable terms and conditions as the Authority thinks fit'. This report does not apply to School appointed staff for whom the Council does not hold this power.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Cabinet are asked to agree:

3.1.1 Corporate offices close at 12 noon on Friday 23rd December 2022 and reopen on Tuesday 3rd January 2023.

3.1.2 All staff receive 2 hours' credit for Friday 23rd December 2002 as per the arrangements detailed in paragraph 5.5 of this report.

3.1.3 This principle of Christmas shutdown and the 2 hour credit for future years; the dates affected will be agreed by the Leader and the Chief Executive.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The recommendations are made to allow managers to plan service delivery over the Christmas period and also to recognise the continuous hard work and commitment of staff.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Cabinet will be aware that the Council has in previous years implemented a closedown for offices and some other services over the Christmas period. During this period, employees have an entitlement to 3 bank holidays plus an extra statutory day.
- 5.2 Whilst Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on a Sunday this year, in line with NJC and JNC National Agreements, Monday 26th December 2022, Tuesday 27th December 2022 and Monday 2nd January 2023 are the agreed public holidays. The Council's extra Statutory Day falls on Wednesday 28th December 2022.
- 5.3 In accordance with previous close down arrangements, offices would close at 12 noon on Friday 23rd December 2022 and reopen on Tuesday January 3rd 2023. Employees affected by the closedown arrangements will be required to take 2 days annual leave or accrued flexi leave to cover the closedown days of Thursday 29th and Friday 30th December 2022. Any employee required to work during the Christmas closedown period to cover essential services will not be required to take leave.
- 5.4 It is proposed to continue with this practice again this year and shut corporate offices at 12 noon on the last working day before Christmas Day i.e. Friday 23rd December 2022 and staff who would ordinarily be office based will be encouraged to start the Christmas closedown period at that time also, crediting staff with 2 hours for the afternoon.
- 5.5 It is proposed this year that all staff receive a 2 hour credit again this year (pro rata for part time staff). Cabinet will be aware that last year was the first time this was offered to all staff, as in previous years many frontline services did not benefit from this time credit. Where front line service and some essential services need to be open on the afternoon of Friday 23rd December 2022, services may support the 2 hour paid absence at another time. Where services cannot practically accommodate this 2 hour absence from shift, staff will benefit from 2 hours' additional pay. This will be pro rata for part time staff.
- 5.6 The residents are used to this shut down period. Some office based services do operate on the public holiday and extra statutory day with skeleton staff.
- 5.7 Cabinet are asked to agree this principle of Christmas shutdown and the 2 hour credit for future years. The dates affected will be agreed by the Leader and the Chief Executive and published for all staff and residents to note.
- 5.8 **Conclusion**

The report confirms the Council's commitment to continued Christmas closure, service provision permitting, allowing managers to plan service delivery over the Christmas period.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 There are no assumptions made within this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has not been completed because the outcome of the report, if approved, will benefit every single employee employed under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, as stated in paragraph 2.3, regardless of who they are, what job they hold and where they work.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Any associated costs relating to the 2 hours credit or the additional day annual leave will be a cost to the employing service.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The personnel implications are included in the report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 All consultation responses have been included in the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 1972

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Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Property
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