

# Pecyn Dogfennau Cyhoeddus

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Tredomen Park,  
Ystrad Mynach,  
Hengoed CF82 7PG

Ty Penallta,  
Parc Tredomen,  
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Am unrhyw ymholiad yn ymwneud â'r agenda hwn cysylltwch â Jo Thomas  
(Rhif Ffôn: 07714600912 Ebost: [thomaj8@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:thomaj8@caerphilly.gov.uk))

**Dyddiad: Dydd Mercher, 14 Mawrth 2024**

I bwy bynnag a fynno wybod,

Bydd cyfarfod aml-leoliad o'r **Cabinet** yn cael ei gynnal yn yn Nhŷ Penallta a thrwy Microsoft Teams ar **Dydd Mercher, 20fed Mawrth, 2024** am **1.00 pm**. i ystyried materion a gynhwysir yn yr agenda canlynol. Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r iaith Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, a dylid rhoi cyfnod rhybudd o 3 diwrnod gwaith os ydych yn dymuno gwneud hynny. Bydd gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd yn cael ei ddarparu ar gais.

Gall aelodau'r Cyhoedd neu'r Wasg fynychu'n bersonol yn Nhŷ Penallta neu gallant weld y cyfarfod yn fyw drwy'r ddolen ganlynol: <https://civico.net/caerphilly> .

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Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

**Christina Harrhy**  
PRIF WEITHREDWR

## A G E N D A

Tudalennau

1 I dderbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb

A greener place Man gwyrddach

Correspondence may be in any language or format | Gallwch ohebu mewn unrhyw iaith neu fformat



2 Datganiadau o Ddiddordeb.

Atgoffi'r Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion o'u cyfrifoldeb personol i ddatgan unrhyw fuddiannau personol a/neu niweidiol mewn perthynas ag unrhyw eitem o fusnes ar yr agenda hwn yn unol â Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000, Cyfansoddiad y Cyngor a'r Cod Ymddygiad ar gyfer Cynghorwyr a Swyddogion.

Nodi Rhaglen Gwaith I'r Dyfodol y Cabinet.

3 Blaenraglen Waith y Cabinet.

1 - 4

I dderbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiad(au) canlynol y mae angen penderfyniadau gweithredol arnynt: -

4 Canolfan Hamdden Pontllan-fraith.

5 - 52

5 Canlyniad yr ymgynghoriad – Cynigion i Weithredu Premiymau Treth y Cyngor ar Eiddo Gwag Hirdymor ac Ail Gartrefi.

53 - 90

6 Strategaeth a Chynllun Gweithredu Rheoli Perygl Llifogydd Lleol.

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7 Newidiadau i Wasanaethau Gwastraff Masnachol a Pholisïau Codi Tâl.

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**Cylchrediad:**

Cynghorwyr

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

A Swyddogion Priodol.

**SUT FYDDWN YN DEFNYDDIO EICH GWYBODAETH**

Bydd yr unigolion hynny sy'n mynychu cyfarfodydd pwyllgor i siarad/roi tystiolaeth yn cael eu henwi yng nghofnodion y cyfarfod hynny, weithiau bydd hyn yn cynnwys eu man gweithio neu fusnes a'r barnau a fynegir. Bydd cofnodion o'r cyfarfod gan gynnwys manylion y siaradwyr ar gael i'r cyhoedd ar wefan y Cyngor ar [www.caerffili.gov.uk](http://www.caerffili.gov.uk) ac eithrio am drafodaethau sy'n ymwneud ag eitemau cyfrinachol neu eithriedig.

Mae gennych nifer o hawliau mewn perthynas â'r wybodaeth, gan gynnwys yr hawl i gael mynediad at wybodaeth sydd gennym amdanoch a'r hawl i gwyno os ydych yn anhapus gyda'r modd y mae eich gwybodaeth yn cael ei brosesu.

Am wybodaeth bellach ar sut rydym yn prosesu eich gwybodaeth a'ch hawliau, ewch i'r [Hysbysiad Preifatrwydd Cyfarfodydd Pwyllgor Llawn](#) ar ein gwefan neu cysylltwch â Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol drwy e-bostio [griffd2@caerffili.gov.uk](mailto:griffd2@caerffili.gov.uk) neu ffoniwch 01443 863028.

**Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 13th March 2024**

<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Key issue:</b>	<b>Report author</b>	<b>Cabinet Member:</b>
Special Cabinet 20/03/24	Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre	To advise on the outcome of a public consultation on a proposal for Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre to remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners being made available for community use outside of school hours upon opening in Spring 2025. To present the views of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee. To seek a decision on the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.	Rob Hartshorn	Cllr Chris Morgan
Special Cabinet 20/03/24 13:00 p.m.	Consultation outcome - Proposals to implement Council Tax premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes	To consider the implementation of premiums from April 2025.	Sean O'Donnell/Steve Harris	Cllr Eluned Stenner/ Cllr Shayne Cook
Special Cabinet 20/03/24	Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	To provide Cabinet with a statutory update to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in accordance with Welsh Government National Strategy.	Mark Goodger/Marcus Lloyd	Cllr Nigel George
Special Cabinet 20/03/24 13:00 p.m.	Trade waste service changes and charging policies	To provide Cabinet with proposals for providing a new Workplace Recycling collection service to comply with new legislation and agree appropriate collection service recharge rates.	Marcus Lloyd/Hayley Jones	Cllr Chris Morgan

## Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 13th March 2024

Meeting date:	Report title:	Key issue:	Report author	Cabinet Member:
03/04/2024 13:00 p.m.	HRA Business Plan 2024	To seek Cabinet approval of the Housing Business Plan position in advance of submitting the plan to Welsh Government	Lesley Allen	Cllr Shayne Cook
03/04/2024	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy	To seek Cabinet approval for a revised Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, which will detail the key priorities for the service and how they are proposed to be addressed.	Claire Davies/Mark Jennings/ Nick Taylor-Williams	Cllr Shayne Cook
03/04/2024	Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Proposal – Ysgol Y Lawnt / Upper Rhymney Primary	For Cabinet to consider the Objection Report and approve commencement of the Planning application process and Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government.	Sue Richards/ Andrea West	Cllr Carol Andrews
03/04/2024	Proposal for the closure of Cwm Glas Infants School	For Cabinet to consider the Objection Report and provide a final determination on the proposal to close Cwm Glas Infants School with effect from September 2024.	Sue Richards/ Andrea West	Cllr Carol Andrews
03/04/2024	Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board - further recommendations to Cabinet	To consider Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board recommendations	Richard Edmunds/ Keri Cole/ Sue Richards	Cllr Carol Andrews
03/04/2024	Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Virement and Project Approval	To update Cabinet on the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF); and seek Cabinet approval for 2 proposed funding virements due to their significant value.	Rhian Kyte/ Allan Dallimore/ Paul Hudson	Cllr Eluned Stenner

**Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 13th March 2024**

<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Key issue:</b>	<b>Report author</b>	<b>Cabinet Member:</b>
03/04/2024	Caerphilly Ffos Caerffili – WEFO funding update	To update Cabinet on the submission of Ffos Caerffili to WEFO for funding and to outline the requirement for Council core reserves freed up by this process to be reinvested into the Caerphilly Town 2035 programme.	Hamish Munro/Allan Dallimore	Cllr James Pritchard
01/05/2024	Youth Forum Priorities	To provide the Youth Forum priorities for 2024	Clare Ewings/Paul Warren	Cllr Carol Andrews
01/05/2024	Review of Corporate Complaints Policy and Unacceptable Behaviour Policy - 6 month update	For Cabinet to consider the data from 1st April 2023 to 30th September 2023	Lisa Lane/Carl Evans	Cllr Nigel George
29/05/2024 (half term)	Local Housing Market Assessment and the Welsh Government Prospectus	To discuss and approve the LHMA and the Prospectus. Welsh Government requires all Local Authorities to undertake a Local Housing Market Assessment and a Prospectus. The documents set out the requirement for housing within the county borough and is utilised to inform the LDP, the allocation of Social Housing Grant and the Council's own Caerphilly Homes development programme.	Nick Taylor-Williams/Jane Roberts-Waite/ Mark Jennings	Cllr Shayne Cook

**Cabinet Forward Work Programme – 13th March 2024**

<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Key issue:</b>	<b>Report author</b>	<b>Cabinet Member:</b>
29/05/2024 (half term)	Gwent Serious Violence Strategy	To seek Members views and Cabinet approval from members for the Gwent Serious Violence Strategy and Needs Assessment.	Natalie Kenny/Rob Hartshorn	Cllr Philippa Leonard
29/05/2024 (half term)	Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2023/24	For Cabinet to note the content of the annual report and endorse the publication of the information as a record of progress towards, and compliance with, the relevant Welsh Language Standards. Once approved the report will be published on the Council's website by the statutory deadline of 30 June 2024.	Anwen Cullinane /Kath Peters	Cllr Eluned Stenner
29/05/2024 (half term)	The federation of the Cwmaber Infants School and Cwmaber Junior School	To seek Scrutiny endorsement / Cabinet approval to move to formal consultation, in partnership with each Governing Body, for the federation of Cwmaber Infants School and Cwmaber Junior School	Sue Richards / Andrea West	Cllr Carol Andrews
29/05/2024 (half term)	Proposed Changes to Caerphilly CBC's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy	To seek Cabinet approval of a proposed change to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy in relation to rateable value limits.	Glenn Edwards/ Sean O'Donnell	Cllr Eluned Stenner



## **SPECIAL CABINET – 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

**SUBJECT: PONTLLANFRAITH LEISURE CENTRE**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet on the outcome of a public consultation on a proposal for the indoor facilities at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre to remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) including a 4-court sports hall, changing facilities, and a 3G pitch being made available for community use outside of school hours upon opening in Spring 2025. The proposal would also see use of the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site continue, but cease once the 3G pitch at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet approval for the indoor facilities at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre to remain permanently closed and for use of the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site to continue but cease once the 3G pitch at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 In 2019, the Council adopted a Sport and Active Recreation Strategy for the period 2019-2029. The vision for sport and active recreation is “to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be “more active, more often”. The strategy references poor levels of health in certain areas of the county; reducing budgets; the large number of ageing facilities across the county and the deteriorating quality of our older buildings as well as increasing population and consumer demand as some of the key challenges it is seeking to overcome. The strategy also references the need to maximise the impact of all sport and recreation facilities.
- 2.2 Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre is now nearly 50 years old. The building has a significant maintenance backlog, and the associated 3G football pitch is at the end of its lifespan. The indoor leisure facilities closed as a result of the UK national lockdown in March 2020 and, apart from some very limited use of the sports hall for a short period, have not re-opened for leisure use. The budget for running Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and 3G pitch is £179,360 per year.
- 2.3 The Leisure Centre formerly operated as a shared joint - use site with the adjacent Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School which closed in 2016. The school buildings are

currently being demolished ahead of the construction under the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning programme of a Centre for Vulnerable Learners. Due for completion in Spring 2025 the new Centre will include a 4-court sports hall, with associated changing facilities and a 3G pitch (size 40 x 30 metres i.e. not full size) available for community use outside of school hours. Artist's impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners are included at Appendix 1.

- 2.4 Islwyn High School opened in June 2017 to replace the existing Pontllanfraith and Oakdale Comprehensive Schools and includes a 4-court sports hall, a dual use 3G football and rugby pitch, and tennis courts. A new dual use 3G pitch opened at Blackwood Comprehensive School in 2020. In 2021 the existing Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP) at both Lewis School, Pengam and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, Fleur de Lys was upgraded to dual use 3G pitches and support community use. The Council is continuing to look at further developing the 3G pitch provision in the county borough.
- 2.5 Closing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and the associated 3G pitch permanently is consistent with the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and the Mobilising Team Caerphilly principal of doing things differently. The case for closure is made in view of the need to invest significantly in the existing facilities to sustain their use, let alone bring them up to current standards, when there will shortly be new, alternate, and modern facilities available on the adjacent site and nearby. Additionally, these modern alternate facilities can be operated far more efficiently than the existing Leisure Centre as they are located on joint use sites with schools.
- 2.6 On 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Cabinet unanimously approved a consultation exercise regarding the proposal that the indoor facilities at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remain closed permanently and that use of the existing 3G pitch continues, but ceases once the 3G pitch at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use. The outcome of the consultation exercise is included within this report. The Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre report was considered by the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and their comments are detailed in 10.6 below.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That Cabinet consider the outcome of the consultation exercise and the comments of Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee at 10.6 below.
- 3.2 That Cabinet approves the permanent closure of the indoor leisure facilities at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.
- 3.3 That Cabinet approves the permanent closure of the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site once the 3G pitch at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.in a future report to Cabinet

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To support the agreed Outcomes in the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy of:
  - Better Health
  - Healthier and Prosperous Communities
  - Securing a more efficient and financially sustainable future offer



## 5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In 2019, the Council adopted a Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (SARS) for the period 2019-2029. The Vision for sport and active recreation is “to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be “more active, more often”. The implementation of the Strategy encompasses a range of activity which supports the new Corporate Plan and in particular Well-being Objective 3 - Enabling our communities to be Inclusive as well as the Council’s broader Placeshaping plans.
- 5.2 The Strategy references poor levels of health in certain areas of the county; reducing budgets; the large number of ageing facilities across the county and the deteriorating quality of our older buildings as well as increasing population and consumer demand as some of the key challenges it is seeking to overcome. The strategy also references the need to maximise the impact of all sport and recreation facilities.
- 5.3 Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre opened in 1975 and its facilities include a five-court sports hall, two squash courts, small fitness suite, small multi-purpose dance studio and a 3G football pitch.
- 5.4 Now nearly 50 years old, Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre has a maintenance backlog estimated at £475,159 based on a condition survey undertaken in 2019. The 3G football pitch at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre was installed in 2011. The typical lifespan of a surface of this nature is 8 – 12 years depending upon use. In 2018/19 the last full operating year before the Covid-19 pandemic, the leisure centre site cost the Council £131,350 to operate. In that period there were 79,923 visits as shown in the table below

<b>AREA</b>	<b>ADULT</b>	<b>JUNIOR</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
3G Pitch	25,900	24,184	50,084
Fitness Suite	6,729	1,361	8,090
Squash Courts	1,060	56	1,116
Holiday Camps	0	490	490
Sports Hall	10,633	5,137	15,770
Group Exercise	4,373	0	4,373
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,695</b>	<b>31,228</b>	<b>79,923</b>

- 5.5 On 10th April 2019 Cabinet resolved to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and on 24th June 2019 the High Court quashed that decision. There were 5 grounds of the Judicial Review and the Court dismissed 4, but did rule that there was insufficient evidence that Cabinet had properly discharged its duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. An Integrated Impact Assessment for this proposal has been undertaken, including full consideration of socio-economic duty as highlighted at Section 7. below.
- 5.6 The indoor leisure space at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre was closed as a result of the UK national lockdown in March 2020 and, apart from some very limited use of the sports hall for a short period, has not re-opened for leisure use. Between September

2021 and June 2023, it was used by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board as a Mass Vaccination Centre to replace Newbridge Leisure Centre. All previous block bookings of the indoor sport and leisure space have relocated to other facilities across the county borough such as Oakdale Badminton Club at Islwyn High School for example.

- 5.7 The Leisure Centre formerly operated as a shared joint-use site with the adjacent Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School which closed in 2016. Under the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme the Council is developing a Centre for Vulnerable Learners on the former school site. Due for completion in Spring 2025 the new facility will accommodate between 80 - 120 pupils and will be equipped with high quality learning opportunities, indoor and outdoor sporting provision as well as access to first class support and will enable community use of the facilities outside of school hours. Demolition of the surplus school buildings is currently in progress. Artist's impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners are included at Appendix 1.
- 5.8 Sporting facilities at the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will include a 4-court sports hall, with changing facilities, and a 3G pitch (size 40 x 30 metres i.e. not full size). The sports hall will have a minimum ceiling height clear of any obstructions of 7.5 metres accommodating at least the Club Standard for Badminton Basketball Netball and Volleyball in accordance with Sport England guidance. Parking spaces and EV charging points will be available to the public outside of school times. There will be a Joint User agreement between Sport & Leisure Services and the Centre for Vulnerable Learners, with the out of hours usage of the facilities managed by Sport & Leisure ensuring appropriate community use. The new 3G will support training provision but not competitive fixtures. The vast majority of competitive fixtures are undertaken at weekends, and these can be played at Islwyn High, or Blackwood Comprehensive school.
- 5.9 The existing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre sports hall is x 5-court (so a reduction of 1 court). The majority of sports halls across the county borough are x 4 courts. The sizes of both facilities are set out below:

<b>Element</b>	<b>Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre Sports Hall (5 Court)</b>	<b>CVL Sports Hall (4 Court)</b>
Overall Width	17912mm	18250mm
Overall Length	36000mm	34730mm
Wall to Badminton Court Baseline	2260mm / 2300mm	2425mm / 2425mm
Between Parallel Badminton Courts	Varies (Min being 750mm)	2000mm
Wall from Side-line of Badminton Court	Varies (Approx. 1000mm)	2165mm

In summary, the CVL is marginally wider, but slightly shorter than the existing sports hall at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre, however this is negligible given the move from a 5 to 4 badminton courts hall.

- 5.10 The CVL will not include a fitness suite, squash courts or dance studio, but there has been significant investment in the Fitness Suite at Newbridge Leisure Centre along with a smaller but targeted investment at Heolddu Leisure Centre in both the Fitness

Suite and Squash Court, there is also a Fitness Suite at Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre. The Sports Hall in the CVL is multi-purpose and as such can accommodate aspects of provision that the Dance Studio previously offered and provided. Also a new Dance and Group Cycling Studio were provided as part of the Newbridge Leisure Centre Fitness Suite project and is supported by an expanded programme of activity. It should also be noted that there are a number of private sector fitness suite providers within the local area offering a variety of options.

- 5.11 Use of the outdoor 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre recommenced on a phased basis in April 2021 without access to the changing rooms, supported by the Sport and Leisure Covid 19 re-opening plan. The full size 3G pitch is well used and in 2022/23, there were 30,257 visits as shown in the table below:

<b>AREA</b>	<b>ADULT</b>	<b>JUNIOR</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
3G Pitch Hire	10,913	19,344	30,257

- 5.12 The 3G pitch has been the subject of ongoing repairs for some time. An inspection report produced in 2022 confirmed that the condition of the pitch is as to be expected given its age and intense usage (particularly the usage level when the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School was open) and that it is nearing the end of its lifespan. Any further repairs undertaken would only provide a short-term benefit and replacement must be considered. Replacement costs are approximately £280,000, although this does not include a review of the current 30 year old substructure that will require investigation to ensure that the integrity has not been compromised.
- 5.13 Islwyn High School is 3 miles away and opened in June 2017 to replace the existing Pontllanfraith and Oakdale Comprehensive Schools and includes a dual use 3G football and rugby pitch and 4-court Sports Hall and tennis courts. A dual use 3G pitch was also installed at Blackwood Comprehensive School and opened for use in 2020. In contrast to the single use, football only, 3G pitch provision at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre the 3G pitches at Blackwood Comprehensive School and Islwyn High School are capable of being used for both football and rugby (with resultant Football Association of Wales and International Rugby Board approval).
- 5.14 The current 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre is one of the few pitches that meets the current standard for Gwent County matches. The 3G pitches at Islwyn High School and Blackwood Comprehensive School do not currently meet that standard. However, Welsh League Reserve fixtures have been played at the Blackwood Comprehensive School 3G pitch this season along with FAW Academy fixtures over the past year. The county borough has six Gwent County level teams, and all of these teams play at their own local facility and have not expressed a desire to make any 3G their 'permanent' home. Should these teams aim to move through the FAW league tiers then the options to support them in this would be discussed and explored.
- 5.15 It should also be noted that recent investment has taken place at both Lewis School, Pengam and Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, Fleur de Lys in relation to upgrading the existing Artificial Turf Pitches (ATP) to dual use Rugby & Football 3G pitches. The allocation of bookings at these facilities is undertaken in collaboration with the host school and Sport & Leisure Services. The sport and community facilities at both Islwyn High and Blackwood Comprehensive School are delivering full community programmes and in December 2023 the management of the 3G pitch and sports hall at Islwyn High school was transferred to Sport and Leisure Services and is now available for weekend and evening bookings. In a further improvement to existing facilities the 3G pitch at Newbridge Leisure Centre is in the process of being renewed.

The Council is also continuing to look at developing further the 3G pitch provision in the county borough.

- 5.16 With the existing significant 3G provision and following the opening of the CVL it will be possible to accommodate all current 3G pitch bookings at alternative facilities if use of the 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith were to cease. Whilst the Sport and Leisure service would use best endeavours to meet the requests of users it is not possible to guarantee that all bookings could be transferred on a like for like basis in terms of time and day of the week. It should also be noted that the existing 3G pitch operates until 22:00 hours in the week and the CVL has a condition of planning consent permitting use of the 3G pitch until 21:00 hours. There are currently 2 bookings on the existing 3G pitch at 21:00 hours.
- 5.17 Closing the leisure facilities and 3G pitch would render the site surplus to requirements.
- 5.18 On 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Cabinet unanimously approved a consultation exercise regarding the proposal that the indoor facilities at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remains closed permanently and that use of the existing 3G pitch continues, but ceases once the 3G pitch at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use. The purpose of the consultation was to gain an understanding of the impact of the proposal on key stakeholders including previous and current users of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and 3G pitch and to understand any identified negative impacts.
- 5.19 The consultation period ran from Monday 20 November 2023 to Wednesday 3 January 2024 and was widely promoted including targeted stakeholder groups (including current users of the 3G provision/local sports clubs). Residents were encouraged to give their views in a variety of ways including online and hard copy surveys and online/face to face drop-in sessions. 307 completed surveys were received by the closing date and 16 individual members of the public in total proactively attended the online/face to face drop-in sessions to discuss the proposal.
- 5.20 By far, the largest group of people to respond to the survey were previous users of the leisure centre and local residents. 79% said they were previous users of either the leisure centre or 3G pitch. The largest number of users visited the site “weekly” during this time and the main mode of transport to the site was car (75% used their car and 23% walked).
- 5.21 35% of previous users have used another CCBC leisure centre or sports facility while the centre in Pontllanfraith has remained closed. 21% have used another privately run leisure facility. 31% have not accessed sport and leisure facilities during this time - distance to alternative facilities (not being able to walk to alternative sites) was the main reason given. Other facilities not suitable to personal needs and a preference to use Pontllanfraith along with capacity at other facilities were also reasons. 130 respondents to the survey are current users of the 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith. 67% visit the site weekly, 20% visiting a few times a week. The main mode of transport to the site was the car. 25 people said that they currently walk to the site. 98 use a car.
- 5.22 74% of respondents to the survey felt the proposal would have a negative impact, 26% felt that the impact would be neutral or positive. Reasons given for neutral or positive impact were that other facilities within CCBC would allow residents from any area a choice, are of a better quality/more modern (including CVL); Exercise outdoors so not reliant on the facility; the centre has been closed for some time, welcome a new facility
- 5.23 The main reasons given for feeling that the closure will have a negative impact were:

- Distance to alternative provision (beyond the CVL), increase travel distance, time and costs/ other sites are not on public transport routes.
  - Too few sport and recreation facilities generally across the borough to meet current demand and growing population. fewer facilities will have a negative impact on health and well-being
  - Lack of availability of facilities during the day
  - Shortage of 3Gs at weekends and in the winter
  - Size of the new 3G pitch for competitive matches and capacity at alternative sites
  - Questions over suitability of CVL sports hall for badminton and other sports, noted the lack of gym.
- 5.24 The majority of respondents live within a 5 or 10 minute drive from the current site but some users of the existing site travel from further afield and a number of other 3G sports pitches also fall within 10 minute drive from the current site.
- 5.25 A number of older respondents to the survey, some respondents with children, as well as those with disabilities, felt that they would be more negatively affected due to the increased distance and associated cost if they have to travel further to alternative facilities. Comments were also raised that women's sports may be impacted more if there is a limited capacity to book facilities, and that the CVL site needs to be accessible for those with disabilities.
- 5.26 In terms of mitigation of the impacts identified, some respondents commented that the site should simply be kept open. Suggested mitigation included:
- Consider the difficulties and cost associated with travel to other sites
  - Ensure alternative provision locally: classes and opportunities to use the hall at the new CVL site
  - Temporarily open the existing site until the alternative is available
  - Replace the current 3G pitch (with like for like) in the local area
  - To meet demand:
    - ensure that 3G pitches across the borough are made available at weekends and during school holidays.
    - build more 3G pitches on current grass pitches that currently don't get enough use due to poor weather.
    - change the allocations system to ensure grass roots teams can access pitches
    - ensure that those using the current pitch are allocated other provision
- 5.27 Some respondents to the consultation commented they felt there would be a negative impact due to the increased distance and associated cost if they have to travel further to alternative facilities. The 23% of respondents who said that they walk to the existing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre will have the opportunity to make use of new facilities at the CVL outside of school hours. 75% responded that they travel by car to use the

existing facilities and the majority of respondents live within a 5 or 10 minute drive from the current site, but some users of the existing site travel from further afield. As illustrated in 5.33 there are a number of alternative facilities within 10 minutes' drive of the existing site.

- 5.28 The ability to book alternative facilities such as the new 3G pitch and sports hall at the CVL will serve to mitigate some of the impacts identified by respondents in relation to capacity. In addition, current bookings at Pontllanfraith will be supported to transfer to alternative facilities with capacity being increased further with the management of the 3G and sports hall at Islwyn High school having been taken over by Sport and Leisure Services in December 2023 and is now fully available for weekend and evening bookings.

## Conclusion

- 5.29 The indoor leisure facilities at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre closed as result of the UK National lockdown in March 2020 and, apart from some very limited use of the sports hall for a short period, has not re-opened for leisure use since, with previous block bookings being relocated to other facilities across the county borough. The existing leisure centre has significant outstanding maintenance liabilities, is not energy efficient, is not DDA compliant and does not meet the aspirations set out in the Sport & Active Recreation Strategy 2019 – 29 of providing modern, fit for purpose leisure facilities.
- 5.30 The 3G football pitch is coming to the end of its lifespan and requires regular and ongoing repairs to ensure it remains safe for community use. The cost to replace the facility is estimated at approximately £280,000.
- 5.31 The Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) development provides an option to replace the majority of facilities within the existing leisure centre with a modern, fit for purpose offer that will also the help the Council meet its ambition in relation to carbon reduction.
- 5.32 The CVL will also offer a 3G facility, however it is acknowledged that the new offer will be smaller and only suitable for training purposes and not competitive matches. Most competitive matches are played on weekends, and as such can be relocated to Islwyn High or Blackwood Comprehensive School.
- 5.33 74% of respondents to the public consultation felt the proposal would have a negative impact. The negative impacts identified principally centred around increased distance and associated cost if they have to travel further to alternative facilities and concerns around the capacity and availability of those alternative facilities. Those impacts are mitigated by the provision of new facilities at the CVL and the availability of a range of alternative facilities a short distance away:

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Distance from Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre</b>	<b>Travel Time by Car from Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre</b>
Newbridge Leisure Centre	3.3 miles	9 minutes
Cefn Fforest Leisure Centre	2.0 miles	8 minutes
Sue Noake Leisure Centre, Ystrad	3.1 miles	9 minutes

Mynach		
Heolddu Leisure Centre	5 miles	14 minutes
Islwyn High School	3.1 miles	7 minutes
Blackwood Comprehensive School	2.3 miles	8 minutes
Caerphilly Leisure Centre	7.5 miles	16 minutes
Markham Community Leisure Centre	4.2 miles	10 minutes
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni, Fleur de Lys	2.2 miles	5 minutes
Lewis School, Pengam	3.1 miles	9 minutes

- 5.34 Closing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and the associated 3G pitch permanently is consistent with the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and the Mobilising Team Caerphilly principal of doing things differently. The case for closure is made in view of the need to invest significantly in the existing facilities to sustain their use let alone bring them up to current standards when there will shortly be new, alternate, and modern facilities available on the adjacent site and nearby. Additionally, these modern alternate facilities can be operated far more efficiently than the existing offer as they are located on joint use sites with schools. These proposals support the new Corporate Plan and the Council's Placeshaping plans.

## 6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 As indicated in the report, a number of the financial figures are estimates. The completion and opening date for the Centre for Vulnerable Learners is based on current project projections.

## 7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Feedback from the consultation exercise has been used to further develop the Integrated Impact Assessment undertaken. Older people and those with children as well as those with disabilities felt that they would be more negatively affected due to the increased distance and associated cost if they have to travel further to alternative facilities. 75% of respondents drive to the existing leisure centre and there are a range of alternatives within 10 minutes' drive of the site. The provision of a new sports hall and 3G pitch at the adjacent CVL offers further mitigation.
- 7.2 There was also concern that women's sports may be impacted more if there is a limited capacity to book facilities. As detailed in this report, there will be significant alternative provision with the completion of the CVL and availability of other facilities nearby. It was also stated that the CVL site needs to be accessible for those with disabilities and the new facility is being designed and built in accordance with modern accessibility standards. The existing Leisure Centre is not.

**Link to IIA**

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The budget for running Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and 3G pitch is £179,360 per year. It became more expensive to run following closure of the adjacent secondary school in 2016 with the ending of a joint user virement of circa £26,000 from Education (as a result of the Leisure Centre previously being classed as a joint use centre located on a school site) following closure of the school. Also, a new rating valuation following the school closure resulted in an increase in non-domestic rates of £17,000.
- 8.2 As detailed above, there is a maintenance backlog estimated at £475,159, based on a condition survey undertaken in 2019. The 5 year old survey identified repair or replacement works to multiple elements of the building including the roof, walls, cladding, windows, doors, ceilings and electrics. The 3G football pitch was installed in 2011 and is at the end of its lifespan and replacement costs are approximately £280,000 – although this does not include a review of the current 30 year old substructure that will require investigation. Some consideration may also need to be given to changing room provision if the 3G pitch facility were to be retained.
- 8.3 As stated above, apart from very limited use of the sports hall for a short period, the indoor sport and leisure space has not been in use since the national lockdown in 2020 and has for a significant period been utilised as the county borough's Mass Vaccination Centre. The majority of equipment in the Fitness Suite has either been relocated to other leisure centres or taken out of use to support ongoing maintenance and repairs across the other leisure centres. This would need to be purchased at a cost of approximately £60,000 - £80,000.
- 8.4 The likely savings between operating the CVL facilities in comparison to running the leisure centre will be determined upon developing the delivery model and clarifying the scope of public interest and the range of opening. Energy cost considerations are difficult to determine at this moment in time. It is proposed that there will be an agreement between Sport & Leisure and the CVL (Education) to reimburse the school for out of school hours usage with the facilities managed by Sport & Leisure – this will be covered by a Joint User agreement that sets out agreed areas of responsibility in support of ensuring appropriate community use.
- 8.5 In summary, whilst the annual revenue costs of operating facilities for community use at the CVL are not known currently they will be significantly less than the current annual budget for Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre of £179,360. New equipment would be required to reopen the Fitness Suite at a cost of approximately £60,000 - £80,000. Replacement costs for the existing 3G pitch which is at the end of its life are at least £280,000. In addition, the existing leisure centre has a maintenance backlog estimated at £475,159 in 2019.
- 8.6 Closing the leisure facilities and 3G pitch would render the site surplus to requirements. Any potential capital receipt for the sale of the leisure centre and 3G pitch area would be dependent on a number of variables.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Any closure of the leisure centre will be progressed in accordance with relevant HR policies and in consultation with staff and Trade Unions as appropriate. The 3 staff based at the site have been working in support of the Mass Vaccination Centre along



with a secondment to the Sport & Leisure Customer Services Team. The staff member who supported the Contact Tracing Team has been reallocated to Cefn Forest Leisure Centre to support an existing vacancy. It is clear that the delivery of community based facilities from the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will require a dedicated and experienced staff resource and on that basis utilising the existing staffing would be advisable and support consistent and safe delivery practice.

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly.
- 10.2 Following Cabinet approval on 15th November 2023 a public consultation regarding the proposal that the indoor leisure facilities at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remains closed permanently and that use of the existing 3G pitch continues, but ceases once the 3G pitch at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use. The purpose of the consultation was to gain an understanding of:
- the impact of the proposal on key stakeholders including previous and current users of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and 3G pitch.
  - Where respondents identify a negative impact of the proposal, to understand their reasons and to identify mitigation to reduce that impact.
- 10.3 The consultation period ran from Monday 20 November 2023 to Wednesday 3 January 2024 and was widely promoted including targeted stakeholder groups (current users of the 3G provision/local sports clubs). Residents were encouraged to give their views in a variety of ways:
- Survey – online, hard copies available
  - Face to face engagement – 4 drop in sessions held within the Pontllanfraith ward plus 2 online sessions
- 10.4 307 completed surveys were received by the closing date, and 16 individuals in total proactively attended the online/face-to-face drop in sessions to discuss the proposal in further detail. The full consultation report on is included at Appendix 2.
- 10.5 On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee received a report which sought its views as part of the consultation exercise. During the meeting the Scrutiny Committee decided not to provide its views and requested a future report on the outcome of the consultation once the consultation period had expired.
- 10.6 The Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre report was considered by the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

One Member asked about consultation on the requirements of sports clubs playing at the higher tiers at set times over weekends. The 3G pitches at Islwyn High School and Blackwood Comprehensive School do not currently meet the standard for Gwent County matches. The Sports & Leisure Facilities Manager gave assurances on the consultation with sports clubs and advised that weekend access at Islwyn High School would provide greater capacity for some of the higher tier matches.

A Member highlighted the 31% of previous users of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre that responded to the consultation who have not accessed sport and leisure facilities since the centre closed. The Member expressed the view that people with families and older

members of the community were discriminated against as alternative provision focussed on the evening which was a period when many people preferred to remain at home. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services advised Members that alternative rather than identical provision of services was proposed in the report. It was also highlighted that these alternatives were a short distance from the Leisure Centre site and that the consultation showed that 75% of previous users that responded to the consultation indicated that they had used their car to get to the leisure facility.

One Member queried if the temporary closure of the Newbridge 3G pitch, along with the permanent closure of the one in Pontllanfraith, would have an impact on the offer of suitable surfaces across the County Borough. The Sports & Leisure Facilities Manager gave assurances on the availability of 3G pitches at the Centre for Vulnerable Learners and Islwyn High School and also pointed out that the closure of the pitch at Newbridge for upgrading was for a very short period of time to support an upgrade to the existing facility. Members also heard that many teams currently book half not full pitches for training purposes.

A Member questioned the assertion in the report that the indoor leisure space at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre was closed as a result of the UK national lockdown in March 2020. The Member believed it was closed in August 2021 prior to being used as a mass vaccination centre. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services advised that the centre closed as a result of lock-down requirements and to the best of his knowledge the centre did not reopen after lockdown measures were lifted. The Chair asked for officers to clarify the date of closure.

The Member also sought clarity on why the Leisure Centre did not reopen to the public after its use as a mass vaccination centre by the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services gave details of the investment that would be needed to bring the centre back into public use, such as refurbishment of the sports hall floor. The Sports & Leisure Facilities Manager advised Members that only a small number of calls had been received enquiring about when the Leisure Centre would be reopening. The Member commented that users did not call the centre as they knew it was closed. The Member also suggested that a breakdown of the maintenance backlog estimated at £475,159 would be useful. He also questioned if it was essential to refurbish the sports hall floor.

The Member raised the issue of block bookings and observed that Blackwood Netball had questioned the suitability of alternative facilities at Markham Leisure Centre. The Sports & Leisure Facilities Manager advised that he had discussed with representatives from Blackwood Netball concerns over heating issues and were given reassurances about the provision of facilities in the future.

One Member questioned the assertion in 5.28 that current bookings at Pontllanfraith will be supported to transfer to alternative facilities such as the 3G pitch and sports hall in Islwyn High School which are now available for evening and weekend bookings. The Member observed that this was not happening as clubs were having to email the school and then waiting a few days for a reply. The Sports & Leisure Facilities Manager clarified that weekend bookings were currently being taken by Newbridge Leisure Centre and advised that there had been full weekend use of the 3G pitch by local clubs since Sport and Leisure Services took over weekend booking arrangements for Islwyn High. He also stated that additional communication would be provided to ensure that users knew who to contact to book the alternative indoor facilities on weekends.

One Member sought clarity on the booking process for facilities at Islwyn High School.

The Sports & Leisure Facilities Manager provided information on the process and advised that bookings had been for the outside space at the High School and were taken by staff at Newbridge Leisure Centre. The Member asked why the Pontllanfraith centre was closed before the Centre for Vulnerable Learners was operational, given that the facilities at this new location were a replacement for the ones under discussion in the report. The Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services reiterated to Members the financial reasons why it was proposed that the centre is not reopened for public use. The Member raised concerns over the suitability of the new 3G pitch proposed at the CVL. Following further clarification on the financial considerations associated with this matter the Corporate Director for Economy and the Environment reminded Members of the £50M+ savings required by the Council over the coming couple of years and that this report should be considered against that savings requirement backdrop.. The Member finished by suggesting that the potential asset transfer of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre should be fully explored.

## 11. STATUTORY POWER

### 11.1 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

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

#### Consultees:

Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces  
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Mike Adams, Pontllanfraith Ward Member  
Councillor Patricia Cook, Pontllanfraith Ward Member  
Councillor Colin Gordon, Pontllanfraith Ward Member  
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive  
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment  
Jeff Reynolds, Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager  
Jared Lougher, Sport and Leisure Development Manager  
Sue Richards, Head of Transformation, Education Planning and Strategy  
Andrea West, Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
David Roberts, Interim Finance Manager  
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer  
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning  
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property  
Hayley Lancaster, Transformation Manager – Engagement  
Liz Sharma, Service Improvements and Partnerships

#### Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Artist's impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners
- Appendix 2: Consultation Report

#### Background Papers:

- **Report to Cabinet 20th September 2017 – “Proposals to commence a consultation exercise to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting.**
- **Report to Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee 1st November 2017 – “Consultation with respect to the closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and**

relevant minute of meeting

- Report to Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee 12th December 2017 – “Outcome of consultation on the potential closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting
- Report to Cabinet 13th December 2017 – “The future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting
- Report to Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee 18th January 2018 – “Consideration of call-in request – Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant minute of meeting
- Report to Cabinet 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre – Consideration of the call-in in the context of the leisure review” and relevant minute of meeting.
- Report to Cabinet 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 – “Draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-29” and relevant minute of meeting
- Report to Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant Minute.
- Report to Cabinet 10th April 2019 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant Minute.
- Report to Cabinet 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and Link to meeting and relevant Minute.
- Report to Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre” and relevant Minute
- Report to Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee 13th February 2024 – “Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre”

Appendix 1: Artist's Impressions of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners





# Caerphilly County Borough Council Consultation on proposals for Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre – November 2023

## **Background:**

In November 2023, Caerphilly County Borough Council's Cabinet agreed to consult on a proposal that would see Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) being made available for community use outside of school hours from Spring 2025. The proposal would also see use of the 3G pitch on the Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre site cease once the 3G pitch at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners is open for community use.

The proposal is intended to contribute to a more efficient and financially sustainable future leisure facilities offer in accordance with the adopted Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019 -2029.

The indoor leisure space at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre closed because of the national lockdown in March 2020 and has not since re-opened for leisure use. Between September 2021 and June 2023, it was used by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board as a Mass Vaccination Centre. Previous block bookings of the indoor sport and leisure space have relocated to other facilities across the county borough.

Use of the outdoor 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith recommenced on a phased basis in April 2021 (without access to the changing rooms). The full size 3G pitch is well used, however, the pitch has been the subject of ongoing repairs for some time. An inspection report (2022) confirmed that the pitch is nearing the end of its lifespan and any further repairs undertaken would only provide a short-term benefit, therefore, replacement must be considered.

The Council is developing a Centre for Vulnerable Learners on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive school site. Due for completion in Spring 2025, the new facility will be equipped with indoor and outdoor sporting provision and will, managed by Sport & Leisure services, enable community use of the facilities outside school hours.

Sporting facilities at the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will include a 4-court sports hall. The existing Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre sports hall is a 5-court (so a reduction of 1 court) with associated changing facilities and a 3G pitch (size 40 x 30 metres i.e. not full size). The sports hall will accommodate at least the Club Standard for badminton, basketball, netball and volleyball. The new 3G pitch will support training provision but not competitive fixtures - however these can be played at Islwyn High, or Blackwood Comprehensive school.

The full report outlining the proposal presented to Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 can be found here: <https://democracy.caerphilly.gov.uk/documents/s46999/Pontllanfraith%20LC%20-%20Cabinet%20Report%20Final%203%2011%2023.pdf?LLL=0>

## **Purpose**

The current consultation was designed to gain an understanding of the impact of the proposal on key stakeholders including previous and current users of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and 3G pitch. Where individuals identify that the proposal will have a negative impact on themselves or their household, the

consultation will help the council understand the reasons for this and to identify mitigation that could be put in place to reduce that impact.

An initial Integrated Impact Assessment identified that the additional distance that users may need to travel, could have a potential negative impact under the socio-economic duty and on those with protected characteristic. To this end, the consultation sought to identify the main mode of transport used and distance travelled to the Pontllanfraith site.

The Integrated Impact Assessment can be found here:

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillydocs/ia/pontllanfraith-leisure-centre-ia>

## **Methodology (what we did)**

The consultation period ran from **Monday 20 November 2023 to Wednesday 3 January 2024** and was promoted via:

- A dedicated web page accessible directly, via the Council's website or a QR code included on posters: <https://conversation.caerphilly.gov.uk/pontllanfraith-leisure-centre> including links to all supporting reports and frequently asked questions.
- Media releases: <https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/news/news-bulletin/november-2023/pontllanfraith-leisure-centre-update?lang=en-GB> (1<sup>st</sup> November)  
<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/news/news-bulletin/november-2023/have-your-say-on-future-of-pontllanfraith-leisure?lang=en-GB> (15<sup>th</sup> November)
- Digital media posts throughout the duration of the consultation period including Facebook (16<sup>th</sup> November; 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023) and NewsOnline (8<sup>th</sup> November; 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2023).
- Posters displayed in public facing Council venues in the Pontllanfraith/Blackwood area including Blackwood Library and Blackwood Miner's Institute Poster
- Targeted e-mails to stakeholder groups including current users of the existing 3G provision/local sports clubs

Residents were encouraged to give their views in a variety of ways:

## **Survey**

A survey was made available online throughout the duration of the consultation. The survey could be completed online or printed for completion. Hard copies of the survey were also available from Blackwood library and were made available at all drop-in sessions.

The survey focussed on identifying the potential impact of this proposal on stakeholders as outlined above.

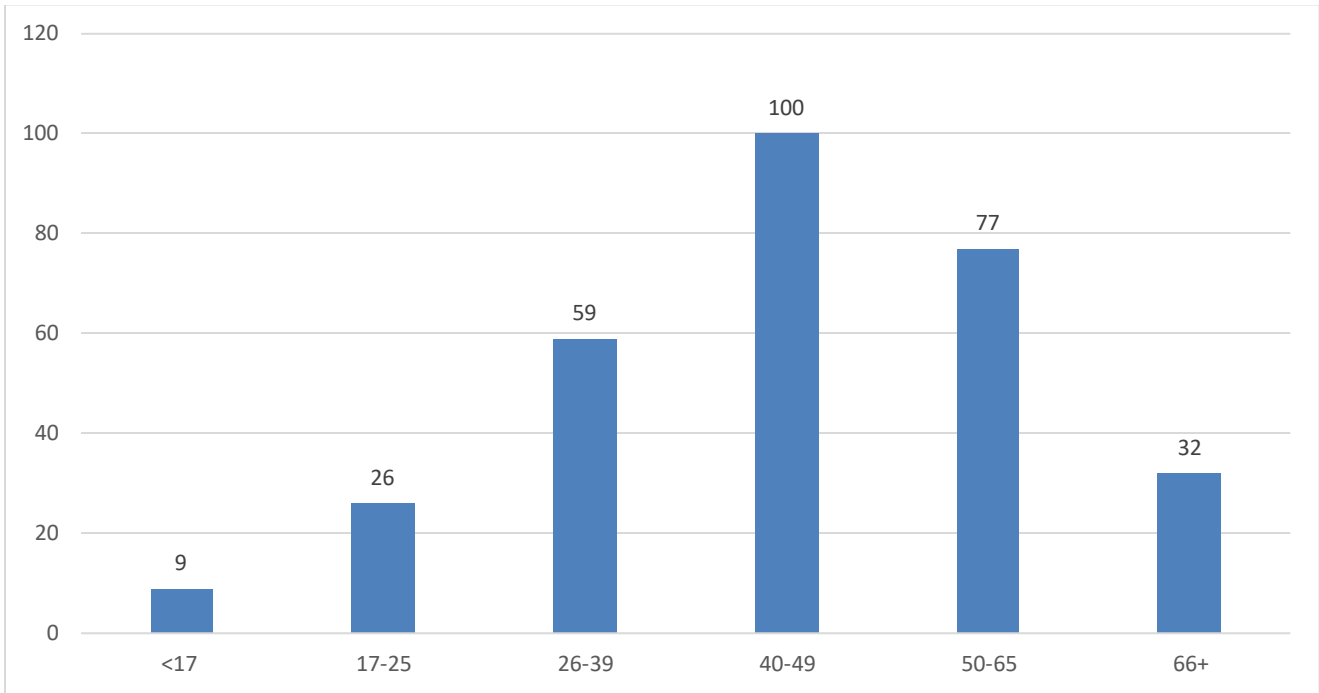
**307 completed surveys** were received by the closing date.

## **Respondent profile (survey)**

- Just under a third of respondents were under 40 (31%), a third (33%) were in the 40-49 age group and just over a third (36%) were aged 50+. **Graph 1** shows the count of respondents by age group – for accessibility purposes, graph 1 simply illustrates the text in this paragraph.

Graph 1: Respondents – count of age group





- There was an almost equal split between female (49%) and male (48%) respondents with 3% preferring to self-describe/not to say.
- Disability – 16% of respondents (49 individuals) have a disability. Of these, 84% (41 individuals) indicated that their disability impacts on their day-to-day activities.

### Face to face engagement

The purpose of the face-to-face sessions was to clarify the proposal, answer any questions and gather feedback, through conversation and encouraging those spoken with to complete the survey either in hard copy or online. These sessions were held on different days of the week and different times of the day, including early evening, to enable as many people as possible to attend.

### Drop-in sessions

A series of informal face-to-face drop-in sessions for residents were arranged:

- Elim Baptist Church, Pontllanfraith, Tuesday 28 November, 5.30pm-7.30pm
- Penllwyn Millennium Centre (attending the Penllwyn Community Partnership Christmas event), Wednesday 6 December, 6pm to end of event
- Pontllanfraith Rugby Club, Wednesday 13 December, 11am-1pm (day time session added at request of a local resident who had attended the initial meeting)
- Elim Baptist Church, Pontllanfraith, Thursday 14 December, 5.30pm-7.30pm

A total of **16 individuals** actively attended the drop-in sessions (some individuals attended more than one session). In addition, information was shared with residents attending the Penllwyn Millennium Centre event.

Two online face-to-face sessions were also scheduled.

- Tuesday 28 November, 12 mid-day. One person attended.
- Wednesday 6 December, 11 am. No one requested to attend this session.

## Targeted engagement with stakeholders

Key individuals, clubs, groups and organisations were contacted directly via e-mail and were invited to take part in and to promote and share details of the engagement with their contacts/members. As noted below, a range of clubs responded to the survey representing a range of sports, age groups and both male and female.

## Key Findings

This section summarises the key findings of the survey, qualitative feedback from the drop-in sessions, CCBC Facebook comments and other written responses. **Please note that for accessibility purposes, where graphs are featured throughout this consultation report, they are accompanied by a paragraph of text within the body of the report which explains the content of the graphs. Alt text is not used to describe graphs.**

Comments raised at the drop-in sessions and other sources largely echoed those from the survey and these are reflected in the qualitative analysis throughout.

*Note: The statistical data (percentages) presented within this report relates to survey responses. The number of responses received for individual questions may be lower than the total number of completed questionnaires returned. Percentages are therefore based on the number of responses to individual questions (n=number of responses).*

*Participation in the consultation was self-selecting. The data should be considered within this context.*

## Interest in the consultation

By far, the largest group of people to respond to the survey were previous users of the leisure centre and local residents. Respondents were able to select more than one option for this question and many selected multiple responses e.g. most current users of the 3G pitch had also used the pitch prior to March 2020 and indicated that they were also representing local sports clubs.

Clubs represented in the survey responses include:

- Cascade and Caerphilly district schools (1)
- Cefn Fforest (2)
- Crumlin (1)
- Cwmcarn United Rugby (10)
- Fleur de lys FC (1)
- Football (1)
- Girls and boys football and all sports (1)
- Junior Football Team (1)
- Newbridge Cricket club (1)
- Newbridge RFC (1)
- Newbridge Town (1)
- Newbridge vikings (1)
- Oakdale Netball (3)
- Pengam (2)
- Pengam Blackwood netball club (3)
- Pengam Boys and Girls Football Club (7)

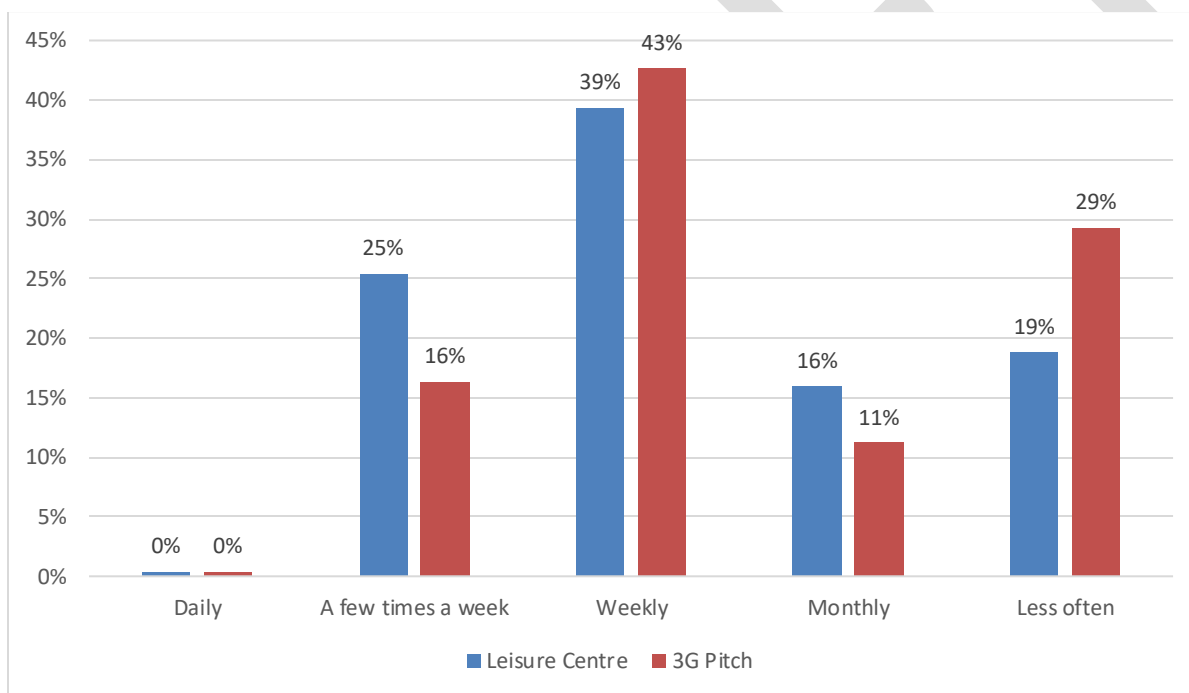
- Pentwynmawr AFC (6)
- Pentwynmawr football/ netball (1)
- Pontllanfraith RFC (2)
- Pontllanfraith School Old Boys (1)
- Risca Triathlon club (1)
- Treowen Stars girls - various age groups (7)
- Wattsville FC inc ladies (9)

### Use of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and 3G pitch prior to March 2020

Of those who responded to the questions about use of the site prior to March, 79% (244 individuals) indicated that they were users of either the leisure centre (244 individuals) or 3G pitch prior to 2020 (232). A significant proportion of respondents indicated that they used both the Leisure centre and 3G pitch prior to March 2020.

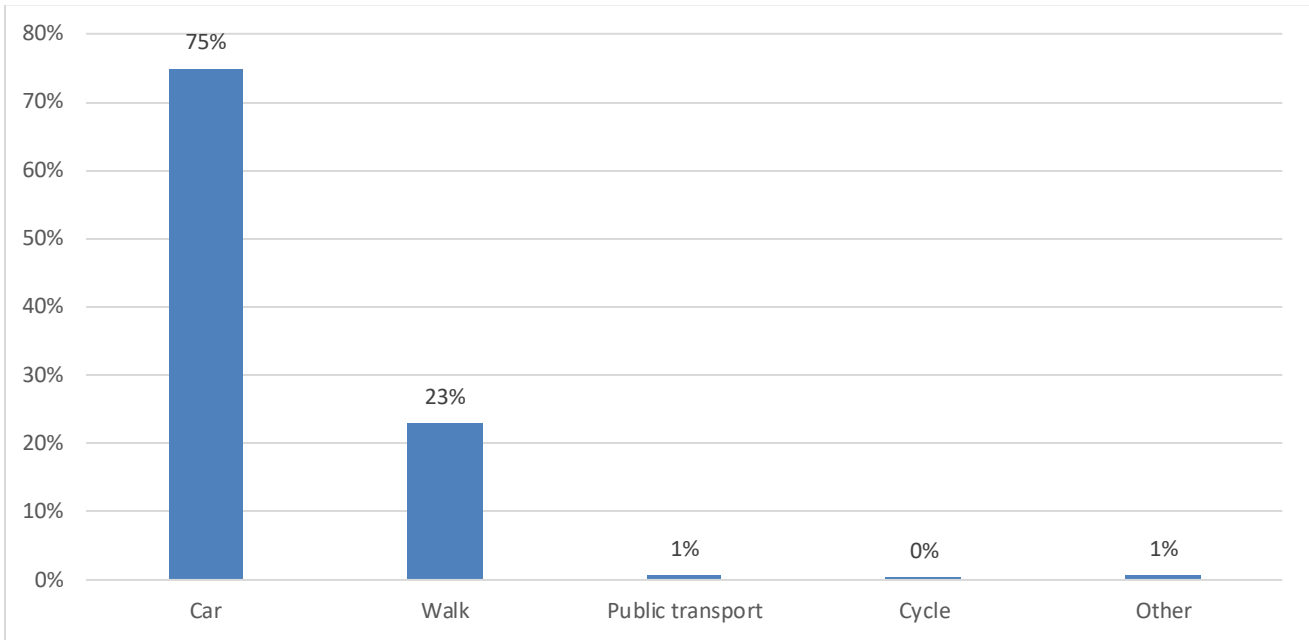
As shown in **Graphs 2**, the largest number of users visited the site weekly prior to March 2020.

**Graph 2: Frequency of use of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre (n=244) and 3G pitch (n=232) prior to March 2020**



The main mode of transport to the site prior to March 2020 was car with 75% indicating that they had used their car and 23% indicating that they walked to the site (**Graph 3**).

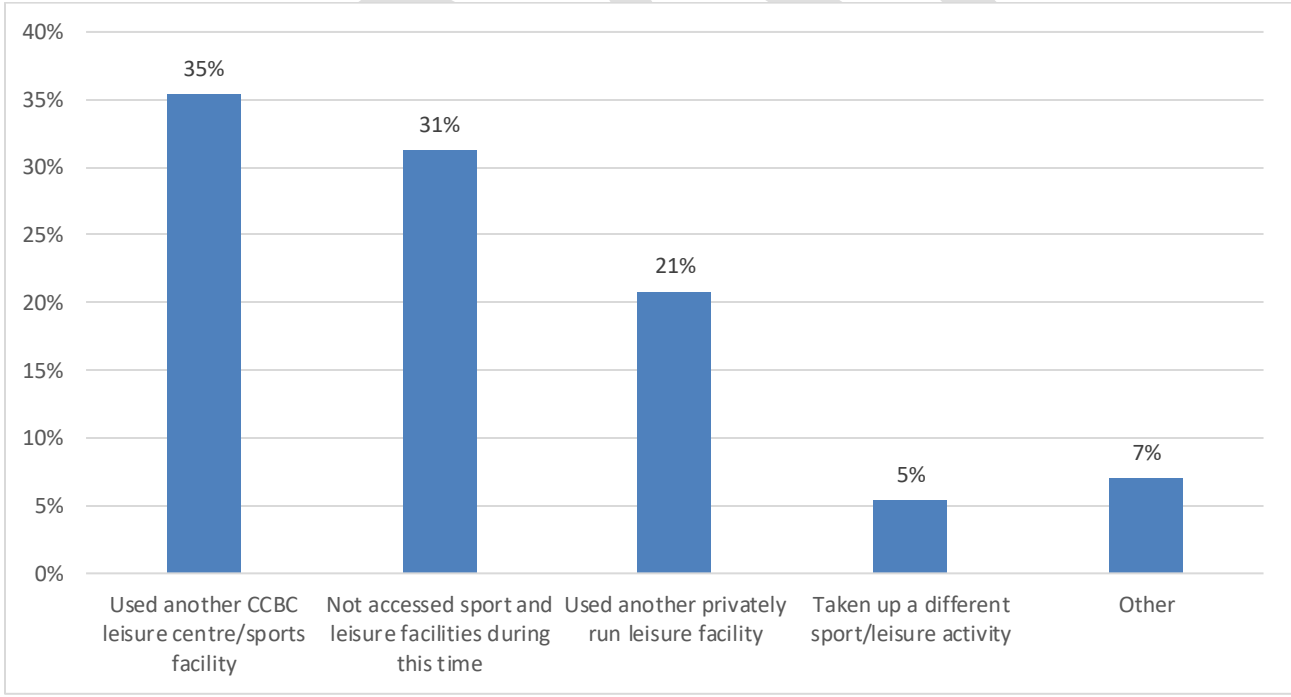
**Graph 3: Main mode of transport to the site prior to March 2020**



**Alternative arrangements during the time that Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre has remained closed**

As shown in **Graph 4**, over a third (35%) of previous users have used another CCBC leisure centre or sports facility. A further 21% have used another privately run leisure facility.

**Graph 4: Alternative arrangements during the time that Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre has remained closed**



Just under a third (31%) of respondents indicated that they had not accessed sport and leisure facilities during this time. The reasons given for this can be themed:

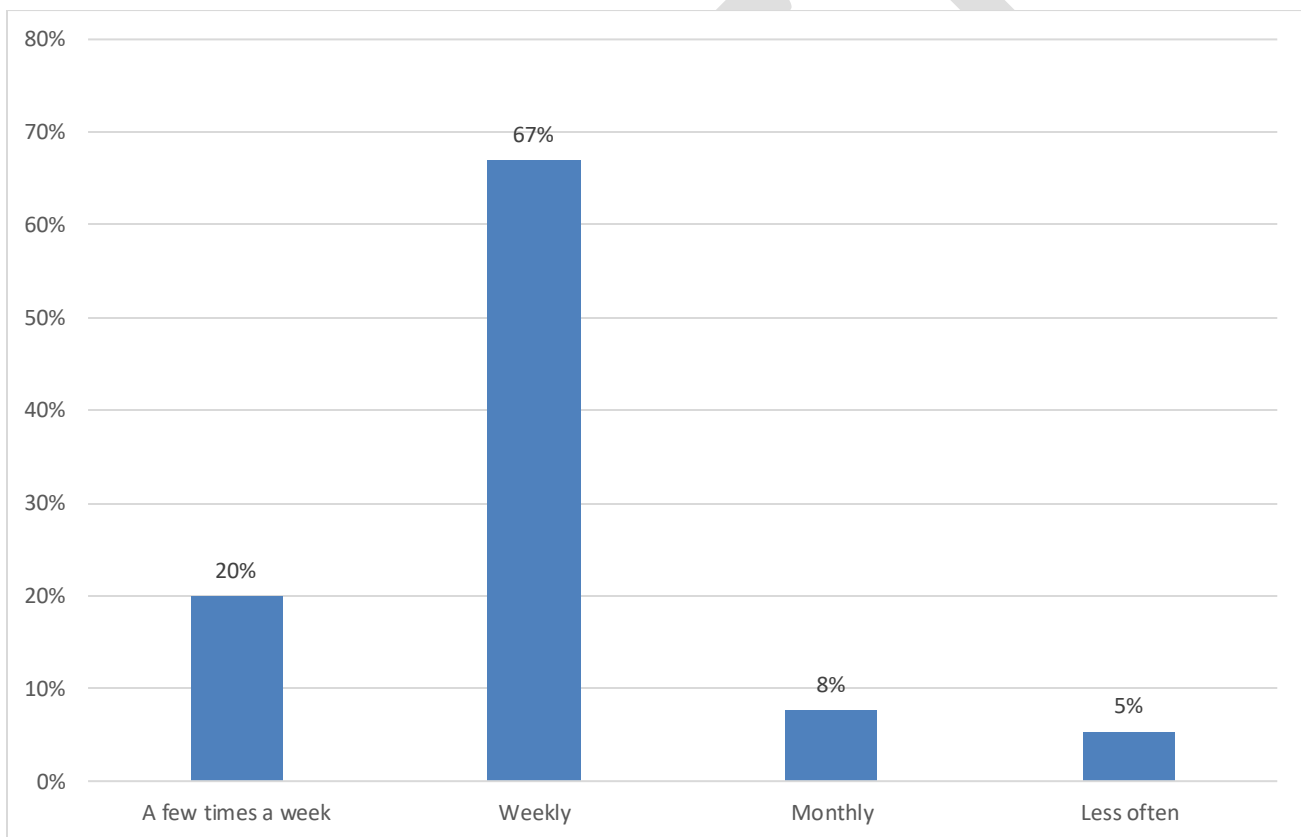
- Distance to alternative facilities (37 responses). This was the main reason given, with a number of comments noting that they are unable to walk to alternative sites.
- Other facilities not suitable to needs/preference to use Pontllanfraith (13 responses)

- Capacity at other facilities (7 responses)
- Anxiety/mental health (3 responses)
- Cost of alternative/additional cost of travel to alternative (4 responses)
- Lack of public transport (2 responses)
- Loss of fitness (2 responses)
- Lack of parking at alternative sites (1 responses)
- Opening times (1 response)
- Personal commitments/time constraints (2 responses)

**Current use of Pontllanfraith 3G pitch**

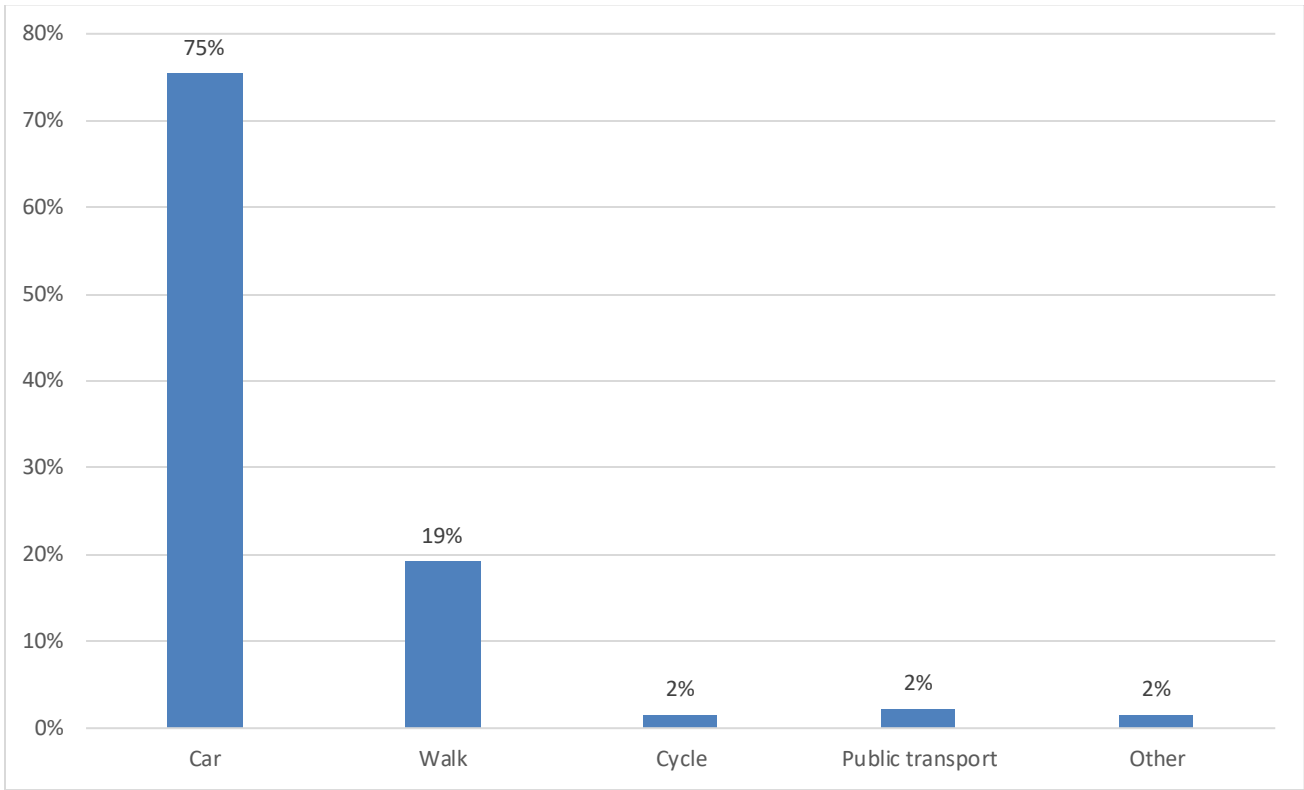
In total, 130 respondents to the survey are current users of the 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith. The largest number of current users (67%) visit the site weekly with 20% visiting a few times a week. **(Graph 5)**

**Graph 5: Frequency of use of current use of the 3G pitch (n=130)**



As shown in **Graph 6**, the main mode of transport to the site by current users was the car. Of the 130 survey respondents who currently use the 3G pitch, 25 people indicated that they currently walk to the site. 98 use a car.

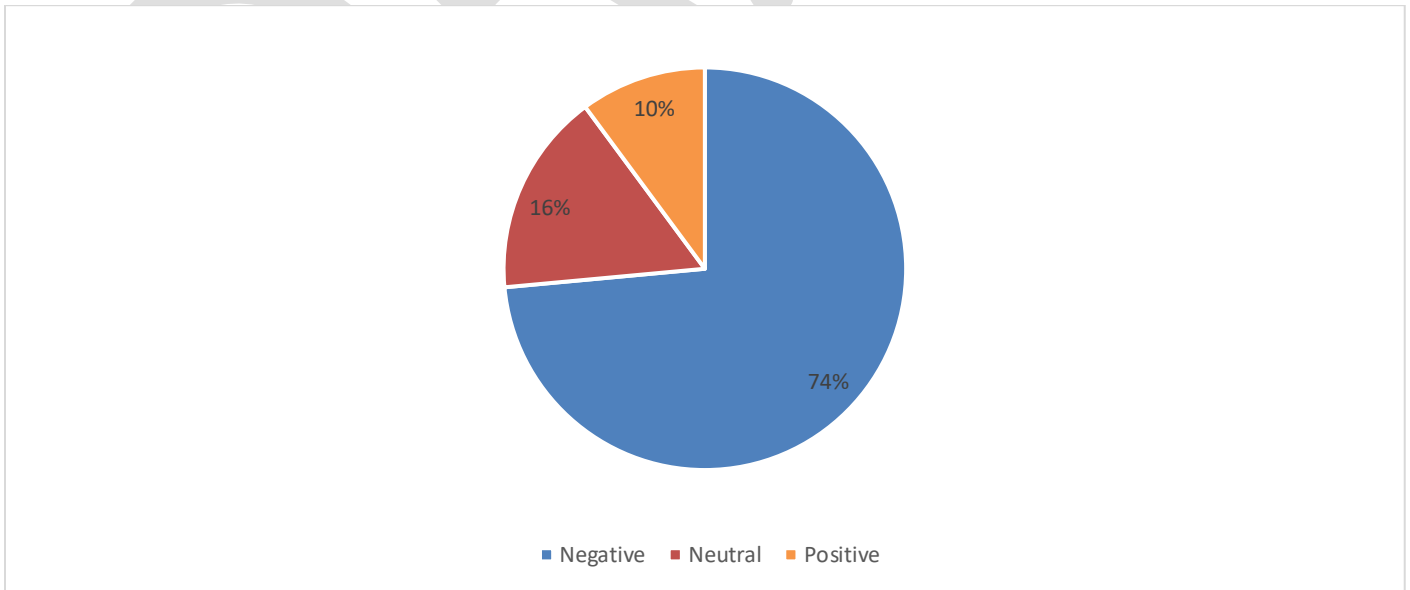
**Graph 6: Main mode of transport to the site amongst current users (n=130)**



**Impact**

The proposal would see Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre remain permanently closed, with sporting facilities at the adjacent Centre for Vulnerable Learners (CVL) being made available for community use outside of school hours from Spring 2025. As shown in **Graph 7**, of those who responded, 74% (225 individuals) felt that the proposal would have a negative impact on them. The remaining 26% felt that the impact would be neutral or positive.

**Graph 7: Impact of the proposal**



Reasons given for the proposal having a **neutral or positive impact** included:

- Other facilities within CCBC would allow residents from any area a choice

- Other facilities are of a better quality/more modern (including the proposed new facilities at the CVL)
- Exercise outdoors so not reliant on the facility
- The centre has been closed for some time, welcome a new facility

The main reasons given for respondents feeling that the closure will have a **negative impact** can be themed:

- Respondents feel that there are not enough sport and recreation facilities generally across the county borough to meet current demand, and that a growing population in the area through new housing developments will exacerbate this. In particular:
  - There was concern over a lack of availability of facilities during the day
- A shortage of 3G space, especially at weekends and in the winter. There were concerns over the size of the new 3G pitch in relation to reduced capacity and there being no alternative pitch for competitive matches. Current users also questioned whether bookings will be transferred across to the new site and whether there would be more capacity at alternative sites
- Respondents questioned the suitability of the new CVL sports hall for badminton and other sports and noted the lack of gym.
- There was a concern that alternative provision (beyond the Centre for Vulnerable Learners) is too far away. No other sites are in walking distance and the permanent closure will increase travel distance, time and costs and that other sites are not on public transport routes.
- Generally, it was felt that fewer facilities will have a negative impact on health and well-being

To add context to concerns raised around travel distance, the postcodes of respondents travelling to the site by car were mapped. Please refer to **Map 1**. The map highlights that the majority of respondents live within a 5 or 10 minute drive from the current site. However, the map also shows that some users of the existing site travel from further afield and that a number of other 3G sports pitches also fall within 10 minute drive from the current site. (Sports Wales suggest that a 20 minute drive is reasonable).

In relation to protected characteristics, some older people, those with children as well as those with disabilities felt that they would be more negatively affected due to the increased distance and associated cost if they have to travel further to alternative facilities. There was also concern that women's sports may be impacted more if there is a limited capacity to book facilities. Comments were also raised around the CVL site needing to be accessible for those with disabilities.

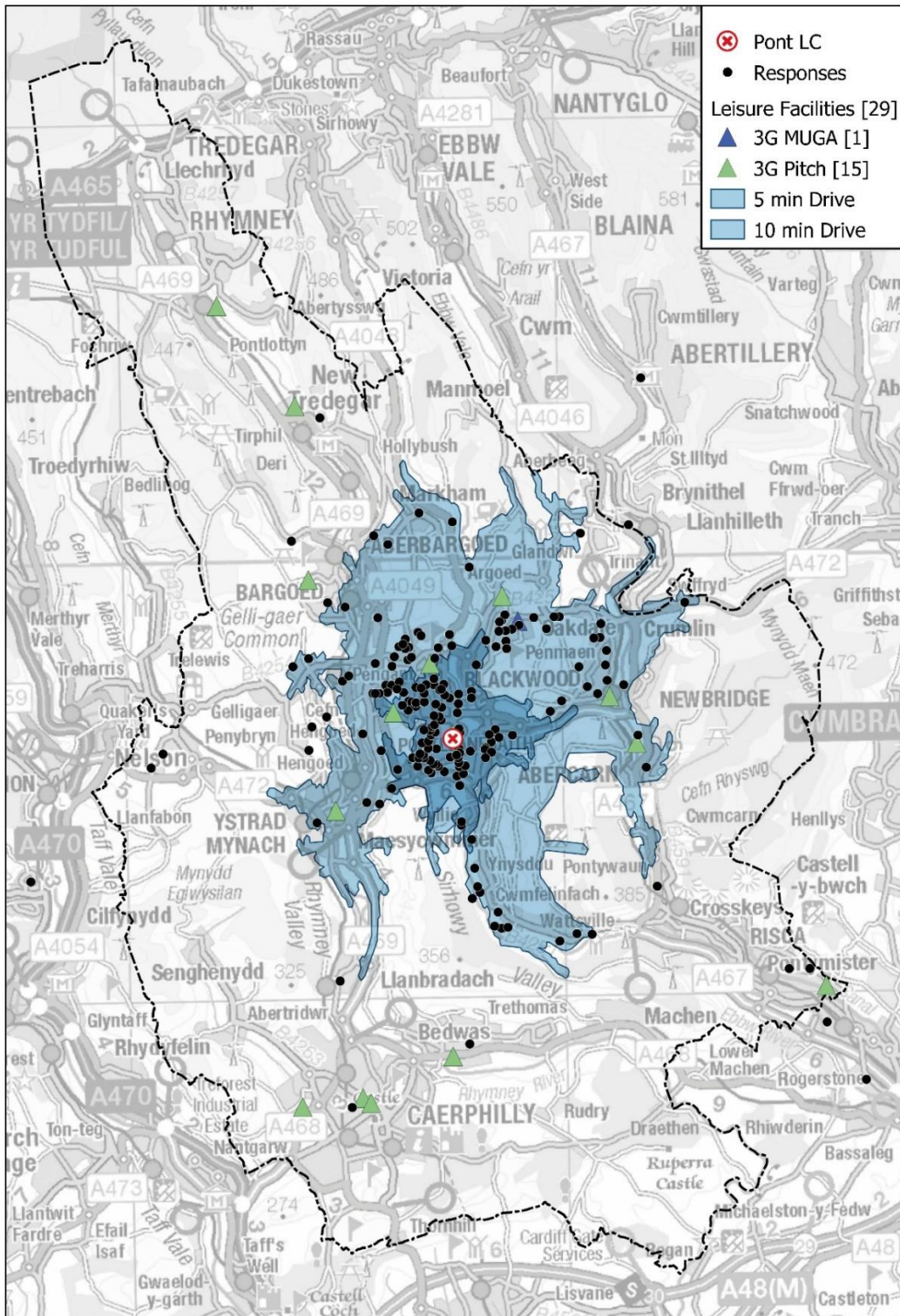
## Mitigation

When asked what mitigation would help reduce the impact of closing the site, a number responded that the site should simply be kept open. Of those who answered this question further, suggestions put forward include:

- Support access to facilities for people of all ages
- Consider the difficulties and cost associated with travel to other sites
- Ensure alternative provision locally:
  - provide classes and opportunities to use the hall at the new CVL site – things that local people used to do in the leisure centre
  - temporarily open the existing site until the alternative is available
- Replace the current 3G pitch (with like for like) in the local area
- To meet demand:
  - ensure that 3G pitches across the borough are made available at weekends and during school holidays.

- build more 3G pitches on current grass pitches that currently don't get enough use due to poor weather.
- change the allocations system to ensure grass roots teams can access pitches
- ensure that those using the current pitch are allocated other provision

**Map 1: Postcodes of respondents who visit the site by car**



Note: only 230 postcodes were mappable (invalid/incomplete postcodes were not mapped).



## Digest of comments received through survey responses:

### Reasons for not using alternative facilities whilst the leisure centre has remained closed:

As all others are to far from me
Because pontllanfriath leisure centre is my nearest centre
Because the centre was closed!
Because there was no space at any other facility
Can't book any other facilities to suit needs
Carer and health problems
Classes in all other leisure centres near to me are always fully booked therefore for this reason I have ceased my membership. I used to use Pont Leisure Centre for classes and the their gym 6 days a week for at least 4 years prior to lockdown. It is sad and I always felt comfortable at the leisure centre classes and gym, much more so than any other site. Also the members of staff at Pont were very helpful. I have not chosen to renew my membership for some years now since the closure of Pont Leisure Centre. I really miss using this centre and it helped my confidence and anxiety. No matter what the public consultation says the Council have sadly already decided its future.
Couldn't find a pitch
Difficult to get to too Pont leoditr was close and local and suited work hours
Distance; inability to access public transport; as a carer greater time is needed to get to other centres
Don't drive so it's hard to get to other places
Due to anxiety and time constraints I only felt comfortable walking to and enjoying the classes on offer at Pontllanfraith
facilities not close enough, too fat to travel
Horrible facilities elsewhere. No parking at Newbridge. Caerphilly is horrid to get to around peak traffic times. Cefn fforest is one I use for gym and leisure but that could do with updating as it's small and also has no 3G. Another one on the list for closure no doubt.
I am not familiar with the other sites
I am not happy to travel to far because of my mental health
I can not afford to get a taxi, buses are extremely unpredictable on times and expensive. Other Leisure Centres are to far to walk
I can't travel further away.
I can't get to any other venues
I didn't want to travel further as my parents live near there too, so I could visit them at the same time.
I have accessed newbridge on a few occasions but haven't every week due to having to use my car to get to it
I liked the facilities available there
I previously used the leisure centre for many years but retired but have spoken to someone about walking netball. I am concerned about the obesity in young people which is now a pandemic
I want to use my local leisure centre
It's my local centre
Lack of available facilities in Blackwood area
Local gyms are more expensive. Pontllanfraith is in walking distance from where I live
My son got learning disabilities and don't use public transport and has a single mam don't drive also he don't like change we would walk to Pontllanfraith and it was a family bonding time
Newbridge leisure centre is too full and difficult to park. Pontllanfraith was much easier for me.
No facilities in walking distance.
No other facilities are convenient
No other facility is close
No other suitable facilities.
No particular reason, we just used Pontllanfraith.
No where accessible that had the facilities needed
No where else to go

Not able to
Not close enough
Not convenient to travel outside my area
Not convenient. I haven't the time to travel elsewhere
Not easily accessible, and other facilities have been too busy at the times I have tried to access
Not had the time
Nothing local as I don't drive to get to other facilities
Nothing suitable
Now 75 and during lockdown lost what little fitness I had left
Nowhere near enough to walk to.
Other centres are too far away
Other facilities were not suitable or too far.
Other leisure centres too big and intimidating I get anxious when there are too many people in one place
Play football on the 3g
Pont was easy access for me ... and affordable other options are either out of area I can walk or not affordable
Pontllanfraith is the perfect, central location for people to meet from all over CCBC. The badminton facilities, number of courts available despite the popularity, are perfect and contributed to well being and togetherness because playing sport as a group
Pontllanfraith leisure centre was the best for my sports interests.
The days and times available don't work for me. Neither does the necessity to travel further from home/work to access the facilities.
The distance I have to travel and it's not as close as I work in the area so used to go there after work.
The leisure centre is local to me and with two children I am time restricted so being so close to home allows me to be a stone's throw away from home
The training was moved to a facility too far away for me to travel to on a weekly basis
There are no facilities within walking distance
There is no other facility that is within reasonable distance to accommodate a busy lifestyle, booking slots unavailable, facilities not adequate
There is nothing else suitable in the vicinity. CCBC are intent on shutting all facilities in and around Blackwood to open shiny new ones in Caerphilly and it's a disgrace.
There isn't anything else within walking distance.
They are too far away (or private ones are too expensive without the facilities and classes which Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre had.
Too far to walk
Unable to find suitable indoor area with availability to book.
Used some home gym equipment but not able to replicate a proper gym session and much poorer physically for it

**Would this proposal have a positive, negative or neutral impact on you and your household?**

<b>Negative</b>
3g pitches are highly in demand. A lot of grassroots football uses pont 3g, these children are the future of Welsh sports. We should be doing everything we can to keep places like this open to help promote healthy lifestyles.
A loss of any community unit is a step in the wrong direction for people's health.
All local football teams use the facilities
All of my family have used this 3G pitch and indoor hall for football matches & practice... 3 sons and my husband. Also as an adult learner I personally attended this centre weekly attaining enough qualifications to go on to higher further education in College Gwent then onto a degree and a reasonable job with encouragement from the tutors I met in Pontllanfraith and the help I received from the manager of the leisure centre so it's not just about sports it's also an educational asset

Already struggle to get netball facilities in the vicinity. So that has reduced that. Already have to take my 5 year old every other week to a different county to play the league and it's so cold. Pontllanfraith is ideal and central. The other facilities are already fully booked.
Alternative not big enough.
As a club we used the hall not the 3G pitch!
As a family we use the facility to ensure our physical and mental health are maintained
As a person with a disability, I need to access somewhere during the day.
As answered previously, I find other centres way too busy. I feel far more comfortable using the facilities and gym at Pont LC. Plus, all other classes at Heolddu, Caerphilly etc are always fully booked and the gym too intimidating plus they are further away and I have to travel further.
As many members of my family use Pontllanfriath
Being new centre for CVL learners it may not be available to members of public use when needed
Both myself and my son use the 3G each week and have in the past used the badminton courts which we would like to do again rather than travel further to another facility. The leisure facilities at Pontllanfraith have been used by all members of the household for over 25 years and massively help not only physical health but also mental health
Caerphilly council just putting profit over health and well being of locals in the area. The facilities are already in place. The proposed does not match what is already there and would have a detrimental impact of people
Who currently use all the facilities. I've used that 3G weekly for over 20 years and my children use it for their respective football teams at the weekends. The proposed would not be viable and the council know it. It's just lip service
Can't afford to lose any facility
Cannot use 3G; previously used gym at Pontllanfraith and several weekly exercise classes
Child having access to sporting facilities
Children unable to play football impacts on health
Current facilities, are readily available and not upto standard.
Currently use the 3G pitch which is far superior to others within the Borough. The 3G was closed for a few weeks in the summer and so used the alternative nearest which was Newbridge. Considering this site has newer facilities the 3G was in dire condition not to mention the horrific smell from the nearby river. Should Pontllanfraith close this would impact any local residents as would remove such a good facility
Decreased access to local facilities having an impact on health and well-being of all house hold members. Our local communities have high rates of childhood obesity which has significant impact on short and long term health outcomes. Closing this facility would have a detrimental impact and could mean decrease physical activity for our children, a known cause of obesity
Don't want to exercise in such a place
Due to working patterns, I would rely on facilities during school hours
Facilities like this is vital for the community for physical and mental health. People shouldn't have to travel long distances to use such facilities. Some people don't have the advantage of own transport .
Football Used the pitch
Getting rid of a community leisure centre can never be a positive for that community
Had always used Pontllanfraith in the past and found it ideal for my purposes
Help to promote health and wellbeing in a LOCAL faciltites
I always enjoyed the freedom to use the leisure facilities , I also liked the friendships that were formed and the ability to access straight away with our having the issues of the booking system that is in place at the moment. It us sole destroying
I currently have to travel from Newport to Markham which is very far
I enjoyed my time with like minded others, we shared our experiences with others. This was very therapeutic for many of us
I feel it would be a great personal loss to me. I would really struggle to travel to and engage in activities at another site. This would impact my mental and physical health
I have no wish to use the new facility
I have two sons who deserve access to good leisure facilities. Systematically taking away good facilities to replace the sites with more housing is nit beneficial to the community as a whole

I have used this facility since a child and I know many people the same. It is always clean and safe to use and is great for mental health.
I joined a private gym after the gym closed, but the activities I used to do from pontllanfraith have not been able to be continued elsewhere as they had to find different days and times to slot these things in and some are too far away and I've had to give them up because they have been unable to rebook them back into pontllanfraith leisure centre, had the leisure centre been open and the activities could be booked I would still be using pontllanfraith on a weekly basis.
I need somewhere I can get to.
I suspect we will lose something here in the process, as private users
I try to keep fit and healthy and by shut this centre would have a dramatic impact on me keeping fit.
I use the pitch to play with my friends. And my son uses it as a training facility with blackwood town. It's within walking distance so no car is involved and 80% of players walk as we are all local.
I used to use the Leisure Centre for Squash and Badminton / unless the new facilities include these it would have a negative effect. I am currently travelling to Caerphilly LC to play squash
I want it to re open so I can use it as before
I want to access facilities during week days
I want to use my local leisure centre.
I was really hoping to go back to the gym, exercising in my own home for a long time now, but it's not really suitable for me. My daughter and I both had gym membership before it closed down. We're not comfortable exercising in private gyms.
I would argue that it would have a negative impact on the local area as it would reduce the options people have to exercise and have a healthy lifestyle.
I would have no access to leisure facilities that I felt comfortable to be at
I would like to begin using the sports hall again as this is local to me.
I would like to get on track with my fitness. My daughter's netball team also trained there and they are currently training in Markham. This is a much longer journey for us both.
I would love and benefit for my health to be able to use a local gym for my self
I would love to get back to sport in the way that we played pre pandemic but as explained in my previous answer I simply cannot make that work. I'm getting fatter and while peri-menopausal a leisure centre on my doorstep would be so much of a positive influence.
I would say a negative impact due to wanting to use the facilities during day time as the others are attached to schools in which we can't access facilities during school hours such as sports hall, badminton/squash facilities or even access to changing room. And another negative would be the new pitch is not a full size one which will not be able to accommodate our club due to our numbers as we won't be able to train together as a whole and which would also mean that we couldn't play our league matches on that site either.
I've been a frequent user of the leisure centre for my entire life. From the astro turf, the gym facilities and the indoor courts for football, racquet sports, basketball, birthday parties etc etc. The leisure centre means a lot to not only me but the people of the community and shutting it would have a very large negative effect on the community as a whole.
If it closes, I have no access to a full 3g pitch within walking distance
If the leisure centre and 3G shuts, I wouldn't be able to play football weekly and then not see all the friends that I have made and currently play football weekly there with myself.
Isn't it obvious? It's near to us, as I've already said...and my son and I have taken part in sport there.
It affects my sons football club and in the long run his overall health and mental wellbeing
It attracts all young people for surrounding areas , not just Blackwood
It is a big step backwards to have less sporting facilities in the area
It is not suitable.
It is the closest leisure centre to my home and I used to attend a weekly badminton club there.
It take away a local community venue where some can walk to and local venue for sporting events. Your taking away from people mental health who rely on the leisure centre
It was a place for many years where I played and now my daughters play... now we play in markham I have seen a decline in players due to the facilities,, carpark and temperature in the centre in markham ...
It will affect my health both physically and mentally.
It wont be big enough

It would be unfair for the wider community who don't have cars
It would limit my time to attend the gym by closing the leisure centre and my sons
It wouldn't have the gym facilities, the dance room for classes, or the sports hall that the current centre has.
It's been used for years by numerous sporting teams it would be a joke to everyone who lives in blackwood or the surrounding area to shut this facility down
It's only outside of school hours
It's very much needed for the local community. More facilities we have for older people and younger people the better
It's where I played football for countless years as well as net ball and made many memories. It's a good facility and well used.
It's obvious that losing sport facilities in my local area is a bad thing.
It's on my doorstep. I'm 59 and I Don want to travel any distance. Its good for my well being that it's on my doorstep.
Keep pont leisure centre open
Kids need somewhere to train
Kids wouldn't be able to play sports
Lack of facilities in Blackwood No squash courts closer than Risca
Lack of facilities in our area.
Lesiure Centre should be open for all users
Less facilities when the area is growing is farcical, it proves the area needs this as the 3G is in constant use so why close ...? Other sport facilities need to be opened back up as it encourages health and fitness
Local amenities encourage more people to take care of themselves
Loss of too many facilities including full size pitch
My child and wife both used the gym and sports pitch prior to lock down and closing it would see them either have to travel by car or give up going when they have already lost access to a safe park for the younger children in the area
My child would be even more disadvantaged in terms of accessing sports facilities
My daughter and her team mates train on the pitch and would not be able to do so
My grandchildren live within walking distance of the L C their mother doesn't drive so would find it harder to access other facilities also site will probably be built on. Loss of more green spaces in Pontllanfraith. Nowhere for local children to play organised sports close to home.
My Grandchildren use this pitch regularly
My Grandson has started playing football this year which has really brought him out of his shell, without this he would be back to sitting in front of a TV gaming or watching rubbish, he only trains at the leisure centre once a week but has made new friends in the football team that he now gets out to play with after school, if we were forced to move to a different training site it might not be possible due to transport and time restraints
My kids use it and they would have to go else where
My son don't like change and I myself used pont leisure centre when I was a child and that's where I met my children dad who has now past away going to pont us has a family is a very happy place
My son plays football there, it means we will have to travel to Ebbw Vale
My son plays his football matches there on a Sunday and it is impossible to get to the other locations in Oakdale or Brynmawr via public transport. My son is 7 and since joining the team his confidence has increased greatly and not being able to attend football matches will have an impact on his physical and mental well being.
My son trains on the 3G My gym classes were moved to newbridge which is 15 minutes further away from me, using more petrol and creating more pollution
My son wouldn't be able to train for football in the winter months
My younger family members use the centre
Need access to facilities all year round not just out of school hours.
Need something for 2024
No netball training
No other council run leisure facility in the local area
No sports hall or gym access at all.

No toilet facilities when using the 3G pitch. Less access to sport and leisure can only be a negative thing for our community in general
No where else to train or play games during these as most pitches in area are waterlogged and not looked after
No where to play sport indoors during the intern
No where to train for football locally
Not anywhere sufficient to meet current usage
Not as accessible for team sports
Not being able to get there without someone else driving me there
Not enough 3G pitches for local football teams in the area.
Not enough for youngsters to do any way so this is an asset
Once again where can my Husband and I go to play Badminton together which is quite close to where we live
Only open after school hours
Our girls are currently struggling to get access to suitable 3G pitches for both training and weekend matches. The new proposed pitch I believe isn't full size so no good for matches. We need more pitches available not less.
Part of community and should be able to use for netball
People who are elderly would not travel
Pont leisure was my go too place I was nee to the area and un able to drive was local and great staff and friendly atmosphere there Really was good for my mental health
Pontllanfraith leisure centre and its staff have been a permanent fixture in the local community for many years. Why the council feels the need to close down old buildings and promise us new facilities is beyond me. We know how much money it cost to re-route the gas to the centre over the last year, and the building has plenty more years left. Stop building new and fix the existing buildings! It's OUR money you're using it's not YOURS!
Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre is a local resource that allows the local residents to use the facility instead of having to travel to another facility. Again, it appears that the Local Authority may have plans for more housing being built in the area which the Leisure Centre is located .
Pontllanfraith leisure centre is close to my home and I have had to resort to more expensive private gym to maintain my fitness. The cost for the leisure centre was more affordable. If it is nit reopened and due to financial constraints my fitness will suffer. This will then impact on my health and cause extra strain on the NHS
Pontllanfraith would be our nearest leisure centre and is directly in a bus route, which my children could access while I'm in work.
Proposal for new 3G is too small to hold competitive matches on
Proposed 3G would not be big enough for many if not most of our teams. We already really struggle to access enough training facilities, if the Astro pitch at Pontllanfraith closes this would make things extremely difficult. We have 200 players registered from under 6 to adults including my own children, and have relied on Pontllanfraith for training and match facilities for many years.
Proposed pitch is too small for matches
School hours are the only times some people are free to access fitness. Plus, the proposed facilities are considerably less than the current ones
Son plays football here every week and it's a great 3G pitch
Sport and Leisure facilities are essential for everyone's mental and physical health
Takes away a local venue that is integral to the community
Taking away our local sports facilities.
The 3G pitch being planned is not to regulation size so will not be able to be used for football matches
The 3g pitch is a great surfaced used by me and my team for years. It is local with adiquite parking.
The area is already very much lacking in sports facilities for my three children and having to travel further afield wouod als cause major issues. I'm also part of Oakdale minis and Juniors and we've had awful trouble finding places to train during the Winter in the past so this would add to an already desperate situation for lots of local clubs. The Leisure centre itself would also be a big loss to the community, especially those who can't travel to exercise
The closing of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre would lead to local people being without a place to exercise and lead a healthy lifestyle. It's imperative that the leisure centre stays open as it offers another place

where local sports clubs can use the facilities during the winter periods to continue training and play matches as we have a lack of these facilities in the county as is.
The Council on the one hand wants to be green and prevent over use of cars but is wanting to close local leisure facilities, Making residents travel farther for 'local' amenities.
The CVL would not be open in the daytime, and is a much smaller facility offering no squash court or fitness suite. In addition the leisure centre will be closed before the CVL is built
The facilities on offer at the new centre are pathetic. A small 3G that's no use to anyone or any local teams/ how about building this facility in Caerphilly and building the new multi million pound leisure centre in Blackwood!? It's shameful and shocking the under investment in Blackwood. Corruption at its finest
The facilities that will be available are not the same as before and are inadequate in size and availability. More should be done to promote sport to prevent a decline in all the residents of Caerphilly with their health and wellbeing
The facility is local and would benefit the community there is already so much taken from the Blackwood area for housing development the community would and have suffered too much loss already
the group of people that I play badminton with are located throughout CCBC. Pontllanfraith is the perfect location, with the number of courts available are ideal. Losing this facility would mean the end of group badminton sessions which will contribute to deteriorating fitness and mental health.
The gym could be used during school hours where as most members of the household work outside of school hours
the health of the community i,ve been using it for years/
The indoor pitch for football would be huge for plus during the winter months
The leisure centre is a big part of my teams training and practice activities, as well as this, I personally use the facilities for exercise and find it very handy as it's the only leisure centre in the area and the 3G proves very useful when our teams grass pitch is affected by poor weather, meaning we don't miss a match and can play safely on a durable and all-weather pitch here at Pont.
The new facility is less than half the area for 3g and would limit the number of players.
The pitch size would be too small
The pitch would be too small for my households requirements
The proposal doesn't take into account use of the internal facilities e.g squash, badminton, 5 aside indoor football or gym equipment. Very disappointing this has not been included.
The proposal to permanently close pont leisure facilities would be negative as the leisure centre is a facility that can be accessed by all members of the public all day and night seven days a week, without the new school facilities and it's sensitive nature as a special needs school being impacted by members of the public. The new school facilities is a lot smaller and not fully accessible as a separate leisure centre and its facilities can offer. The school is a priority for education not to provide leisure services for the general public. There are major impacts in this decision making. Whilst sports caerphilly have heavily invested in other leisure centres across the borough, they have neglected Pontllanfraith leisure over the last 10 years. I highlighted to the authority how their decision making in 2018 to close the leisure centre was wrong and they had made mistakes by not including the impacts in our most vulnerable within our borough. The leisure centre was used as a major vaccine centre for our communities near and far and this did not impact any school sites to continue their services. I firmly believe that the current proposed decision making to permanently close the leisure centre is unfair and outcome biased decision making. This decision making is set out to achieve the same outcome from decision makers which clearly lacks fairness, integrity, limited creativity, innovation and forward thinking. After Covid more and more people are accessing their sport facilities for their mental and physical health. Hence, why I believe this decision making is still being influenced by past biases with a consistent approach in trying to solve the wrong problems in taking key decisions forward. Why close Pontllanfraith leisure centre without any references to an asset transfer to our communities? This is a critical flaw and reverts back to the original decision making that tried to close the leisure centre in 2018. It's the same pattern for the same outcome. This seriously highlights the lack of respect to our communities from decision makers.
The proposed new leisure facilities will not be adequate for use, as the football pitch will be big enough for 2 teams to train. Or even be used for a full game as the pitch will not be big enough.

The survey doesn't properly recognise the family use of the leisure centre and affects on family support for local opportunities of their children etc. Whilst I no longer use the centre regularly like I used to do because of my age I support my children's family and take grandchildren to use the facilities. If this closes then longer journeys, less opportunity and certainly less eco friendly follows.
There already isn't much to do, since this was used for vaccinations there hasn't been other options in the local area of pontllanfraith, keeping the centre open could mean local people having a place to go and socialise or keep healthy again. And also an opportunity for people to start classes etc like many others use their centres for. A place for teenagers to learn sports or activities many different ways to use the leisure centre
There are fewer and fewer facilities for people to train and by closing the leisure centre means we will not be able to train
There are insufficient facilities for the number of people wishing to participate in sports - I live alone and this weekly activity is important to both my fitness and mental wellbeing
There are not enough all weather surfaces available all year round for private hire or local sports clubs and many training sessions and matches are cancelled due to the weather
There are not enough sports facilities in the area and removing a other one would have a detrimental impact on the community.
There are not enough suitable places within the area to use for different events. I know the 3G is currently used on a regular basis. It would be a shame to have to go elsewhere to use the facilities. This would result in further travel costs and inconvenience to all involved. Plus it would not encourage people to stay fit and healthy.
There are very few all weather facilities for children to play football in the area . Many local grassroots games are cancelled for weeks at a time on grass pitches
There aren't enough leisure centres about so closing ones not helping.
There is a need to expand range of services offered- restricted hours etc would only offer basic piecemeal services
There is a shortage of 3G spaces during winter months and on weekend in Caerphilly Council
There is already insufficient provision of suitable pitches for our activity (walking football)
There is no other 3G pitch available to us in the local area. All others are booked up. The proposed 3G pitch to my understanding will not be a full size football pitch. Also, there are no other squash courts in the local area. I would need to now drive all the way to Caerphilly or Risca to play squash as the courts in Newbridge have also closed.
There is not enough facilities locally, I have to drive elsewhere if this closes
There isn't enough 3G pitches in the area and local clubs struggle for availability especially during the winter months without losing another one.
This facility us within walking distance from our home, no need for a car or other mode of transport
This is a borough resource. Stop wasting money on vanity projects diversity etc and get back to core community values of a healthy population. Time for the council to listen to its residents. You are there to provide for us not tell us what you think we need
This is a hub for the community. Many Reports have also shown that exercise is extremely beneficial to mental health.
This is a local training ground and sports pitch for local football teams.
This is an invaluable all year round pitch used separately but regularly by my daughter and I.
This is making it extremely hard for clubs to find available places to train. I won't be able to train as much not allowing me to do much sports
Travel further
Use the gym after work. Book the courts for badminton.
Used the gym daily
We already have an obesity crisis, and cost of living and your closing facilities that enable us to afford to do activity
We cannot allow another Leisure centre to close.. Cwmcarn went quietly Pont cannot.
We currently walk to the leisure centre for my sons football training
We need this vital leisure centre it is a much needed safe space for children and adults alike
We need to keep the 3G pitch where it is
We need use of the Astro so we are able to train and play games
We should be promoting and investing in leisure facilities not closing them down.



We use two different venues to accomodate club, this causes issues in itself, also the school facility (islwyn high)is cancelled regularly throughout the tear so facilities can be used for exams. The other venue we use is threatened with closure as it is committee run, we will then not have anywhere to train.(markham community lc)
we want this to be re opened as it's a massive thing to me and my family , DONT SHUT IT DOWN!!!!
We watch our grandson play football on this pitch, its an important part of the teams to use when the fields are unplayable due to flooding. It is imperative this 3g pitch stays open in Pontllanfraith.
We would have to find use of another 3G pitch in the area of which there aren't many and never the same time slots or days
We would have to travel to access a leisure centre
We would no longer have access to a leisure centre without significant travel. This has stopped us since the national lockdown, and I don't any change in the future.
What size is pitch? How easy will bookings be? Will current slots be transferred across?
Would be able to book it to train the children come as you serve purpose
Would end social and physical activity due to no option of relocation. This would impact my physical and mental health and have a severe issue on myself and others. Without access to facilities and the interaction i would likely seek other resources to assist with my depression causing further strains on local resources.
Would not be the same standard and not accessible in the day time
Would probably struggle to get access to other local facilities
Would take away the freedom and enjoyment of not only mine and my families enjoyment and interests but also thousands of other individuals and their families in the local and surrounding areas which is very unfair.
Wouldn't have a 3g pitch to play football on
You are building a raft of new houses in the area but want to limit facilities, why?

<b>Neutral</b>
Any sporting facility within CCBC would allow residents from any area a choice to use the sports offered.
As Senior Citizens who keep ourselves fit through outdoor walking we will not be directly impacted by the closure of the Leisure Centre. However we are parents/grandparents of younger users of the facility. Additionally, I would be unhappy to see the land given over for the development of even more housing without the infrastructure to support the increasing number of residents in the vicinity of Pontllanfraith/Blackwood.
Because of age and infirmity unable to use it a t moment but needs to be kept open for all generations
Both the facility used now and the leisure centre are close to where I live, however Spring 2025 seems too long of a time
Don't use leisure centre only 3g pitch
Haven't used the centre for years and not likely too.
I can access Newbridge leisure centre just as easy via car or using public transport. The facilities are far advanced and the opportunity for an all round exercise workout awaits.
i don't live in that area or use the centre
I have a back problem and am looking forward to chair yoga to try to maintain some fitness an mobility
I think a leisure. Enter keeps the community together, somewhere if you are on your own to make friends and keep fit at the same time.
I would just give up using places like this.
I would need more details of what amendments Where available, squash, badminton etc
If an indoor area that is safe and fit for purpose can be made available, that will have a positive impact. If the outdoor 3G pitch is smaller than the current 3g pitch, this will have a negative impact to the footballing community, especially our youngest footballers in the community as there will not be enough space for their festivals on Sunday.
It's not necessarily our local leisure centre. But I could see the facility being useful for my children's activities. Such as the 3G being used on the weekend for their football etc.
Neutral now as I no longer live in South Wales. However it would have been negative if I had have still been there.
Newbridge Leisure Centre is equally as easy to access, has much better and more modern facilities and is not looking like a tired, old building
Not clear what sporting facilities would be available???
The 3G pitch would need to be the same size as the current pitch at pontllanfraith leisure centre. So to be able to accommodate 2 sides training on each half as is the case now. Other wise this will have a negative impact and you will not be able to accommodate all local teams.
The facility will close leaving a gap for users whilst this new facility is built. Plus will it open for external users or remain closed like other facilities in the borough
The main centre has not been used for time other than for covid vaccinations
Use other facilities but feel the closure would impact the local community and those that are more vulnerable or don't have access to their own transport.
Wouldn't affect me.
Positive
Area needs it
Better use of available resources.
Close it. Other leisure centres around the area are much better
Currently using the 3G playing area for walking football. I am 67 years old and this is the third location we have used this season. Failed to get the third year at Blackwood Comp having used it for the previous 2 years. Ystrad Mynach not suitable for football it becomes to dangerous when wet. There are a number of clubs in the area looking for suitable training facilities so we all would be looking to book a slot at various days and times.Has Blackwood Walking football was set up initially for peoples well being this would be devastating to some of the members.
Good use of new facilities
I feel at least it will be used.
I live near other centres that are better than this one
It needs to stay open for all
More access for netball very popular sport in borough

Other 3G pitches are better in the area
Quality of 3G facility is good quality and would love to carry on making use of this facility. Without it I feel the football group would collapse.
Rubbish 3G pitch compared to the others in the borough
Saving money travelling to other places for the gym and to get to netball training
Sounds good
The closure of the facility would enable the council to achieve the financial savings needed. In addition, the site needs a significant investment to bring it up to standard.
The new CVL facility is much better than what is in offer at Pontllanfraith leisure centre. It needs to go.
The new CVL site will offer modern facilities that are better than at Pont leisure centre
The proposal has facilities for indoor sports that arent available now.?
There are already a shortage of pitches available for sports teams, especially in winter with limited sunlight and deteriorating grass pitches - this is a great facility to allow teams, which are significant parts of local communities and play major roles in sustaining both the mental and physical health of residents to continue to train/play through the winter months
Us Blackwood netball club enjoyed out training sessions here, and would like to be able to come come back and this was a very big part of our club, with out this leisure centre it has impacted of the training as where we train now does not compare to pontllanfraith leisure
We can use centre again
We need more houses in the area and the other local centres are not far too away

**If you feel the proposal would have a negative impact on you and your household, please outline how we could work with you to reduce this impact.**

Another local facility would need to be made available.
As above. Plus being a representative of a local football team with over 250 players and access to One council grass pitch it is a must that we provide excellent opportunities to a growing demographic. You continue to build house but where are these residents intended to participate in sports
As far as I'm concerned the facility should remain open as there is far too high a demand for such facilities already without the addition of so many new families moving into the area which such developments as the old council office's site among others.
At present paying for private facilities- cost of living ! Looking for affordable options
Build a racquet club in Blackwood area
Build another leisure centre near Blackwood
Build another new sports facility in the Blackwood / Pontllanfraith area which would be a waste of money when you can keep an existing facility open
By keeping it open
By keeping it open and leaving it there
By keeping Pontllanfraith leisure fully open and operational how it used to be..
By keeping the leisure centre open it will have less impact on my health and fitness. Resulting in less pressure on the NHS
By not putting profit over health and wellbeing. Invest in this area and not just Caerphilly town. Invest in Cefn forest and Pontllanfraith.
Can't keep fit as won't be able to train
Closing a local useful amenity. You should support all weather training facilities for local sports teams as there are already too few about.
Do not close the leisure center. The 3g pitch is in very good condition and the hall had been very useful in the difficult times we had in covid.
Do not close the leisure centre.
Don't close it
Don't close it down
Don't close the 3G pitch
Don't close the 3G.
Don't close the centre
Dont close it

Don't close it as a sport/leisure unit.
Don't close pont leisure centre
Don't take away the leisure centre and 3G facilities. Keep it and invest in it to maintain an appropriate standard.
Easy to access, travelling to access other facilities
Easy to get to
For me personally to offer chair yoga or excercise in an alternative place
Get it open and running so it can be used
Give access until new facility is available
Give more opportunities for training and playing time for children in sports
Have a facility that is open for all members of the public to use throughout the day, not just evenings and weekends
Having to travel further to use facilities
Having to travel further to use other 3G pitches
Having to travel further which isn't always an option.
I am wondering how it is possible for people who don't own cars to be able to access leisure facilities.. buses are expensive after all...
I feel as the leisure centre closed its doors due to the 2020 Covid pandemic and was required as a vaccine centre to help save the lives of our communities. (We all need to be thankful for this intervention from CCBC and the NHS). It has remained closed for just shy of 4 years. I think the question that needs to be asked is: Where have all these individuals that a fighting so say to keep the leisure centre open been all this time? I feel the answer is, 1. They are clearly using alternative locations. 2. They did not use the centre previously and therefore have no intention of using it in the future. It is my personal and professional opinion that the Leisure Centre remain closed and be demolished to make way for much need respite accommodation for children, elderly, and adults with additional needs. That is what this community requires.
I need to join back to pontllanfraith leisure. It's in walking distance and easy to access . My son also used the 3g pitch weekly for football practice for a local team
I would have to drive further to another facility. Therefore increasing my carbon footprint. This goes against WG wishes
I would need to see your full impact assessments to address the full impacts on my household.
Improve public transport to other locations on a Sunday.
Instead of closing completely assess the most popular days the centre is used, then consider closing or alternating with other centres.
Invest in and keep the leisure centre open
Invest money to relaunch the centre not close it
It will have a negative effect on all those that used to use it. The only way you can reduce the impact is to sort out the welsh government and get the funding to reopen the facilities. They're wanting people out of their cars and outside, yet make it impossible for people to access leisure facilities that does just that. They need to get their spending priorities right and stop squandering millions on things thir constituents do not want.
it won't have a impact on me as i don't use it
It would impact my mental wellbeing, which would affect my Wife and Children. They need me to be in a sound mental and physical state, losing Pont would mean I dont have the option to remain active
It's 5 mins away , very accessible
Just keep this resource open .
Keep it open
Keep it open
Keep it open
Keep it open
Keep it open
Keep it open
keep it open

Keep it open as the further we have to travel the more impact it has on the environment as well
Keep it open but if it has to close build a multi purpose leisure centre with swimming pool. Don't put everything into Caerphilly
Keep it open for the local community.
Keep it open if it doesn't make a profit maybe think about closing it then
Keep it open it should have reopened after NHS use
Keep it open.
Keep LC open
Keep original pitch
Keep pont leisure centre open
Keep pontllanfraith leisure center and 3g open
Keep Pontllanfraith leisure centre open as a running leisure centre.
Keep Pontllanfraith leisure centre open is the only way to mitigate against any negative impact.
Keep Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre open!
Keep pontllanfraith leisure centre open!!!!!!
Keep Pontllanfraith open
Keep the 3G open or invest in a new facility in the Blackwood or Newbridge area
Keep the 3G open.
Keep the centre and its facilities open!
Keep the centre open
Keep the centre open! There enough houses being built everywhere!
Keep the centre open. The way youths exercise less today we need more options and facilities not less. Longer term less facilities will put extreme pressure on the nhs (this has been proven). Please listen to what local people want. You are there to represent us and what we want as a community
Keep the current pitch open - the new 3G pitch proposal isn't the same size for games
Keep the facilities available and open. Really not difficult
Keep the facilities open
Keep the facility open
Keep the facility open and stop spending all the budget in facilities much further away. You are here to serve ALL residents
Keep the facility open, have alternatives that are open all hours and not around school hours
Keep the leisure centre open
Keep the leisure centre open as it's local and within walking distance
Keep the leisure centre open!
Keep the leisure centre open, ensure that all school 3G pitches are available not only in the weekend but when the schools close for half terms and build more 3G pitches on current grass pitches that currently don't get enough use due to poor weather.
Keep the leisure centre open.
Keep the leisure centre open. It is used by many individuals in the community currently and by many more in the past.
Keep the leisure facilities and 3G pitch open
Keep the leisure facilities where they are, enabling porous like myself to access it with the discrimination
Keep the old leisure centre open even if it was for a few hours so residents could use the gym facilities
Keep the place open
Keep the place open.
Keep the remaining full size pitches
Keep the use of the Astro
Keep these facilities open
Keeping it open
Keeping the 3g pitch open
Keeping the Leisure centre open and putting the funds into it instead of putting greater funds into making new facilities.
Keeping the outdoor facility would be my main concern
Lack of choice in facilities
Leave Pontllanfraith leisure centre where it is and invest some money in it to make it more user friendly!

Leave pontllanfriath leisure centre open because the closest one is too far away (newbridge/ Caerphilly), Pontllanfriath is more beneficial to general public in local area
Leave the leisure centre open to public
Less access to trading, squash courts, less physical
Less provisions available for our family to use.
Like for like pitch size
Local amenities encourage self care
Loss of facility means less spitting opportunities
Loss of the facility and not taking into account the increase in local housing which would result increased transport to other facilities thus increasing carbon foot print. Negative impact as all other centres are attached to schools thus no daytime use unlike cefn forest and pontllanfraith if retained. Yet you are investing 33M£ in removing and replacing a working facility in the heart of Caerphilly town □. Please consider allocating the 1M£ for a brand new 3G pitch at pontllanfraith TIA
Make all 3G's in Caerphilly council available on weekends
Make more 3G pitches available in the area as well as offer sports and leisure services to local sports team such as team memberships and more streamlined pitch booking systems.
Make other local facilities as good as Pontllanfraith available which make no sense when the facilities are already available, children need somewhere they can meet to train to keep them off the gaming, help with their social skills and where their parents know they are safe
Make the centre available during school hours
Means I am using a private facility which I would rather not and have to go further out of my way to access facilities
Must maintain facilities for local and other residents.
My grandchildren would have to continue to travel further afield to play the sport they love the costs of which my family would struggle to afford at this time
My son plays for a football club, so having less facilities will have a great impact
Need a leisure centre and gym
No impact
No impact for my family including two adults and two children 10 & 7
No where to train and keep my mental health good
Not close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.
Not closing the leisure centre
Open up the leisure centre!
Pay for me to attend a private gym that is within walking distance .. a bus to the nearest facility isn't an option as I only have a short time free to go to the gym
Please don't close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre! It's so very valuable to the local community. I implore you to invest more into the site if anything
Problem with the number of cars using the roundabout at the bottom of Penllwyn lane.
Provide a leisure centre service for Pontllanfraith when the school is open.
Put other options in place
Quite simply do not close it. Invest in its future, it can become an even better local facility for one of the biggest catchment areas in the Caerphilly County Borough. The opportunity is there with the land available to improve the access for those who are unable to walk to the facility for cars and public transport. It would be shameful not too take advantage of the opportunities to keep and improve this facility for an area that has a constantly growing population.
Rather than spend millions on new facilities in Caerphilly spend the money in Blackwood
Re open it as before
Re open the leisure centre for its original purpose
Reatin Pontllanfraith leisure centre or provide the same facilities in the same location
Reconsider removing the Astro pitch or provide equal or better facilities at another location nearby!
Reduced access to leisure facilities making it difficult to book due to extra demand. Physical activity helps with my physical and mental health.
Renovate the leisure centre.
Reopen it

Reopen it as it was
Re-open the leisure centre and sports facilities for all to use.
Same as above
See the above answer for details.
Simply don't close the leisure centre. I think the community have told you more than enough times and in more than enough ways and I think it's frankly disgusting that you are choosing to ignore the community and local voters.
Simply re-open Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre
Start running regular activities. Some years ago Caerphilly hosted badminton mornings with a coach organising the teams. Also regular classes for older people would also be so beneficial such as yoga.
Still won't have access to a gym
Stop thinking of closing the site
Stop trying to cut cost via leisure try cut the money paid to councillors and officers it used to be a voluntary service
Support access to facilities for people of all ages
The closure of the leisure centre would be a travesty and injustice, as such a frequent user I would feel extremely betrayed to have it taken away.
The convenience of such a lovely facility of within walking distance for my 2 children to use
The facility at pontllanfrairh. was always full .. we have to travel to the other centre where I always have to drive but pontllanfraith is nearer and offers public transport which I would be happy for my daughters to use without me
The facility is local and would benefit the community there is already so much taken from the Blackwood area for housing development the community would and have suffered too much loss already
The leisure centre is walking distance for myself and my daughter, having this facility available not just outside school hours for us being right on our doorstep and is promoting health and fitness, removing this facility could be detrimental to our mental health, we can no longer do the activities that keep us going week on week.
The loss of a full size pitch would restrict access to facilities meaning that my daughter and myself maybe unable to train and play weekly.
The only negative impact on me would be the building site right behind my house if houses are built.
The upkeep of Pont Leisure centre should have been completed on a yearly basis and forecasted correctly by CCBC management to maintain to a high standard. The impact on families was discussed when this went to court
There are no direct links from the Valley I live in to other leisure ce tres
There aren't enough artificial pitches to support local sports teams, so the loss of the existing 3G pitch will have a significant impact on local sporting communities
There will be no impact on me personally but the communities of The Penllwyn and Pontllanfraith will be even more deprived of facilities than they are already and Pontllanfraith is expanding hugely: more young families with children and grossly reduced facilities do not make for a happy, healthy, active community.
this is a potential removal of an important local facility for a growing and expanding community, which ultimately forces the community to travel by car or public transport.
To be denied as we have for 3 years is disgraceful. We can not afford to travel further or engage in a sport that is vital to my wellbeing
we want it to remain open !
We wouldn't be able to train regularly
We're taxpayers and your proposal is to destroy a public service already in place. We struggle for 3g pitches.
What's the point the Council does not give one damn or care about its residents.
Wife has a Caerphilly Lesiure membership
Will result in an unfit local population with more obesity and illness
With regards to the 3G, we use this for an hour a week for U14s Blackwood Town football training. I would like this session to continue so we would need the council to find us an alternative venue. At present all other 3G pitches in the area are pretty much fully booked mid week.
Would impact my mental health as unable to play football locally
Yeah attending Pontllanfraith is one of the few opportunities I get to exercise and have done so for a number of years. I have developed good relationships with those who also attend which wouldn't have

happened otherwise. If this closed it is likely we won't be able to find another suitable location and would likely have to stop and would then lose the relationships I have built up
Yes, my son and his team mates, 17 of them
You can't
You can't ! It is that simple ! The proposal to close would negatively affect so many people who previously used the centre - older people; people with disabilities; young people. Nearby is a new housing development who could easily access the Centre. As a full-time carer of an elderly person with dementia I have no alternative. Exercise helps my mental and physical health and well-being and helps me cope with the daily stresses of being a carer. I also know many local older people / people with learning difficulties who were regular users - and now have no access to mental health / well-being / physical exercise. Closure is short-sighted and nothing short of disgraceful.
You could not
You could reduce any negative impact by opening the leisure centre for the community.
You couldn't my son and other children feel close to their dad closing it would have a big impact on their mental health and having a game of football my daughter plays for a team and the amount of problems we get is that they never got no where to play matches due to the lack of places and they are currently in the league
You don't need to work with me to reduce the impact you simply need to update the current facility and keep it open.
You have already made the decision to close Pontllanfraith, so this consultation is utterly worthless.
☹️☹️☹️☹️☹️

**If the proposal would impact you differently as an individual because of any of the following (age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, religious belief or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality, or responsibility for any dependents or because you or a member of your household are or have been a member of the armed forces) please give details below.**

Age & disabilities plus not a car user
Age. I don't want travel far at my age
Already said
Am gay; have 3 types of learning difficulties; am a full-time carer so unable to work - following an extended period of unemployment; suffer with depression; also have a long-term health condition which limits my mobility and ability to travel
Any loss of such services would affect the community
Approaching the age where I would prefer closer facilities and not have to drive or take a longer bus journey
As a 65 year old, I cannot continue to afford private clubs. Many more families have moved in next to the leisure centre, and I'm sure that many others will be in the same situation as me. There are NO day time facilities in Ystrad Mynach where I live.
Children would have much further to travel to access facilities. The cost of living crisis means families find it hard to finance travelling further therefore children will miss out, reducing activity and participation levels across the borough
Closing would have an impact on health and well-being.
Disability
Disability due to back injury, arthritis, diabetes and over 60
Disabled user
Female sport
Girls don't get many pitches to play their games or train on, so it would mean another pitch we can't use
I am a carer and I need such places to help maintain my physical and mental well being
I am a veteran of the British army RCT Participating for me or volunteering with an organisation can encourage feelings of purpose or belonging, support older adults to develop a new daily routine and help them retain a sense of independence.
I am disabled, over 66 and always used this place gif my health and wellbeing
I am over weight . I need it to be local for me



I am registered disabled but found the gym facilities suited me perfectly
I have a disability and need to keep as healthy as possible, shutting it down would not just have a negative impact on myself it will also impact other people who are on low wages and find it easy to get to.
I have a disability that effects my daily living and activities this is why I attend pontllanfraith for my active and social and mental well-being and They also have a ramp in which I can use to access the indoor which makes in better for me as I struggle with the steps. I haven't seen the access to the vulnerable learners to see if that would be accessible for myself and also there is nothing that states that it would be open to the public in the day eg 9-5 it says access but for public but don't state times at all.
I need somewhere to walk my dog. other fields in the area all have very steep paths to access them and due to my disability they are inaccessible.
I now fall in the category of over 50.
I would never have had the courage to go onto further education without the encouragement from the people at the centre I would never have gone directly as an older person onto a course in a college let alone think about being brave enough to travel to university plus as a single mother at the time I would not have had the time or money to travel i played sports there myself also and attended many parties held there it would and is a loss to the community
I'm a disabled person with mobility issues and the closure would mean further isolation and limit my wellbeing
It wont
It would impact me as a Pont resident. Millions being spent in Caerphilly and the RV whilst the Islwyn area is being starved of funds and services. A once wealthy area is being brought down to the level of the Rhymney Valley.
Like I already explained previously..
Mental health and fitness, while struggling with mental health. Being able to use the gym facilities or sports hall really benefit my health
My main reasons are as above. Not necessarily for my own personal use but for future use of family and the large local population. I'm unsure whether these comments from this survey will actually reach the people who make the decisions rather than just a tick box of survey results. I would ask that my comments are registered formally as part of the enquirey.
My sport is over 50's walking football for women. Without local facilities I will not be able to continue without travelling further.
My wife has MS
No comment at this time
No impact
Police and TA
See above answer regarding public transport
Wife has a disability and needs to exercise to reduce pain - closing facilities mean we have to go wider afield or pay more money for private facilities
Yes disability.
Yes due to my condition of copd then ramp access preferred then stairs with handrail.
Yes I'm disabled and got a mobility scooter which can get me there and back home before needing to charge it
You have the protected characteristics wrong it is sex not gender and you should make sure this is correct given the previous failures of you trying to shut the centre. Very disappointing.

### **Notes from drop-in sessions and online consultation sessions**

<b>Date/time/location of drop-in session:</b> Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> November at 12midday - online
<b>Overview:</b>
Total attendees – 1
Attendee was Senior Communications and Research Officer from office of Delyth Jewell MS.

Attended in anticipation primarily of listening to residents' views.

Offered an overview of the various ways people are able to give their views, including the survey and the face-to-face drop-in sessions. Also discussed the IIA process and 'lessons learned'.

MT offered an update on the facilities in development at the centre for vulnerable learners and additional provision at nearby a nearby site for weekend competitive fixtures.

Have offered to meet attendee at a later point in the consultation period if required.

**Date/time/location of drop-in session:** 28<sup>th</sup> November at Elim Baptist Church 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Total attendees – 8

Concern raised: The decision has already been made

**Response: The proposal is in line with the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy that has been in place since 2019. Part of this strategy is to streamline the provision whilst maintaining the overall offer.**

**No decision has yet been made and the consultation is being undertaken to identify what impact the proposed closure would have on local residents and stakeholders and how we can work to reduce any potential negative impacts identified. Feedback from the consultation will feed into Cabinet alongside other related information for a decision**

You mention running costs of Pontllanfraith but not of other leisure centres

**Response: It is difficult to compare sites as they all have a different offer and footfall**

Lack of availability of 3G pitch as the replacement is not like for like.

**Response: Acknowledged that the pitch at the new Centre will be smaller. Many of the current bookings are for ½ pitch – for children and five a side. The hall at the new centre can also be used for indoor training.**

**Investment has been provided for at least one additional 3G site in the borough in addition to recent additional sites being made available as shown on the map.**

**Discussions will take place directly with clubs if the decision is made to permanently close the site.**

**UKSPF funding can only be used for new pitches and not to repair or replace existing ones.**

**Management of sports pitches at Iswlyn High school is being transferred to Leisure Services. From 6<sup>th</sup> December pitches will be available for weekend bookings and in the new year (date to be confirmed) will also be available during the evenings moving forward.**

Why are all the meetings in the evening?

**Response: Two online day time sessions have already been scheduled as advertised (the one today was only attended by one person).**

**We are trying to arrange an additional day time session – subject to venue availability.**

Can you put a reminder on social media the day before the next drop-in?

**Yes**

Access to the Centre for Vulnerable Learners

**The new venue will be DDA compliant and accessible**

Cost of public transport to visit other sites

**Noted – part of the survey is to find the main mode of transport to the site.**

Community Asset Transfer

**If the decision was made to permanently close the site, then this could be one of the options available when the Council disposes of the land.**

Are they going to build houses on the site?

**If the decision was made to permanently close the site, the council would dispose of the site – any future use would be determined through the planning process**

Will we consider social media comments as part of the consultation?

**We would encourage anyone who wants to take part to either attend a drop-in session or visit our website before completing the survey to ensure that they are able to access the information they need to make an informed response to the consultation.**

**We will incorporate responses to our own social media posts but are unable to access externally managed social media pages. These would need to be collated and shared with us directly before the closing date for the consultation. Please note – a full digest of comments received through CCBC's social media channels can be found at :**

**<https://conversation.caerphilly.gov.uk/pontllanfraith-leisure-centre>**

Will the consultation response be available before a decision is made?

**Yes, the Cabinet papers are always in the public domain 1 week before Cabinet. A summary report of the consultation will be attached to the Cabinet report.**

What will you do after tonight's meeting?

**We will seek a response to the questions raised and update our FAQ page on our website. Anyone wishing to be made aware when this happens is welcome to leave an e-mail address.**

Questions to clarify:

- Car parking availability at the new Centre for Vulnerable Learners – will this be adequate?
- Why has the leisure centre not reopened since it is no longer used as a vaccination centre?
- Are we going to consider changes to the way pitches are allocated to support smaller/grass roots clubs?
- What is the height of the sports hall, and will this accommodate netball and badminton?
- Have ABUHB and Parks been consulted?
- CCBC don't mention the Centre for Sporting Excellence in its list of centres. It's funded by CCBC – is it making a profit?
- Update link to current consultation (Google search)

**Date/time/location of drop-in session:** Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December at Penllwyn Millennium Centre

Attended the Penllwyn Community Partnership's festive event as a stallholder.

Several hundred people attended the occasion, which afforded an opportunity to largely signpost people to the consultation.

Three attendees from the previous session at Elim Baptist Church (28<sup>th</sup> November) attended this session also. Approximately 35 surveys were distributed to those interested in taking a hard copy away to complete, with further discussions with another 8-10 who said they would complete it online.

Representatives from three sporting clubs (Blackwood Town, Walking Football and Pengam) attended to discuss access to the 3G pitch facility and their requirements for booking slots in future.

There were several positive comments from attendees to the event about the facilities to be available at the Centre for Vulnerable Learners. One attendee asked about the possibility of accessing a vacant slot in the sports hall to deliver a boxing club.

While individual discussions took place at this event, the primary focus was on awareness raising of the consultation and signposting to the various ways people can have a say.

**Date/time/location of drop-in session:** 13 December 2023 at Pontllanfraith Rugby Club

Attendees – 4 (including one who had attended previous face-to-face sessions also)

**Main points raised:**

- Why haven't we spent money on maintenance over the years – no maintenance for years
- Leisure centre not comparing like with like – how much does each one cost to run?
- Political decision - has the decision already been made – Leaders comments suggest that
- Why was the decision made to stop maintaining Pontllanfraith
- Loss of green spaces
- Football fields – closed – Bedwelty
- How much did ABUHB pay to rent PLC?
- Is there a demand for the facility? We don't know because the hall is shut
- Newbridge car parking – increase demand and increase demand for car parking and facilities – relies on cars and can't walk to Newbridge
- What exactly are the repairs on the hall?
- When was it last surveyed?
- Will there be capacity for all the demand
- What happened to the old gym equipment?
- Update Leisure Lifestyle website to say Leisure Centre is closed
- What will the land be used for? Surplus to requirements – council then partners – can they make use of it? Then Community Asset transfer
- Less facilities for more people
- CfSE – is it making a profit? Is it used as community facility
- Pontllanfraith – Islwyn welfare ground – check facts? Condemned?
- Apathy – people think it's already been decided

**Date/time/location of drop-in session:** Thursday 14th December 2023 at Elim Baptist Church

**Total attendees – 1**

Main points covered:

- General concern that regardless if the outcome of the consultation, the centre will not reopen
- Safeguarding issues regarding the shared use of the CVL
- Travel costs to other sites – the current site is in a prime location
- Lack of leisure facilities generally in the local area – need to travel more than 20 minutes to alternative sites
- Allocation of pitches (noted this is being looked at and a report will be taken forward in January 2024)

**Further details:**

Also readily available at <https://conversation.caerphilly.gov.uk/pontllanfraith-leisure-centre>

- Poster outlining opportunities members of the public had to offer their views
- A print version of the survey questions asked
- An overview of targeted stakeholder engagement undertaken
- Social media comments received through CCBC social media during the consultation period
- A letter to the Leader of the Council from Members of the Senedd – Peredur Owen Griffiths MS and Delyth Jewell MS, dated 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023
- A comment from a member of the public received through the council's website during the consultation period

Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



## **SPECIAL CABINET– 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

**SUBJECT: CONSULTATION OUTCOME - PROPOSALS TO IMPLEMENT COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS ON LONG-TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES AND SECOND HOMES**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report provides Cabinet with the results of the public consultation which it agreed to undertake on the proposed introduction of Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes in the County Borough.

### **2. SUMMARY**

2.1 The report to Cabinet on 13 December 2023 set out the conditions where council tax premiums can be applied to both long-term empty dwellings and second homes. Cabinet agreed to launch a public consultation on the levels of premiums that could be applied to both long-term empty dwellings and second homes. The discretion given to Councils to charge premiums is intended to be used as part of a wider strategy to help Councils to: -

- a) bring long-term empty homes back into use to provide safe, secure, and affordable homes;
- b) support Councils in increasing the supply of affordable housing and enhancing the sustainability of local communities; and
- c) prevent properties from becoming long-term problematic properties in the first place.

2.2 Most Welsh Councils have now adopted premiums and Caerphilly County Borough Council is in a minority of authorities yet to do so.

2.3 The consultation proposed a flat rate premium of 100% for second homes and stepped premiums on long-term empty properties, increasing based on the length of time properties have been empty.

2.4 This report provides details of the results of the consultation exercise and sets out the options for consideration.

2.5 The first determination to charge a premium on second homes must be made by

Council at least one year before the beginning of the financial year to which it relates (section 12B (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992). For long-term empty dwellings, Welsh Government's statutory guidance is that the first determination is made at least 6 months before such a premium becomes chargeable.

- 2.6 Providing the necessary determinations are made by full Council before 01 April 2024, council tax premiums within the county borough could be introduced from 01 April 2025.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked: -

3.1.1 to review and consider the consultation feedback attached at Appendix A of this report; and

3.1.2 to recommend to Council the implementation of the following premiums from 01 April 2025: -

<b>Class of dwelling</b>	<b>Premium</b>
Second Homes	100%
Long-Term Empty Properties: -	
Empty longer than 2 years	100%
Empty longer than 3 years	200%
Empty longer than 5 years	300%

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 To provide Cabinet with the results of the public consultation and to propose the introduction of Council Tax Premiums on long term empty properties and second homes to Full Council.

4.2 Implementing Council Tax premiums for long-term empty properties and second homes is intended to be used as part of a wider strategy to help the Council encourage owners to bring properties back into use and reduce the number of unoccupied and underused properties across the county borough.

### **5. THE REPORT**

5.1 Currently, within the county borough, unoccupied and furnished dwellings (second homes) and unoccupied and unfurnished dwellings (long-term empty properties) are subject to 100% of the standard council tax amount being charged for each dwelling. These policies have been in place since 01 April 1998 for second homes and from 01 April 2005 for long-term empty properties; the determinations were reaffirmed by full Council at its meeting on 17 July 2018. In effect, the current policies disapply the default 50% discount that would otherwise apply to such dwellings. Had the Council not already done this, it would have needed to make a determination to this effect as part of any decision to introduce council tax premiums.



- 5.2 From 01 April 2017, Councils in Wales have been able to charge higher amounts (a premium) of up to 100% on top of the standard rate of council tax on second homes and long-term empty properties. The legislative changes were made by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the powers given to Councils are discretionary. Whether to charge a premium on second homes and or long-term empty properties is therefore a decision to be made by each Council.
- 5.3 The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 also provides regulations which make exceptions to the premiums. These are set out in the Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) Regulations 2015 and amended by The Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2023.
- 5.4 From 01 April 2023, the relevant regulations have been updated by The Council Tax (Long-Term Empty Dwellings and Dwellings Occupied Periodically) (Wales) Regulations 2022, following a Welsh Government consultation exercise to allow Councils to charge a maximum premium of up to 300% on top of the standard rate of council tax.
- 5.5 **HIGHER AMOUNTS (PREMIUMS) FOR LONG-TERM EMPTY DWELLINGS**
- 5.5.1 For the purposes of charging a premium, a long-term empty dwelling is defined as a dwelling which is both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a continuous period of at **least one year**.
- 5.5.2 In determining the length of time a dwelling has been empty, no account can be taken of any period before 01 April 2016. In addition, the furnishing or occupation of a dwelling for one or more periods of six weeks or less during the year will not affect its status as a long-term empty dwelling. Use of a property for less than six weeks does not give rise to a new exemption period.
- 5.5.3 Where a Council makes a determination to charge a premium on long-term empty dwellings, it may specify different percentages (up to a maximum of 300%) for different dwellings based on the length of time for which they have been empty.
- 5.5.4 A Council may make a determination to charge a premium for a financial year, but only before the beginning of the year. In exercising its functions, the Council must also have regard to any guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers. The current statutory guidance is that Councils should provide at least 6 months' notice before implementing a premium for long-term empty dwellings. However, a longer notice period such as 12 months is preferred to allow taxpayers sufficient time to consider the impact of a higher premium on their own personal financial circumstances and make choices regarding their property, for example, to occupy, sell or let the property.
- 5.6 **HIGHER AMOUNTS (PREMIUMS) FOR SECOND HOMES**
- 5.6.1 A second home is defined as a dwelling that is not a person's sole or main residence and is substantially furnished. These dwellings are referred to in the Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 1992 as dwellings occupied periodically but they are commonly referred to as 'second homes'.
- 5.6.2 Where a Council makes a determination to charge a premium on dwellings occupied periodically, it may specify a percentage of not more than 300%.

## 5.7 HOUSING STRATEGY CONTEXT

5.7.1 Caerphilly CBC's 'No Use Empty' Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy has a two-pronged approach: -

- a) Preventing properties from becoming problematic empty homes; and
- b) Tackling problematic empty properties on a risk assessment basis.

5.7.2 The Council's Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy (2023 – 2028) was developed in recognition of the high number of private sector empty homes in the County Borough and the Council's commitment to address the problem. It is acknowledged that there is an ongoing national housing crisis, combined with continuing pressure to increase the supply of available good quality homes, and that empty homes are one of Welsh Government's priorities. Most new housing supply will be delivered through new build programmes, and alongside this bringing empty homes back into use can offer an economically viable option, which can also contribute to increasing the affordable housing supply. At the same time, it will have a positive impact on existing communities by improving environmental and social conditions.

5.7.3 Although the Council's Empty Homes Strategy has only been formally in place since March 2023, work to bring empty properties back into use has been undertaken for many years; with the Empty Property Team successful in returning 104 properties into use during 2022/23. The average per annum prior to this was circa 36.

5.7.4 There are still a high number of empty homes across the county borough despite the Council's progress and commitment to bringing them back into use. To continue to address the issue, the recently approved Private Sector Empty Homes Strategy (2023 – 2028) needs to be fully implemented. The proposal to introduce council tax premiums fully supports this new strategy.

5.7.5 A recent analysis of long-term empty dwellings in Caerphilly County Borough showed that a total of 885 homes have been empty for more than 1 year, with 264 empty for more than 5 years. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of long-term empty properties, while table 2 provides the total number of second homes in the county borough. While the Council continues to target these empty homes, providing advice and assistance to the homeowners in order to support them to bring them back into use, it is recognised that additional measures are required to encourage homeowners not to leave these homes empty.

5.7.6 **Table 1 - Analysis of Long-Term Empty Dwellings empty longer than 1 year**

Empty over 5 years	264
Empty between 3 and 5 years	171
Empty between 2 and 3 years	145
Empty between 1 and 2 years	305
<b>Total</b>	<b>885</b>

*Data as at 24/02/2024*

5.7.7 **Table 2 – Second Homes**

Second Homes	<b>254</b>
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*Data as at 24/02/2024*

- 5.7.8 With 6,569 active applications on the Common Housing Register (01/10/23) the need for affordable housing in the county borough remains high. The 2018 based Local Housing Market Assessment showed an annual requirement for an additional 282 affordable homes per annum over a 5-year period once the turnover of the existing stock and the development of new homes had been taken into consideration. A new Local Housing Market Assessment is currently being produced and the emerging figures suggest that the requirement for additional affordable housing will remain high. By helping to increase the supply of accommodation throughout the county borough the proposal to introduce council tax premiums may help the Council towards meeting any backlog housing need, whilst supporting its homeless prevention agenda.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 It is assumed that a proportion of the extra revenue raised would support the implementation of the Council's Empty Homes Strategy.
- 6.2 It is also assumed that some of the additional revenue generated from council tax premiums will fund additional staffing resources required within the Council Tax Team to implement and administer premiums.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The determination to charge a premium under these powers must be made by full Council. However, prior to doing so the Council must give due consideration to its statutory duties to carry out an integrated impact assessment under the Equality Act 2010 including socio-economic duties, the Welsh Public Sector Equality Duties 2011, incorporating its duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Council must also consider engagement and consultation with key stakeholders and the residents of the county borough.
- 7.2 This Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) indicates that the implementation of Council Tax premiums on second homes and long-term empty properties would fully support the Council's Empty Homes Strategy. This in turn would have a positive impact upon the residents of the County Borough by increasing the number of affordable houses available to buy or rent which in turn would help meet the housing demand of the County Borough. In addition, a proportion of the extra revenue generated from premiums would be used to support the Council's strategy.
- 7.3 By providing opportunities for residents to access a wider range of housing options, the IIA shows that the Strategy will have a positive impact on tackling social disadvantage and promoting the wellbeing of existing and future generations. Helping people achieve affordable home ownership also contributes to several of the Council's wellbeing objectives.
- 7.4 No adverse impact on the promotion of the Welsh language was identified.

[Link to IIA](#)

## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 It is difficult to accurately forecast the additional revenue that may be raised by charging a premium on both long-term empty dwellings and second homes. This is because the Council Tax Team does not currently hold information regarding all of the circumstances that give rise to a dwelling being excepted (excluded) from a premium charge. In particular, dwellings up for sale or to let would be excepted from paying a premium for a period of 1 year which would reduce the estimated additional revenue accordingly. Currently, there is no requirement to record whether a home is up for sale or to let because it has no bearing on the level of council tax charged within this Authority's area where the legislation on premiums has not been introduced. For the purpose of projecting the additional revenue that could be raised by charging premiums, this report assumes that 25% of properties will be excepted from a premium for up to 1 year, with the most common exceptions being properties up for sale or let. These are statutory exceptions set by Welsh Government. The projected additional revenue is also adjusted for an assumed **80%** collection rate.
- 8.2 The table in paragraph 8.10 sets out the potential additional revenue that could be raised by charging premiums on both long-term empty dwellings and second homes. The table provides a basic forecast based on a premium level of 100% for second homes, and a stepped premium of up to 300% on long-term empty properties based on the length of time they have been empty. This would be on top of the 100% standard rate of council tax charged on these dwellings.
- 8.3 All dwellings that may be eligible to be excepted from a premium will need to be identified and reviewed by the Council Tax Team to establish whether the Council's council tax records are correct or need updating in line with statutory Welsh Government exceptions. The largest category is likely to be dwellings up for sale or to let.
- 8.4 Another consideration is that based on feedback from some Councils in Wales that have implemented premiums in recent years, the percentage collection rate in respect of dwellings liable for a premium tends to be lower than the percentage rate achieved in respect of standard council tax charges. This is partly due to the reluctance of some homeowners to pay a higher rate of council tax willingly, but also the fact that some cases can be complex and require a lot of manual intervention by council tax officers, which can involve recovery action taking more than one financial year to be concluded. For this purpose a collection rate of **80%** has been assumed.
- 8.5 The Non-Domestic Rating (Amendment of Definition of Domestic Property) (Wales) Order 2022 changed the criteria for properties being commercially let for short periods as self-catering accommodation. Prior to April 2023 properties that were available to let for at least 140 days, and were actually let for at least 70 days, paid business rates rather than council tax. It was felt that these regulations provided a loophole for second homeowners to move their properties from the council tax banding list to the business rate rating list and avoid paying a premium. From April 2023 the change has increased the thresholds to being available to let for at least 252 days and actually let for at least 182 days in any 12-month period.
- 8.6 It is for the ratepayer to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) that a property has met the necessary criteria to be classed as non-domestic property. Consequently, a property used wholly for the purposes of living accommodation is considered domestic and liable for council tax until such time as the ratepayer provides sufficient evidence to the VOA that a particular property is being commercially let and meets the following criteria: -

- it will be available for letting commercially as self-catering accommodation for short periods totalling 252 days or more in the following 12-month period;
- the ratepayer’s interest in the property enables them to let it for such periods;
- in the 12 months prior to the day being considered it has been available for letting commercially as self-catering accommodation for short periods totalling 252 days or more; and
- the short periods it has actually been commercially let for is a total of at least 182 days during that period.

Offering the property at excessively high rents may indicate that the operator is not seriously making the property available commercially.

- 8.7 This change is intended to provide a clearer demonstration that the properties concerned are being let regularly as part of genuine holiday accommodation businesses making a substantial contribution to the local economy. Both changes followed a consultation process including businesses, the tourism industry, and local communities.
- 8.8 There will be a need for additional staffing resources within the Council Tax Team to deal with the additional administration of council tax premiums, including valuation tribunal appeals, and new property inspection requirements in respect of dwellings that may fall into one of the exception categories. Subject to Council approving the introduction of premiums, this resource requirement will be considered as part of the 2025/26 revenue budget setting process.
- 8.9 It is proposed that the extra revenue raised through premiums would also partly be used to support the implementation of the Council's Empty Homes Strategy, and therefore be in line with the stated policy intentions of Welsh Government.
- 8.10 **Table 3 – Potential additional revenue based on charging a premium on Second Homes**

	No. of properties	Premium	Additional Revenue
Second Homes	254	100%	£240,743.20

**Table 4 – Potential additional revenue based on charging a premium on Long-Term empty properties**

	No. of properties	Premium	Additional Revenue
Empty longer than 1 year	305	0%	£0.00
Empty longer than 2 years	145	100%	£127,374.17
Empty longer than 3 years	171	200%	£296,280.72
Empty longer than 5 years	264	300%	£671,883.86
<b>Totals</b>	<b>885</b>		<b>£1,095,538.75</b>

*The additional revenue is based on 75% of the full premium. This assumes that 25% of properties will be excepted from a premium for up to 1 year. The most common exceptions will be properties up for sale or let. These are statutory exceptions set by Welsh Government. The projected additional revenue is also adjusted for 80% collection rate. All revenue based on 2024/25 Council Tax charges.*

- 8.11 The additional revenue raised from the charging of a premium on long-term empty dwellings and second homes, would need to additionally support the financing of the Empty Property Team (currently employed on a fixed term basis until March 2026) to ensure the continuation of the implementation of the Council's Empty Homes Strategy, and therefore be in line with the stated policy intention of Welsh Government. This resource requirement will also need to be considered as part of the 2025/26 revenue budget setting process.
- 8.12 Cabinet is advised that the Welsh Government expects local authorities to annually publish a summary of the additional revenue generated by implementing premiums and in broad terms how that revenue has been spent. Councils already charging premiums have placed this information their websites.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There will be a need for additional staffing resources within the Council Tax Team to deal with the additional administration, including valuation tribunal appeals, and new property inspection requirements in respect of dwellings that may fall into one of the exception categories.
- 9.2 The ongoing funding requirement for the Empty Property Team (currently funded on a fixed-term basis until March 2026) will also need to be considered.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 An online consultation was launched on 12 January 2024 and ran for 4 weeks closing on 08 February 2024. Respondents were asked for their views on a number of key points around implementing premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes. The proposals included a flat rate premium of 100% for second homes and stepped premiums on long-term empty properties, increasing based on the number of years the property had been empty.

The detailed analysis of the consultation responses is shown in appendix A and is summarised in the following paragraphs.

- 10.2 As part of the consultation process, **1,111** letters were sent to all long-term empty and second homeowners. It was important to engage with this group as they could potentially be negatively impacted by the proposals which in turn could have a disproportionate impact on the results of the consultation.
- 10.3 MPs, Senedd Members, Caerphilly CBC elected members, Estate Agents, Social Landlords and Citizens Advice Bureau were invited by email to take part in the consultation.
- 10.4 To ensure wider outreach and involvement of the community, the consultation was promoted through the Council's website and social media channels. The public consultation was available online via the Join the Caerphilly Conversation webpage and paper copies were available upon request.
- 10.5 The consultation received **143** responses, reflecting a wide range of interests and views. The consultation contained twenty-two questions relating to the proposals to

implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes.

## 10.6 HIGHER AMOUNTS (PREMIUMS) FOR LONG-TERM EMPTY DWELLINGS

- 137 responses were received when asked if the Council should put measures in place to reduce the number of long-term empty properties in Caerphilly. 41% of responses strongly agreed while only 27% strongly disagreed.
- 41% of respondents own a long-term empty property in Caerphilly, with over half (59%) of properties being empty for over a year. There was a multitude of responses to why the property is empty, with the most common reason being 'unable to sell the property' (36%).
- 45% of responses strongly disagreed with proposals to introduce a premium on properties that have been empty for over 12 months, with 30% of responses strongly agreeing.
- 48% of responses strongly disagree with the proposal that the Council should charge higher premiums based on the length of time a property has been empty.

Below is a selection of comments from the consultation response:

### Agreeing with proposal

*"Well actually I don't think it's tough enough. It is 10 years empty the council should buy it at 80% of it's current market value."*

*"I agree with the principle. However, there is no excuse to leave a property empty for 5 years + so I would give the 300% from 5+ So up-to 2years 100%, 2-5 200%, 5+ 300%"*

*"I think 100% premium should be introduced after two years. A year is not long enough given the circumstances in which an empty property may be acquired or inherited. I agree with 200% after four years but would propose six years for the 300% premium."*

### Disagreeing with proposal

*"Empty property does not use council resources, which are paid for by the council tax, if the property was occupied then the resources would be used. Standard rate is enough for resources that are not being used. People have a right to use or not use their properties, and not to be forced into renting them out to destructive tenants or sell them"*

*"You are trying to dictate what someone does with their property-you have no right to do this. Why are measures always punitive. Why can't you introduce measures to encourage the use of the property instead? Shared relief for owners and renters?- even for a temp period?"*

Below are the common themes from the responses to the question 'Are there any alternatives that you think the Council should consider?'

- 1) *The Council purchasing unoccupied properties to utilize as their own local housing stock; and;*
- 2) *For the Council to work with owners to help bring the unoccupied properties back into use.*

Most responses were unaware of any grants or support available for properties that have been long-term empty. For those that were aware, only a small percentage have been successful with their applications.

## 10.7 HIGHER AMOUNTS (PREMIUMS) FOR SECOND HOMES

From the consultation responses second homes were seen as less detrimental to the neighborhood than long-term empty properties. In general, there was less support for charging premiums on second homes.

- 141 responses were received when asked if the Council should put measures in place to reduce the number of second homes in Caerphilly. Whilst 26% of responses strongly agreed, 41% of responses strongly disagreed with this proposal.
- 48% of respondents disagreed with this proposal to introduce a Council Tax premium on second homes, with 25% strongly agreeing.

Below is a selection of comments from the consultation response:

### **Agreeing with proposal**

*“Second homes add to the housing issues and should be discouraged”*

*“The premium should be the full 300%”*

*“Increase Council Tax for all if additional money required to build more council homes.”*

### **Disagreeing with proposal**

*“2nd home ownership in this area could be down to family usage and inheritance and not a holiday home in this area, it’s not exactly vacation territory and is a deprived area especially New Tredegar, the council are assuming owners are well off !, thus is discriminatory.”*

*“There are only small numbers of second homes in the borough. Accept that some people have reasons for needing a second home, and that they should only pay the same as everyone else. That is, do nothing.”*

*“Does Caerphilly not want tourism? I have a holiday let on my brother’s farm. It’s not really a house that is designed for a long term occupancy. It’s only just started so I haven’t got enough occupancy to qualify for business rates. What happens to these properties with this change? Where are the tourists going to stay?”*

Below are a selection of comments to the question ‘Are there any alternatives that you think the Council should consider?’

*“Encourage second owners to let houses for short-term tenancies (emergencies, for those really in need), and guarantee that it’s a short term occupancy.”*



*“Make an offer to buy empty second homes”.*

*“Perhaps the council could build more affordable houses”*

The most frequent concerns expressed were that a blanket policy of higher rates will unfairly impact people with individual circumstances beyond their control and that it is unreasonable to be charged any or higher Council Tax on properties that are empty as these properties make no demands on the services they perceive Council Tax to be paid for.

## **11. STATUTORY POWERS**

- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 (Commencement No. 5) Order 2015.
- Sections 12A and 12B of The Local Government Finance Act 1992 as inserted by Section 139 of The Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- The Council Tax (Exceptions from Higher Amount) (Wales) Regulations 2015 No. 2068.
- The Council Tax (Long-term Empty Dwellings and Dwellings Occupied Periodically) (Wales) Regulations 2022 No. 370.
- The Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 No. 253.
- The Non-Domestic Rating (Amendment of Definition of Domestic Property) (Wales) Order 2022

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Appendices: -

Appendix A - Council Tax Premiums Consultation Responses

Background Papers: -

Cabinet (13/12/23) – Consultation on Proposals to Implement Council Tax Premiums on  
Long-Term Empty Properties and Second Homes



**Consultation – Proposals to  
implement Council Tax Premiums  
on long-term empty properties and  
second homes**

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## **Introduction**

This document provides an overview of the responses to the consultation on proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes which ran from 12<sup>th</sup> January to 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

This consultation requested views on the Council's proposal to charge premiums on long-term empty homes and second homes and the level of premiums to charge. The consultation was on domestic properties and did not extend to empty business/commercial properties.

The discretion given to Councils to charge a premium is intended to be used as part of a wider strategy to help Councils to: -

- a) bring long-term empty homes back into use to provide safe, secure, and affordable homes;
- b) support Councils in increasing the supply of affordable housing and enhancing the sustainability of local communities

By increasing the council tax charges on long-term empty homes and second homes, the aim is to encourage homeowners to bring their long-term empty properties back into use for the benefit of the local community and economy.

## **Background**

Caerphilly do not currently award any discounts for long-term empty homes and second homes and charge 100%.

Welsh Government have granted local authorities the power to raise council tax premiums for long-term empty homes and second homes, by up to 300% over the standard charge, from 1st April 2024.

The Council consulted on the following proposals:

### **Long-term empties**

- Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce a council tax premium on properties that have been empty for over 12 months?
- Do you agree that the Council should charge higher premiums based on the length of time a property has been empty (up to a maximum of 300%).

For example:

- If a property has been empty over 1 year charge a premium of 100%
- If a property has been empty over 4 years charge a premium of 200%
- If a property has been empty over 10 years charge a premium of 300%

### **Second Homes**

- Do you agree or disagree that the Council should put measures in place to reduce the number of second homes in Caerphilly?
- Do you agree or disagree with our proposals to introduce a Council Tax premium on second homes?

## **Summary of engagement**

As part of engagement, **1,111** letters were sent to all long-term empty and second homeowners that would be impacted by the proposed increase in premium. It is important to identify engagement with this group as they could potentially be negatively impacted by the proposals which could have a disproportionate impact on the results of the consultation.

In addition, MPs, Senedd Members, Caerphilly CBC elected members, Estate Agents, Social Landlords and Citizens Advice Bureau were invited by email to take part in the consultation.

To ensure wider outreach and involvement of the community, the consultation was promoted through the Council's website and social media channels.

The public consultation was available online via the Join the Caerphilly Conversation webpage and paper copies were available upon request.

## **Who responded**

The consultation received **143** responses, reflecting a wide range of interests and views. The consultation contained **twenty-two** questions relating to the proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes.

## Summary of responses

137 responses were received when asked if the Council should put measures in place to reduce the number of long-term empty properties in Caerphilly. 41% of responses strongly agreed while 27% strongly disagreed.

In contrast, 45% of responses strongly disagreed that the Council should put measures in place to reduce the number of second homes in Caerphilly with 30% strongly agreeing.

Around a third of responses strongly agreed that the extra revenue raised would partly be used to support the implementation of the Council's empty Homes Strategy, to help bring long-term empty homes back into use and meet local housing needs while a similar number strongly disagreed.

41% of responses own a long-term empty property in Caerphilly, with over half (59%) of properties being empty for over a year. The most common reason for a property being empty is they have been unable to sell the property (36%).

30% of responses strongly agreed with the proposal to introduce a Council Tax premium on properties that have been empty for over 12 months; the majority of which had already stated they did not own a long-term empty property in Caerphilly. 45% of responses strongly disagreed with the proposal.

When asked if the Council should charge higher premiums based on the length of time a property has been empty (up to a maximum of 300%) 27% strongly agreed. 48% strongly disagreed with the majority also disagreeing with the proposal to introduce a Council Tax premium on second homes.

Most responses were unaware of any grants or support available for properties that have been long-term empty. For those that were aware, only a small percentage have been successful with their applications.

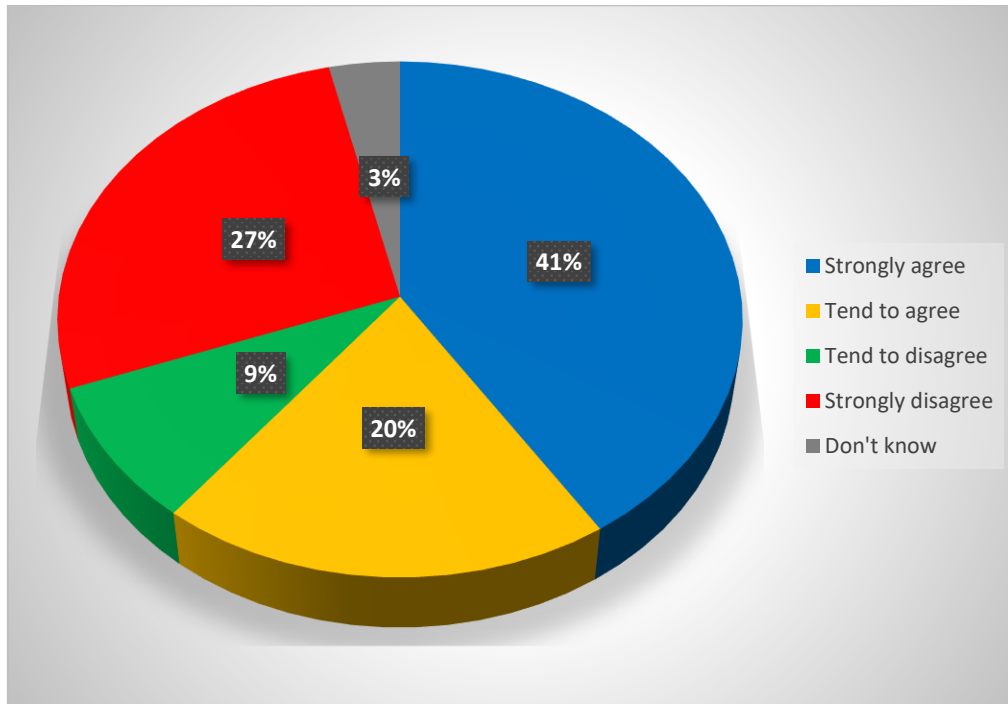
A selection of comments are provided within this document. The most frequent concerns expressed a blanket policy of higher rates will unfairly impact people with individual circumstances beyond their control and that it is unreasonable to be charged any or higher Council Tax on properties that are empty as these properties make no demands on the services they perceive Council Tax to be paid for. The full list of comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers.



## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 1.

Do you agree or disagree that the Council should put measures in place to reduce the number of long-term empty properties in Caerphilly?



There were **137** responses to this question.

Just under half of the responses (41%) strongly agreed that the Council should put measures in place to reduce the number of long-term empty properties in Caerphilly, while almost a third (27%) strongly disagreed. The majority who strongly agreed answered they did not own a long-term empty property.

### Question 2.

Do you own a long-term empty property in Caerphilly?

**138** responses were provided to this question with 41% advising they do own a long-term empty property and 59% advising they do not.

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 3.

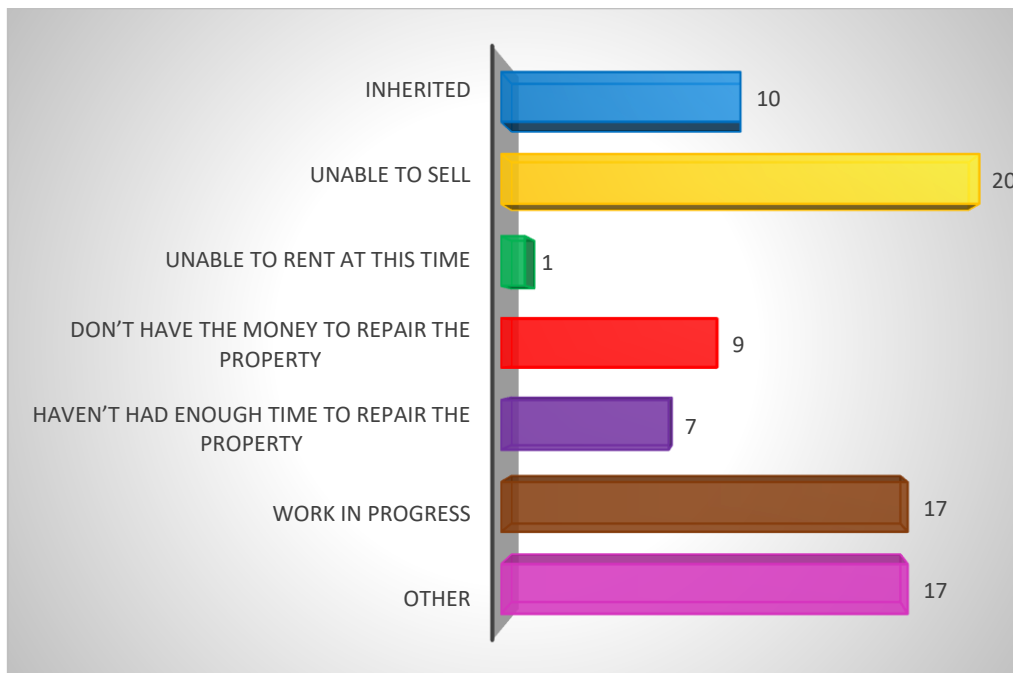
#### How long has the property been empty?

There were **49** responses to this question.

<b>Over 1 year</b>	29 respondents / 59%
<b>Over 4 years</b>	13 respondents / 27%
<b>Over 10 years</b>	7 respondents / 14%

### Question 4.

#### Could you please tell us why the property is empty?



There were **56** responses to this question with some selecting multiple reasons.

The top reason being UNABLE TO SELL (36%)

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 5.

#### Other reasons why the property is empty?

The consultation invited respondents to complete this question via the facility to free type their reasons.

28 responses were received, the following being a selection of those submitted.

*“We are currently renovating the house and have been granted the empty homes grant there is no kitchen or toilet currently in the house so it is unliveable. We intend to move into the property at the earliest opportunity but with the cost of everything rising work is slower than what we hoped”*

*“Lots of factors. Money, I won't go into debt to finish house. Waiting on builders time frame when I do have money. The death of a parent and caring for my other parent when she was seriously ill was my main priority”*

*“I purchased this derelict property and have done extensive work to put it back in a liveable state. The property is currently for sale, I just can't find a buyer currently due to the poor market conditions. I don't feel people like me (who in this instance are actually trying to help more homes become available) should have to pay the extra council tax - I'm already paying £170 a month for a property I don't live in, I don't put out any bins etc, I don't use any council service at that property. I understand why you are looking at this but there should be more help for people like me who are actually trying to solve the problem”*

*“Unable to sell an inherited property which has been actively marketed the market since the death of both my parents following finalisation of probate and clearance of contents myself, despite substantially reducing the price and spending a substantial amount of my own money to maintain, insure and secure the property and garden in a safe and tidy state. I therefore require enough time to sell the property in light of present property market conditions and cannot afford to pay additional council tax burdon from my limited income in addition to paying council due on my own flat located in England”*

*“My wife and I received your letter about the consultation as a result of being executors of my wife's sister's deceased estate. The property has been empty since April 2023 as a result of my wife's mother's ill health. It is ludicrous to suggest that a premium council tax should be charged in these circumstances. How does that help bring the property to the housing market? It simply penalises the deceased estate when neither the deceased, the deceased estate, nor the property are getting any benefit from the council nor are any of them using council resources. The property has been on the market since August 2023 but due to the falling property market has not sold. How does a council tax premium act as anything other than a further penalty?”*

## **Question 6.**

### **How could the Council work with you and support you to help you to bring the property back into use?**

Respondents were invited to complete this question via the facility to free type their suggestions.

**48** responses were provided, the following being a selection of those provided.

*“Give out grants. Once property is let then claw back the grant slowly and reuse. Stop using sticks to get what you want and try some carrot approaches”*

*“Help the owner to sell the property or purchase to add to council portfolio”*

*“Discuss our intentions and advise best route”*

*“Council could kill to birds with one stone they could provide assistance in completing works. To property and also provide training/work for persons unemployed in area. A fee could be agreed and deducted from house price on sale”*

*“Provide more time to complete renovation and bring it to the rental market. Increasing council tax only reduces funds available to continue with the renovation, therefore the house will be empty for longer until enough funds have been acquired to complete the renovation. In the recently inflated market funds have been limited and will be if further in council tax is increased”*

*“Buy the property from us for a slight discount on market value”*

*“Do not add unnecessary costs to the property by increasing the council tax above what it is set at. If the council tax is being paid in full then that should be enough. I understand there is a backlog on the waiting list for housing but 811 houses is not going to solve the problem for the 6569 waiting”*

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 7.

Have you tried to access any of the following grants or support that are available for properties that have been long-term empty?

55 responses were received with a high majority reporting they were not aware of any grants or support available to them.

	Not Aware	Yes - application in progress	Yes – application unsuccessful	Yes - application successful
Grant - former Welsh Government funded Valley Task Force Empty Homes Grant for a property within CCB	84.8%	2.2%	6.5%	6.5%
Grant - current Welsh Government funded National Empty Homes Grant for a property within CCB	88.3%	4.7%	4.7%	2.3%
Loan – CCBC Owner Occupier Loan	94.9%	0%	5.1%	0%
Loan – CCBC Landlord Loan	92.3%	0%	7.7%	0%

### Question 8.

Have you tried to access any of the following support that is available for properties that have been long-term empty?

46 responses were received.

100% of responses were unaware of support available via contact with the Empty Property Team and Private Sector Housing for matters such as advice in relation to available options to return the property back into use including renovating the empty property, VAT discounts, renting, selling and buying an empty property, sign posting to financial assistance and local authority enforcement.

97.4% of responses were unaware of support via Housing Solutions such as ‘Caerphilly Keys’ (helping landlords to find long-term tenants for their properties whilst also preventing homelessness). Only 1 response was aware of this support and had received the funding.

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 9.

#### If you received support, what was the outcome?

19 responses were provided via the facility to free type their answer. The following are a selection of the responses received.

*“Someone contacted us but we have not heard back from them about grants available to us - the issue we understand is a lack of builders”*

*“We are in the early stages of our application the surveyor has been out to make a list of proposed work and advised what we could be awarded. We are now gathering quotes for the proposed work”*

*“In past have had contact with Council about property been sold to Council and was asked not to continue with repairs/upgrades u til decision was made this delayed process and I was advised help can be made available to sell no other advise on grants etc”*

*“I have been awarded a grant but the process itself took just shy of a year. I purchased the property as empty”*

*“Difficult to contact anyone at the council”*

*“The monies the grant was issued was not really the core monies to return the house to a habitable state. Money was granted for new landscaping which was the least of my worries- money would have been better allocated to a new roof. Think the grant: surveyor/ council needs to work with the owners more”*

### Question 10.

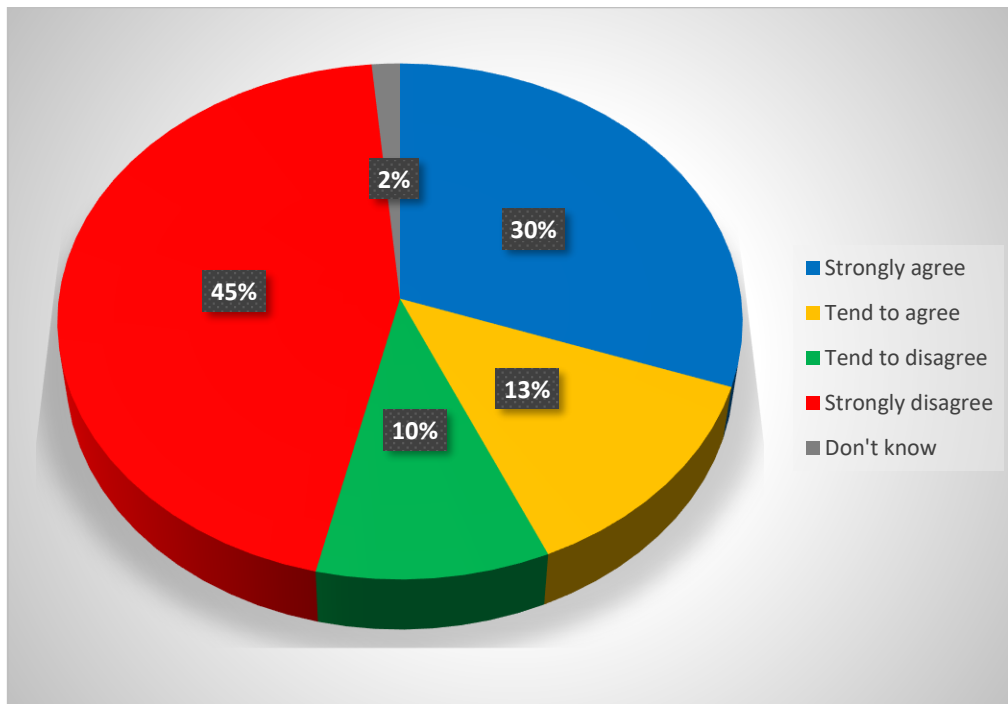
#### If you would be interested in finding out more about the support that’s available, please leave your contact details

21 respondents provided contact details.

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 11.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce a Council Tax premium on properties that have been empty for over 12 months?



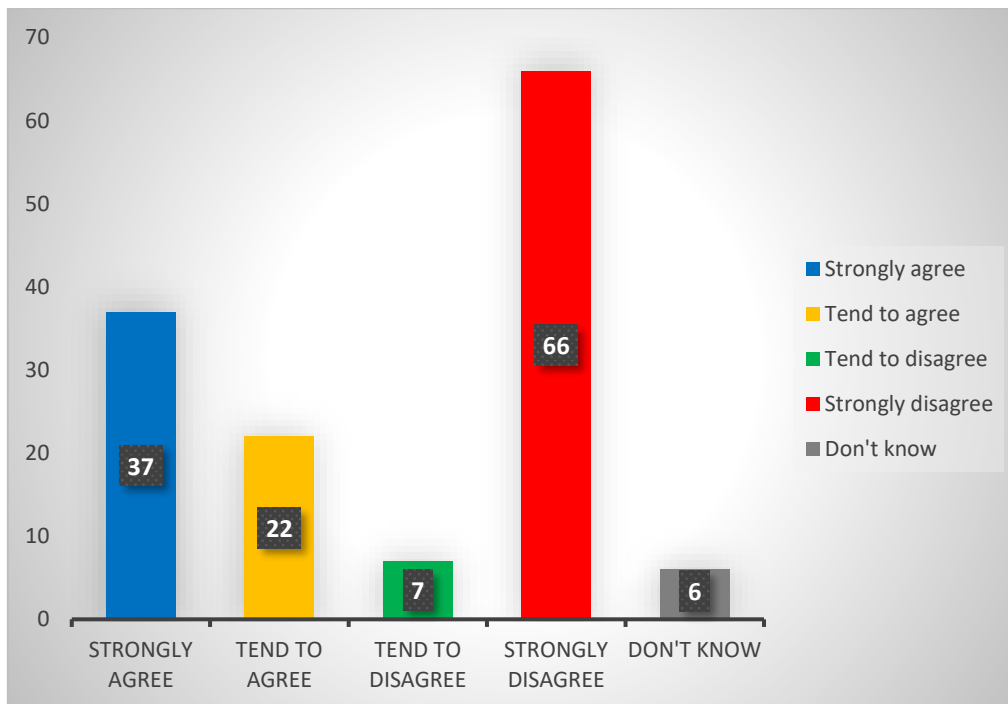
There were **138** responses to this question.

Around a third of the responses (30%) strongly agreed they should while almost half (45%) strongly disagreed.

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 12.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal that the Council should charge higher premiums based on the length of time a property has been empty (up to a maximum of 300%)?



There were **138** responses to this question.

48% of responses strongly disagreed to this Question with almost a third (27%) strongly agreeing.



## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 13.

If you disagree with any of the above, please tell us why:

Respondents were invited to complete this question via the facility to free type their suggestions.

84 responses were received. The following are a selection of both positive and negative comments received.

*“Well actually I don't think it's tough enough. It is 10 years empty the council should buy it at 80% of it's current market value.”*

*“You are trying to dictate what someone does with their property-you have no right to do this. Why are measures always punitive. Why can't you introduce measures to encourage the use of the property instead? Shared relief for owners and renters?-even for a temp period?”*

*“I agree with the principle. However, there is no excuse to leave a property empty for 5 year + so I would give the 300% from 5+ So up-to 2years 100%, 2-5 200%, 5+ 300%”*

*“Why are you trying to penalise people who have worked hard all their lives and invested rather than squandering their money. I am paying council tax for an empty property as well as full tax for my own home.”*

*“Empty property does not use council resources, which are paid for by the council tax, if the property was occupied then the resources would be used. Standard rate is enough for resources that are not being used. People have a right to use or not use their properties, and not to b forced into renting them out to destructive tenants or sell them”*

*“I think this may act as a deterrent to property developers and private landlords. But I agree that for long- term empty properties something needs to be done and this is one method.”*

*“I don't think one year is a very long time. Property could be genuinely empty due to having issues selling it etc and these people don't need to be punished. Exemption should be allowed for those who can show they are actively seeking to rent it or are doing full scale renovations.”*

*“I think 100% premium should be introduced after two years. A year is not long enough given the circumstances in which an empty property may be acquired or inherited. I agree with 200% after four years but would propose six years for the 300% premium.”*

## **Question 14.**

### **Are there any alternatives that you think the Council should consider?**

79 responses were received via the facility to free type their answers.

2 common themes were:

1. The Council purchasing unoccupied properties to utilize as their own local housing stock; and;
2. For the Council to work with owners to help bring the unoccupied properties back into use.

The following are a selection of other alternatives that were suggested:

*“Provide help to people like me to buy derelict properties and renovate them. Give more assistance as interest free loans/grants etc”*

*“ddim yn siwr am opsiynau ond mae achosion lle mae probate wedi cymryd amser llawer rhy hir i'w datrys a dylai fod hawl gyda'r cyngor roi pwysau ar yr adrannau perthnasol a chyfreithwyr i gyflymu'r broses. Hefyd dylid sicrhau bod adrannau'r cyngor yn gweithio'n effeithiol i sicrhau cofstru eiddo'n iawn a mynd ar ol perchnogion tai gwag os nad ydynt yn cymryd gofal o'r tai. Dylai fod hawl prynu'r ty yn orfodol.”*

Translation

*“not sure about options but there are cases where probate has taken far too long to resolve and the council should have the right to put pressure on the relevant departments and lawyers to speed up the process. It should also be ensured that the council's departments work effectively to ensure proper property registration and go after the owners of empty houses if they do not take care of the houses. The right to buy the house should be compulsory.*

*“Yes, stop supporting large new housing estates, these are in no way affordable and do not assist with the housing shortage. I fear we need to accept that in order to access more affordable housing, residents need to consider travelling further into the North of the Borough where the houses are cheaper, but this will undoubtedly have a knock on effect for residents further up the Borough.”*

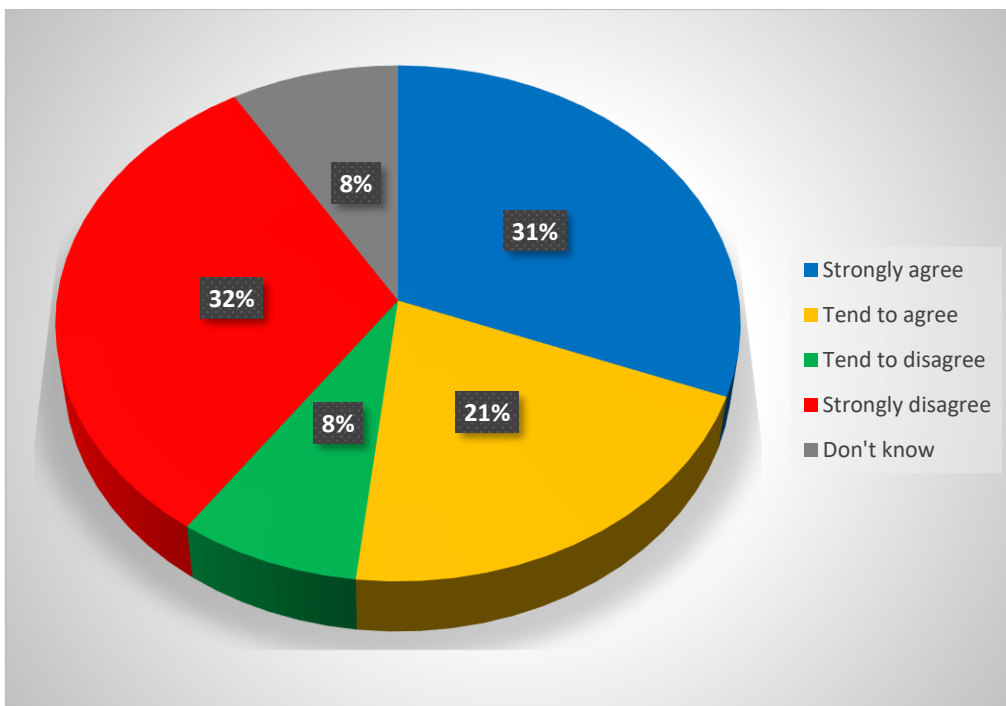
*“Why do you not take money from the Councils Reserves to buy land and build more houses which you state is needed.”*

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 15.

If our proposals for long-term empty properties are agreed, it is proposed that the extra revenue raised would partly be used to support the implementation of the Council's empty Homes Strategy, to help bring long-term empty homes back into use and meet local housing needs.

Do you agree or disagree that the income should be used in this way?



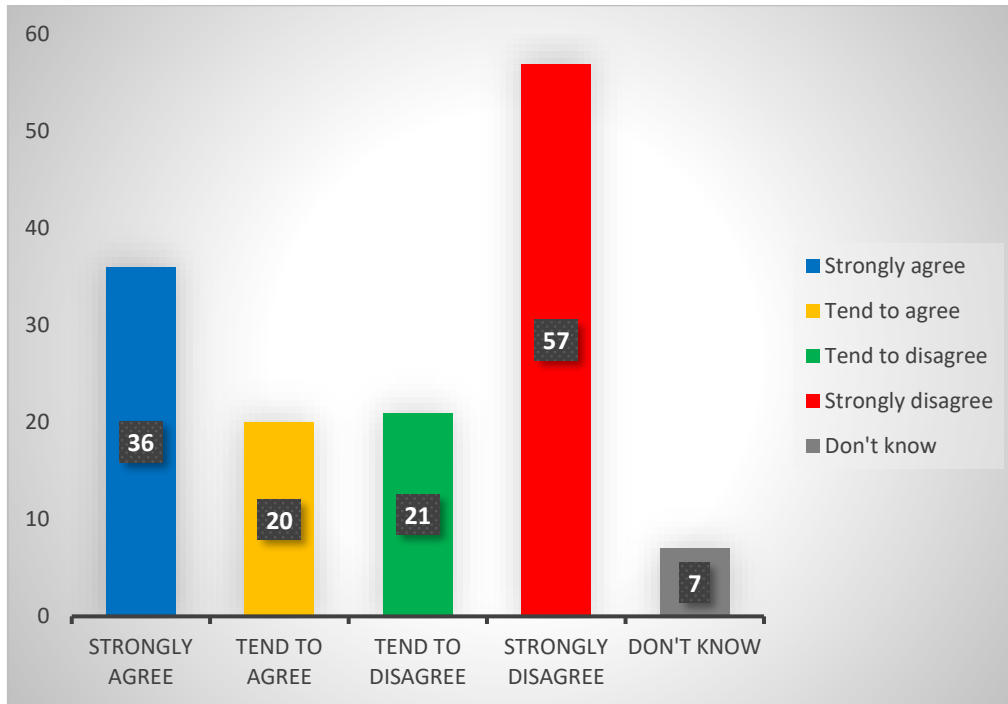
139 responses were received.

Just under a third (31%) of responses strongly agreed the extra revenue raised should partly be used this way with around the same proportion of responses (32%) strongly disagreeing.

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 16.

Do you agree or disagree that the Council should put measures in place to reduce the number of second homes in Caerphilly?



There were **141** responses to this question.

26% of responses strongly agree to this Question. Just under half (40%) strongly disagreed with putting these measures in place.

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

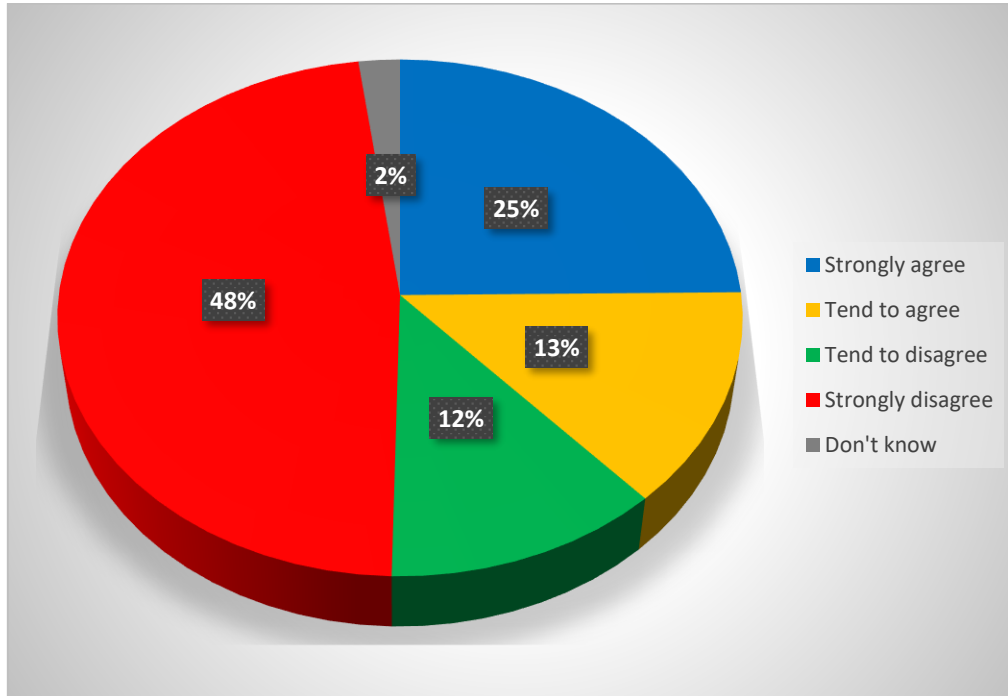
### Question 17.

Second homes in Caerphilly are currently subject to a full Council Tax charge without any discounts.

The Council has the discretion to charge an extra premium of up to 300% on top of the standard rate of Council Tax on second homes.

Our proposal is to introduce a Council Tax premium on second homes from April 1, 2025. The level of premium we propose to introduce is 100%. This would mean that second homes, which do not qualify for an exemption, would in effect pay 200% in Council Tax. As an example, that means for an average Band D property in Caerphilly with a normal annual Council Tax bill of £1,677.53, the owner would pay £3,355.06 (based on 2023/24 charges).

Do you agree or disagree with our proposals to introduce a Council Tax premium on second homes?



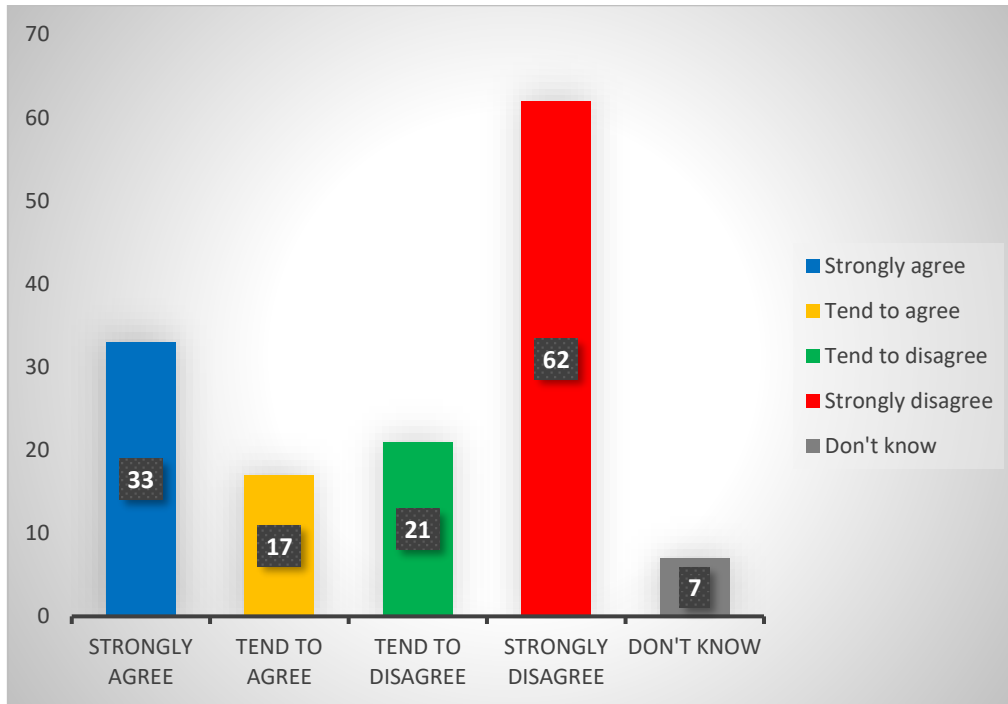
141 responses were received.

Just under half (48%) of responses strongly disagreed and a quarter of responses (25%) strongly agreed.

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 18.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that the level of premium should be set at 100%?



There were **140** responses to this question.

Almost half (44%) of responses strongly disagreed to this Question with a similar number also strongly disagreeing to the proposal to introduce a Council Tax premium on second homes. Just under a quarter (24%) strongly agreed with the proposal.

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 19.

#### If you disagree with the above, please tell us why:

Respondents were invited to complete this question via the facility to free type their suggestions.

83 responses were received. The following are a selection of both positive and negative comments received.

*“As a second home owner I am bound to disagree but I feel the focus should initially be on empty unfurnished deteriorating properties. A premium of 25 to 50% on second homes would be adequate. My property is used regularly by me and is important to my own mental health to have it available. I receive no direct council services ( my rubbish bins were both stolen and I take all rubbish away from me) and I put money into the local economy every time I visit as do family members and close friends when they stay occasionally. However if there is a need for more properties for a social housing I would be willing to sell my house to the local authority for say 95% of market valuation with all legal fees covered and no estate agent fees . I suspect many empty property owners would also accept such an offer if it were legal and practicable to do so.”*

*“The premium should be the full 300%”*

*“2nd home ownership in this area could be down to family usage and inheritance and not a holiday home in this area, its not exactly vacation territory and is a deprived area especially New Tredegar, the council are assuming owners are well off !, thus is discriminatory.”*

*“Does Caerphilly not want tourism? I have a holiday let on my brother’s farm. It’s not really a house that is designed for a long term occupancy. It’s only just started so I haven’t got enough occupancy to qualify for business rates. What happens to these properties with this change? Where are the tourists going to stay?”*

*“This will not encourage people to invest in the area.”*

*“Level should be lower but stepped at a more regular rate”*

*“Should only apply if a 2nd property is not occupied and is for the occasional benefit of the owner only.”*

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 20.

#### Are there any alternatives that the Council should consider?

61 responses were received. The following are a selection of comments received via the facility to free type their answer.

*“Limiting the number of second homes in the county. With Airbnbs popping up on every corner, long term homes aren't available to locals. This will continue no matter what amount of council tax is charged to second homes. A licencing scheme for second homes used as businesses (short term let's), could generate income (application to licencing scheme fee) and allow the number of short term let's to be known. Also would enable anti social behaviour complaints with holiday homes to be addressed.”*

*“There are only small numbers of second homes in the borough. Accept that some people have reasons for needing a second home, and that they should only pay the same as everyone else. That is, do nothing.”*

*“Second homes add to the housing issues and should be discouraged”*

*“Continue charging council tax as current practice. Encourage more tourism and thereby increase other revenue streams for the area. Media coverage of 300% premiums (the media will lead with the worst case scenario) is likely to be damaging. Focus council effort on empty homes where the overall benefits are huge by comparison. (And I don't own a holiday home). And after reading Q21 it's clear why the proposal is to charge second homes more - to raise revenue for empty homes policy. I suspect that second home owners are easier to identify and track down than empty home owners. Don't penalise those that have a business that is supporting the local community.”*

*“Increase Council Tax for all if additional money required to build more council homes.”*

*“Gwneud hi'n fwy deniadol i fod yn landlord er mwyn rhentu eu tai. Wrth gwrs bod angen sicrhau hawliau tenantiaid yn ogystal. Mae prisiau tai a rhent mor uchel mae'n anodd i bawb.”*

Translation

*Make it more attractive to be a landlord in order to rent their houses. Of course tenants' rights need to be secured as well. House prices and rent are so high it's hard for everyone.*

*“Encourage second owners to let houses for short-term tenancies (emergencies, for those really in need), and guarantee that it's a short term occupancy.”*

*“Make an offer to buy empty second homes”.*

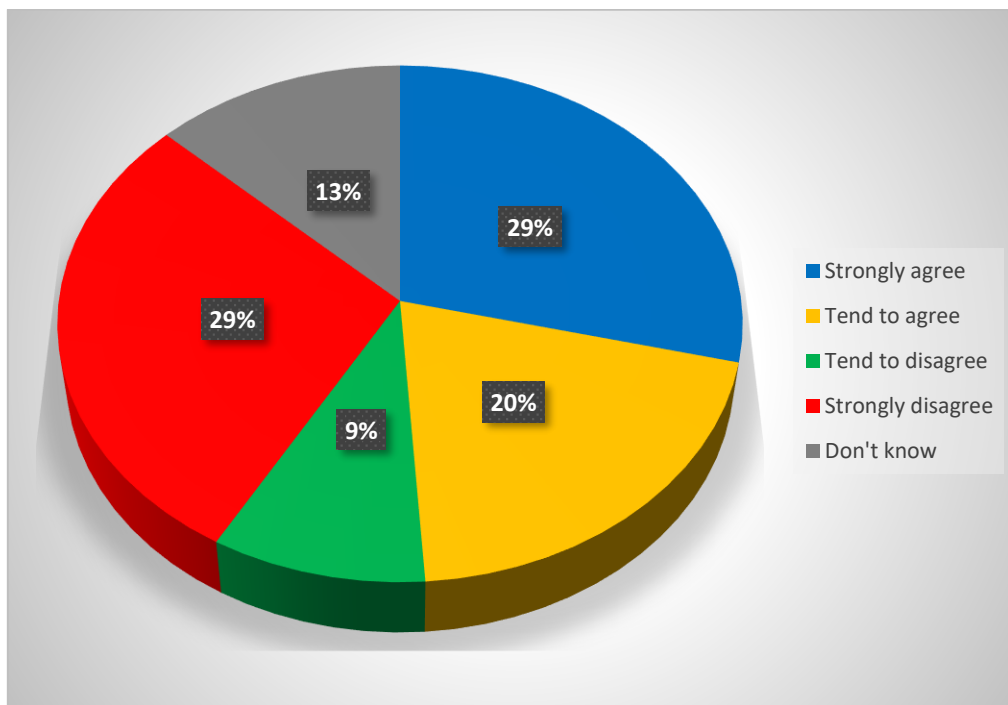


## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 21.

If our proposals for second homes are agreed, we would use a proportion of the income gained to help bring long-term empty homes back into use and meet local housing needs.

Do you agree or disagree that the income should be used in this way?



**139** responses were received.

(29%) of responses strongly agreed the income gained should be used this way with the same proportion of responses (29%) strongly disagreeing.

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

### Question 22.

#### Do you have any other comments in relation to this consultation?

58 responses were received via the facility to free type their answer. The following are a selection of the comments received:

*“Funds raised should be used to police empty homes and take owners to court to enforce handover of properties, as opposed to funding repair”*

*“It is interesting and I think is worthy if it brings the number of empty homes down.”*

*“I am aware of places in Wales where second home owners have priced locals out of the property market leading to almost ghost towns in winter months and I fully understand the need to discourage that going even further. However I don't think Caerphilly is a tourist hotspot (proposed closure of TIC would support that view) and it is not necessary here. it is LONG TERM UNFURNISHED HOUSES that should be targeted not much-loved second homes.”*

*“Why in 21 would it be a ‘portion’ the pretext for the extra revenue is to help solve the so called problem. Why wouldn't it all be used”*

*“The position re second homes is totally different to the position of long-term empty homes . You have multiple schemes to help the owners of long-term empty properties bring them back into usage; hence in these instances if they do not accept help then penalising them may be an incentive. Owners of second homes in this area are more likely to be like me; holding onto properties they love for future full-time usage; those that rent out their properties are in a different position. The situations are entirely different and should not be considered under one sweeping act”*

*“All of this seems sensible on paper but what you are doing is putting in a scheme which will require extra work to monitor by the council and those who want to get around it will. Second homes which are on Airbnb or similar sites and genuinely used to bring foreign tourists to Wales should be recognised for their contribution to the economy and supported, not punished.”*

*“Good to see you are consulting with people on this issue. However, I believe a common sense approach should be used so not to penalise people who are trying to sell a property that has no furnishings in.”*

## Welsh Language

There were **45** responses when asked for views on the impact that this draft action plan would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English. The following are a selection of the comments received:

*“Reducing second homes increases the possibility of local people living the area. Which can only benefit the use of the Welsh language.”*

*“This could bring fewer tourists to Wales which could impact use of the Welsh language.”*

*“I dont think this will have an impact on welsh or english language preference etc”*

*“Policy could push homeowners (a Welshspeaker)to sell house and move to England.This would have a negative impact on the Welsh language.”*

## Diversity

**27** responses were received when asked if this proposal would affect them as an individual because of any of the following (age, disability, ethnic origin, sex, gender reassignment, marital status, religious belief or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality or responsibility for any dependents or because you or a member of your household are or have been a member of the armed forces). The following are a selection of the comments received:

*“This discriminates against people of age where retirees have worked to acquire somewhere for their future ad leisure time to renovate properties. Also discriminating against the ex armed forces who use an additional property to deal with their PTSD away from family members and children. The council don't provide any support services as it is and is in no way shape or form to provide such care and won't be for many years, any attempts have always been substandard to the requirement usually have unfit people in the occupation for the council to tick the box necessary of supporting our veterans.”*

*“If you charge me more it will impact on my families standard of living”*

## Consultation – Proposals to implement Council Tax Premiums on long-term empty properties and second homes

*“I'm single so I'm on my own trying to renovate my house. This would seriously affect me as I would likely lose my home to be.”*

### **The consultation has concluded**

Caerphilly County Borough Council is grateful to everyone who has participated in this consultation and in particular everyone who has submitted a response. As a summary document, not all the issues outlined in responses have been reflected but each response has been considered carefully and will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.

### **Action points**

1. Respondents were invited to free type their comments throughout the consultation. These will be collated and shared with the relevant Departments of the Council.
2. Where contact details were provided, these will be passed to the Empty Property Team who may also share these details with other Agencies so that further information on the support available can be provided.



## **SPECIAL CABINET 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024**

**SUBJECT: LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the proposed update to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan (LFRMaAP) following on from public consultation.
- 1.2 To seek approval of the draft LFRMSaAP for publication and implementation.
- 1.3 To advise Cabinet of the financial implications associated with delivery of the strategy.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The first Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) was published in April 2013 as a statutory requirement under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- 2.2 This followed on from a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) that was published in May 2011, which was a requirement under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 in force at that time.
- 2.3 A Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) was also published in December 2015 as a further requirement under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 in force at that time.
- 2.4 Under the Flood and Water Management Act, a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) must develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in their area.
- 2.5 The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales was published by Welsh Government in October 2020 and initially included a requirement for LLFAs to update their LFRMS within 2 years of the National Strategy. This deadline was subsequently extended to April 2024 because of Brexit and Covid-19.
- 2.6 The Flood Risk Regulations have been revoked as part of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023. As such, there is no legislative requirement on an LLFA to produce an updated PFRA or a FRMP.
- 2.7 The PFRA has been replaced by a consolidated risk assessment for all sources of

flooding using Flood Risk Assessment Wales (FRAW) and Flood Map for Planning (FMfP), which are updated every 6 months by Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

- 2.8 Whilst there is no longer a legislative requirement for any LLFA to produce a FRMP, Welsh Government, through the National Strategy, have requested that all LLFAs produce a Flood Risk Action Plan.
- 2.9 Our updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy incorporates a local flood risk assessment based on FRAW and FMfP as well as an action plan for the 4 highest risk areas into the overall Strategy.
- 2.10 Our FRMSaAP outlines 9 Strategic Objectives, which are underpinned by 34 Measures and 76 Actions to manage local flood risk over the next 6-year period.
- 2.11 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) have outlined neutral or positive impacts. The inclusion of the Social Flood Risk Index (SFRi) within the FRMSaAP ensures that social vulnerability to flooding is embedded within decision making and funding prioritisation.
- 2.12 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has identified the potential for negative impacts associated with 2 of the proposed Strategic Measures and recommends that lower level, activity or project specific HRAs are carried out for any maintenance works or capital projects proposed within a 2km radius of Aberbargoed Grasslands SAC or within identified spatial pathways to the Severn Estuary SAC SPA Ramsar.
- 2.13 The updated FRMSaAP is considered affordable under current CCBC capital and revenue budget allocations, on the assumption that Welsh Government Grant in Aid funding also continues to be made available for capital projects and on the assumption that the current level of the previously hypothecated Welsh Government Flood Revenue Grant (£225k) funding continues to be parachuted to the service area after the Flood Revenue Grant is subsumed into the general Revenue Support Grant.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan (LFRMSaAP) for publication.
- 3.2 Cabinet is asked to note the financial and personnel implications associated with implementation of the LFRMSaAP and that further reports will be presented as required to approve match funding for specific capital projects.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Authority has a statutory duty to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in our area.
- 4.2 The local flood risk management strategy must be consistent with the national strategy and guidance.
- 4.3 Following the update to the National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales, it is necessary for the Authority to update our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to incorporate changes to national strategy and guidance and to bring up to date with changes made to the flood risk assessment frameworks.

- 4.4 The LFRMSaAP was developed based on a previously stated commitment from Welsh Government for flood revenue grant funding to continue at a baseline level of £225k per annum, with a view to this being increased where possible.
- 4.5 The LFRMSaAP is affordable based on a continuation of the flood revenue grant funding (£225k) and CCBC core capital and revenue funding for flood risk management and drainage activities at current levels.
- 4.6 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) have been undertaken. The SEA anticipates neutral or positive impacts. The HRA identifies potential for negative impacts associated with 2 of the Strategic Measures where these are carried out within a 2km radius of the Aberbargoed Grasslands SAC or within identified spatial pathways to the Severn Estuary SAC SPA Ramsar. The HRA recommends lower level HRAs at a project specific scale to identify any actual negative impacts and provide appropriate mitigation as required.

## **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 Flooding is amongst the most frequent and most damaging of all risks identified on the UK National Risk Register. Our updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan (LFRMSaAP) includes updated guidance and links to other sources of information to help people to prepare for flooding, stay safe during flooding, become resilient to flooding and recover quickly and safely from flooding.
- 5.2 Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Caerphilly County Borough Council, in our capacity as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), have a statutory duty to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in its area.
- 5.3 Under the Act, the local flood risk management strategy must specify:
  - 5.3.1 The risk management authorities in our area.
  - 5.3.2 The flood and coastal erosion risk management functions that may be exercised by those authorities.
  - 5.3.3. Our Objectives for managing local flood risk.
  - 5.3.4 Our Measures proposed to achieve those Objectives.
  - 5.3.5 How and when the Measures are expected to be implemented.
  - 5.3.6 The costs and benefits of those Measures and how they are to be paid for.
  - 5.3.7 The assessment of local flood risk for the purpose of the strategy.
  - 5.3.8 How and when the strategy is to be reviewed.
  - 5.3.9 How the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental objectives.

- 5.3.10 The local flood risk management strategy must also be consistent with the national strategy and guidance.
- 5.4 Local flood risk is defined as flooding from:
- 5.4.1 Surface Water
- 5.4.2 Groundwater, and
- 5.4.3 Ordinary Watercourses (small rivers and streams, included those culverted in underground pipes).
- 5.5 In addition to the above sources, Caerphilly is responsible for flooding of and from adopted Highways in our capacity as Highways Authority and for flooding of and from land where we are the landowner. This includes reservoirs under our ownership and control, canals, disused coal tips.
- 5.6 Caerphilly is not responsible for flood risk arising from other sources, including:
- 5.6.1 Main River Flooding, which includes the Rhymney River, Sirhowy River and Ebbw River as well as some of their larger tributaries. The Risk Management Authority (RMA) for this type of flooding is Natural Resources Wales (NRW).
- 5.6.2 Flooding from Reservoirs (except where we are the owner / operator of the reservoir). NRW have overall responsibility for the management of flood risk from reservoirs.
- 5.6.3 Sewer Flooding. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) is responsible for sewer flooding.
- 5.6.4 Flooding from Trunk Roads. This only includes the A465 as it passes through Caerphilly, but does also include the A472, A4060 and M4 in close proximity to Caerphilly borders. These are the responsibility of the South Wales Trunk Road Agency (SWTRA) on behalf of the Welsh Government.
- 5.6.5 Disused Coal Tips (except where these are under our ownership or control or where identified for Local Authority safety inspections). The Coal Authority have overall responsibility for the safety of disused coal tips including flooding or the impacts of flooding, such as landslips. Private tip owners have responsibility for managing their own tips, although new legislation currently being introduced is likely to mean that the Coal Authority will carry out safety checks on high risk private tips.
- 5.6.6 Railways. Network Rail and Transport for Wales (TfW) are responsible for flooding of and from railways. This includes culverts under railway lines and subways.
- 5.6.7 Flooding from Development or Construction Sites. The developers / contractors have responsibility to manage flood risk on and from their sites.
- 5.6.8 Private land. Landowners are responsible for flooding of or from their land. This is especially the case where a watercourse, land drainage system or ditch runs across their land or along the boundary of their land. In these cases, the landowner is a riparian owner of the watercourse and is responsible for maintaining clear unobstructed flow.
- 5.7 Our updated LFRMSaAP contains updated guidance and information relating to the different sources of flooding and highlights key contact information where other bodies



or organisations are responsible for flooding. This fulfils our obligation under 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 above.

- 5.8 Whilst the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 were revoked under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023, which removed the statutory obligation for local authorities to produce a preliminary flood risk assessment (PFRA), the duty under the Flood and Water Management Act continues to include an assessment of local flood risk for the purpose of the strategy (5.3.7).
- 5.9 The national strategy encourages the use of national flood risk mapping from all sources through the Flood Risk Assessment for Wales (FRAW) and Flood Map for Planning (FMfP). Whilst the FRAW contains more detailed information relating to flood depths and velocities, FMfP includes climate change predictions.
- 5.10 In responding to the climate emergency, we have embedded climate change into our updated LFRMSaAP through the use of the FMfP that incorporates mid-range climate change predictions into our initial assessment of local flood risk across the Borough.
- 5.11 A comparison of local flood risk in the whole of Caerphilly as evaluated in our 2011 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA), Flood Risk Assessment Wales (FRAW) and Flood Map for Planning (FMfP) is shown in Table 1

Table 1: Comparison of 2011 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment with Flood Risk Assessment Wales and Flood Map for Planning

	<b>2011 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA)</b>	<b>Flood Risk Assessment Wales (FRAW)</b>	<b>Flood Map for Planning (FMfP)</b>
<b>Risk Receptors</b>	<b>2011 Present Day Flood Risk, not including climate change</b>	<b>2024 Present Day Flood Risk, not including climate change</b>	<b>Future Flood Risk, accounting for the impacts of climate change</b>
<b>Residential</b>	7,017	6,812	9,091
<b>Non-Residential</b>	1,955	1,289	1,611
<b>Critical</b>	69	58	75

- 5.12 Whilst this indicates a reduction in flood risk to 205 residential, 666 non-residential and 11 critical services, it should be noted that some of the change is likely to be attributable to improvements in flood risk mapping over the intervening period.
- 5.13 On a comparative basis, four areas of the Borough with the highest local flood risk have been identified. The highest risk areas and impact on receptors is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Highest risk areas and impact on key risk receptors based on FMfP Zone 3 (areas with 1% risk of flooding)

<b>Risk Receptor</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Zone 002</b>	<b>Zone 077</b>	<b>Zone 082</b>	<b>Zone 099</b>
<b>Electoral Districts in Zone</b>		Tywn Carno and Moriah and Pontlottyn	Cross Keys and parts of Risca West and Risca East	Risca East and Risca West	Van
<b>Residential</b>	9091	1266	587	544	452

<b>Non-Residential</b>	1611	176	69	158	79
<b>Critical</b>	75	6	3	6	5

- 5.14 As the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 were revoked under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 and there are no national flood risk areas identified within Caerphilly Borough, there is no statutory requirement on Caerphilly to produce Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs).
- 5.15 However, the National Strategy includes a commitment that Wales will continue to work to the Flood Risk Regulations and the deadlines within the EU Floods Directive. The National Strategy also considers FRMPs as a key mechanism for delivering improvements in flood risk management. As such, we have developed flood risk action plans for the four highest risk zones as identified in Table 2.
- 5.16 We have further identified 3 Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs), which are areas that are known to have particularly significant drainage and / or surface water flood risk areas. In recognition of their flood history, CDAs are proposed for:
- 5.16.1 The Nant Twyn Harris catchment.
- 5.16.2 The Scouring Brook and Porset Brook catchments.
- 5.16.3 The Rhydney River Upper Reach (Tirphil) catchment.
- 5.17 Within the CDAs, any new development proposals must always be accompanied by a Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) even if the development itself is not shown to be within a flood risk zone.
- 5.18 In accordance with the requirements of the Act, we have developed the following 9 Strategic Objectives that align with the 5 National Objectives outlined in the National Strategy (5.3.3) and contribute to the overall national aim to **reduce the risks to people and communities from flooding and coastal erosion**.
- 5.18.1 Reduce the risk to and impact on people and communities from flooding.
- 5.18.2 Ensure that local communities are aware of and understand local flood risk and are suitably equipped, empowered and enabled to take timely actions to prepare for, be resilient against and recover from flooding.
- 5.18.3 Reduce disruption to critical infrastructure or prepare plans to allow operations to be maintained.
- 5.18.4 Enable national, regional and local designated sites to be protected against or resilient to flooding and enhance these areas where possible.
- 5.18.5 Ensure that investment is targeted towards those areas most at risk with due consideration of socio-economic factors.

- 5.18.6 Ensuring that interventions are designed, constructed and maintained sustainably, with due consideration of whole life costs, embedded carbon (energy) and scarce resources and are compliant with and complementary to the Water Framework Directive (WFD).
- 5.18.7 Support the delivery of Objectives under other environmental and well-being legislation such as The Environment (Wales) Act and the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.
- 5.18.8 Work collaboratively to ensure that the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Plan complements other Regional and Local strategies and plans, i.e. River Rhyrnney Restoration Plan (NRW), Local Development Plan, Well-being Plan, etc.
- 5.18.9 Continue to develop and enhance Caerphilly County Borough Council's knowledge and understanding of local flood risk taking into consideration surface water (pluvial), groundwater and ordinary watercourses (fluvial) and of flood risk management and mitigation measures.
- 5.19 These Objectives are underpinned by 34 Strategic Measures as required under the Act (5.3.4, 5.3.5 and 5.3.6) and 76 Strategic Actions. The Measures are covered in detail in Appendix B of the Strategy. The Actions are covered in detail in Appendix C of the Strategy.
- 5.20 Objective 7 supports the delivery of other environmental legislation as required by the Act (5.3.9). We have consulted with CCBC Ecology to ensure that we also have specific Measures and Actions to support the delivery of the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty under Section 6 of The Environment Act (Wales).
- 5.21 For Capital Schemes delivering flood risk mitigation, we have largely adopted a consistent approach to the Welsh Government prioritisation methodology, with due consideration of our local flood risk assessment. We have further embedded the Social Flood Risk Index (SRFI) in our prioritisation. The SRFI is a measure of geographic flood disadvantage and identifies those communities with the greatest social vulnerability to flooding. By factoring the SRFI into our prioritisation scoring, we will target interventions towards those communities least able to take actions to reduce their flood risk. This also supports a more equal Wales of cohesive communities in accordance with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.
- 5.22 The Action Plans will be reviewed every 3 years, and the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy will be reviewed every 6 years in line with the National Strategy (5.3.8).

## **5.23 CONCLUSION**

- 5.23.1 The Council develops, maintains, applies, and monitors a strategy for local flood risk as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and has a statutory duty to do so.
- 5.23.2 The Council's local flood risk management strategy is consistent with the national strategy and guidance.
- 5.23.3 The updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan fulfils the statutory requirements and the additional requirement for local flood risk management plans as outlined within the National Strategy.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 That, subject to the application of the five-business case model (where applicable), Welsh Government Grant in Aid funding continues to be made available for Capital and Revenue activities in relation to flood risk management and that the Authority continues to be successful in applications for funding.
- 6.2 That the previously hypothecated Flood Revenue Grant, which for 2023/24 and 2024/25 is £225k continues at the current level and continues to be parachuted into the service area budget following being subsumed into the general Revenue Support Grant once ringfencing of the grant for flood risk activities is removed from 2025/26 onwards.
- 6.3 That CCBC core revenue and capital budgets remain at current or higher levels with annual inflationary growth.
- 6.4 That, subject to the application of the five-business case model, CCBC capital funding is made available to support capital projects. Where capital projects are co-funded by Welsh Government, the Welsh Government funding is typically 85% of the total project costs. As such, provision of CCBC capital funding at 15% of project costs, releases additional funding.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

### **7.1 Link to the IIA**

- 7.2 The IIA outlines neutral or positive impacts on all protected characteristics.
- 7.3 The IIA recognises the use of the Social Flood Risk Index (SFRI) within the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to embed social vulnerability into decision making and funding prioritisation.

### **7.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 7.4.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been carried out and is incorporated into the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy as Appendix E.

#### **Link to Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 7.4.2 The SEA identifies neutral or positive impacts of the Strategic Objectives and Measures across all assessment areas.
- 7.4.3 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been carried out and is incorporated into the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy as Appendix F.

#### **Link Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 7.4.4 The HRA identifies potential for negative impacts as a result of 2 of the Strategic Measures. The HRA recommends lower level, project specific HRAs are carried out in relation to any maintenance activities or capital projects within a 2km radius of Aberbargoed Grasslands SAC or within any identified pathways to the Severn Estuary SAC SPA Ramsar.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The updated flood risk management strategy has been developed through application of the Welsh Government Flood Revenue Grant, which was hypothecated up to the 2023/24 financial year.
- 8.2 Welsh Government have previously committed to the current level of the Flood Revenue Grant (£225k) being the new benchmark (see Appendices 4, 5 and 6). However, from 2024/25 financial year onwards, the Flood Revenue Grant is being subsumed into the general Revenue Support Grant (RSG). For 2024/25, this grant will be ringfenced for use on flood risk management activities only. From 2025/26 onwards, the grant will no longer be ringfenced within the RSG.
- 8.3 The total cost of delivering the Strategy has been estimated at £16.2M over the 6-year Strategy period, equating to an annual spend of £2.7M.
- 8.4 The funding split is anticipated to be 77% Welsh Government Grant in Aid, 14% CCBC contributions and 9% Developer or beneficiary contributions.
- 8.5 Welsh Government Grant in Aid contributions are anticipated to be a combination of continued availability of revenue funding as parachuted into the service area from the RSG (£225k per year) and capital grant funding for individual schemes. Welsh Government Grant in Aid contributions have been assumed to continue at a 100% funding level for initial scheme investigations, feasibility studies and design works and at 85% funding level for construction activities.
- 8.6 Welsh Government Grant in Aid will be sought for a combination of annual projects under the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Small-Scale Grant programme and for larger multi-year projects under the FCERM Capital Grant programme. Small-Scale Grants are currently capped at £200k per scheme. Capital Grants have no upper limit per scheme.
- 8.7 CCBC contributions are estimated at an average of £389,308 per year and is considered affordable under the current budget apportionment. Business as Usual type activities, such as gully cleansing and routine maintenance activities are not included within these figures and are anticipated to continue with inflationary increases annually.
- 8.8 Individual capital schemes may require additional CCBC capital funding within individual years, with the majority of these also being eligible for Welsh Government Grant in Aid funding. Where this is the case, funding approval will be sought on a project-by-project basis. An annual funding allocation of £1M, consisting of £850k Welsh Government Grant in Aid and £150k CCBC Match Funding would allow the Council to develop and deliver an accelerated flood alleviation programme.
- 8.9 Developer contributions are anticipated to be primarily in the form of application fees relating to Sustainable Drainage and Ordinary Watercourse Consents.
- 8.10 The financial implications are indicative and represent the best estimate at 2024 prices.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA, also known as “Drainage” or “Land Drainage”) team will be responsible for the delivery of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan.

- 9.2 The LLFA has undergone a restructuring over the past 2 years as part of a departmental growth plan that was previously approved by Cabinet. This has seen the creation of a dedicated Drainage Strategy and Policy Unit for update, monitoring and implementation of the Strategy. This team consists of 2 FTE staff and 33% of the Principal Engineer (LLFA) time. Staff salaries for this team are partially capitalised through Welsh Government Grant in Aid funded projects and partially funded through the continuation of the Welsh Government Flood Revenue Grant via the RSG.
- 9.3 This team is supported by the Engineering Projects Group (EPG), Network Contracting Services (NCS) and external engineers and contractors for programme and project delivery.
- 9.4 This team is further supported by Corporate Services, including Welsh Translation Services, IT, Communications, Customer Services, HR, Transformation, Emergency Planning, as well as individual service areas or land holding departments.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

- 10.1 An initial Phase 1 Consultation (Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Stage 1 Consultation | The Caerphilly Conversation) was held between 27<sup>th</sup> June and 28<sup>th</sup> July 2023, which asked for observations on the 2013 Strategy and proposed revised Objectives. Key findings from the consultation and how these influenced the draft strategy are shown below.
- 10.1.1 Respondents emphasised the need for a more proactive and anticipatory approach to flood risk management. The Strategy includes a Measure to review our programme of planned and proactive maintenance of flood risk management assets (M10) and to provide systems for early warning of potential flooding (M08).
- 10.1.2 Respondents called for the consideration of flood risk in planning applications. Since the implementation of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act in January 2019, most new development and re-development now has to obtain Sustainable Drainage Approval as well as Planning Permission. The Strategy includes a Measure to ensure that sustainable drainage practices are implemented on new developments and redevelopments (M17). The Strategy also includes a Measure to ensure climate resilient development (M25) and for the Lead Local Flood Authority to contribute to the delivery or use of Strategic Flood Consequence Assessments to inform Local Development Plans and help steer development away from flood risk areas (M26).
- 10.1.3 The physical integrity of riverside properties was identified as a major concern, with respondents calling for measures to prevent erosion along riverbanks. The Strategy identifies the different responsible bodies, with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) responsible for flooding from Main Rivers, CCBC responsible for flooding from Ordinary Watercourses (smaller rivers and streams) and Riparian Owners (landowners) responsible for the condition of the banks of the watercourse in their ownership. The Strategy shows how the CCBC Land Drainage Byelaws can continue to be used to regulate works or activities close to an ordinary watercourse and proposes to use Natural Flood Management (NFM) options wherever possible (M20).
- 10.1.4 Some respondents raised concerns about the quality of surface water entering rivers, especially from highway networks. The Strategy commits to Actions to review and update of gully cleansing schedules (A27), to embed a commitment to a “no gully” approach to drainage solutions (A31) and to retrofit water quality measures to highway drainage systems (A35).

- 10.1.5 Respondents called for a need for clearer communication and engagement. The Strategy includes Measures to initiate and / or support Local Flood Forums (M07) and to engage with local communities in relation to local initiatives and schemes (M05).
- 10.2 A Phase 2 public consultation on the draft Strategy ran from 22<sup>nd</sup> January to 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 ([Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Stage 2 Public Consultation | The Caerphilly Conversation](#)). The responses received were largely favourable, with respondents indicating that the Strategy generally presented roles and responsibilities clearly, presented flood risk clearly and that the proposed Objectives, Measures and Actions were relevant and achievable.
- 10.3 Recommendations for improvement of the document were to consider improved internet content to reflect the Strategy with an “easy read” version available to the general public. This will form part of the publication strategy that will involve an overhaul of the relevant areas of the CCBC corporate website and a fully accessible HTML document.
- 10.4 Natural Resources Wales (NRW) provided comprehensive feedback on the draft Strategy and outlined that they are pleased to see the alignment with the National Flood Risk Management Strategy and with NRW’s own Flood Risk Management Plans. NRW welcomes our commitment to work collaboratively with other risk management authorities, including through the South East Valleys River Partnership. NRW also welcomes that our objectives and measures support the delivery of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Environment (Wales) Act, especially the Section 6 Biodiversity Duty.
- 10.5 NRW made some suggestions for clarifications, corrections and amendments to the Strategy prior to publication. These can be accommodated without changing the fundamental messaging of the Strategy. NRW offered some further comments in relation to delivery of the Strategy once approved, which are acknowledged and welcomed.
- 10.6 Network Rail responded to confirm their role as a statutory undertaker and to offer some standing advice in relation to developments close to any railway. These comments will be passed to relevant Planning and Sustainable Drainage Approving Body teams.
- 10.7 CADW offered no adverse comments to the overall Strategy but recommended consultation with archaeological advisers and Conservation Officers at a project specific level when any flood alleviation works are proposed that could have an impact on historic assets. This will be incorporated into delivery of the Strategy.
- 10.8 The Strategy itself contains a Strategic Objective to improve community understanding of local flood risk and enable and empower communities to take actions to prepare for, be resilient against and recover from flooding. An important part of this ongoing engagement will be to expand our Local Flood Forums to include areas with known flooding issues and the highest risk of flooding. This will ensure that engagement continues through the delivery of the Strategy.

## **11. STATUTORY POWERS AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS**

- 11.1 CCBC are the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010).

- 11.2 Under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010), each LLFA has a statutory duty to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in its area.
- 11.3 The local flood risk management strategy must be consistent with the Welsh Government National Strategy and guidance.
- 11.4 Whilst the Flood Risk Regulations (2009) has been revoked under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023, the WG National Strategy commits Wales to continuing to follow the 6-year cycle and reporting schedules within the Flood Risk Regulations and EU Floods Directive. The National Strategy further recommends that a Flood Action Plan is developed by all LLFAs, irrespective of the status of the Flood Risk Regulations or whether a national flood risk area is identified within the LLFA's administrative area. As such, development of a Flood Action Plan is still considered to be a requirement.
- 11.5 Under Section 10(9) of the Flood and Water Management Act, an LLFA must submit a draft of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to the Welsh Ministers for review prior to final publication.

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Consultees: Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways  
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive  
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment  
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services  
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
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Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer  
Robert Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services  
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Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services (Placeshaping and Transformation Capacity)  
Gareth Richards, Highway Services Group Manager  
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities, Welsh Language

Background Papers:

Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Stage 2 Public Consultation | The Caerphilly Conversation  
The above Link provides PDF's from the Consultation Hub. A fully accessible HTML version will be published alongside the designed PDF versions and updated Website pages.  
[Link to Engagement Strategy](#)





## SPECIAL CABINET – 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024

**SUBJECT: TRADE WASTE SERVICE CHANGES AND CHARGING POLICIES**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with proposals for providing a revised Workplace Recycling Regulations collection service to comply with new legislation and agree appropriate principles for collection service recharge rates.

### 2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The new Workplace Recycling Regulations come into force on 6th April 2024. Under the regulations, all businesses and workplaces must present specified recyclable materials for collection separately from each other and separate from residual waste. This will apply to all Local Authority trade customers and Local Authority owned buildings. Local Authorities and those that collect the specified recyclable materials must collect them separately from other recyclable materials; and keep the materials separate once collected and not mix them.
- 2.2 The Authority currently provides a weekly trade waste service for residual waste, recycling and food waste. This is co-collected alongside the domestic collection stream. Whilst the regulations do not require a change to the existing residual and food waste services, the current co-mingled recycling service will not be compliant from April 2024, so the Council must make changes to the way dry recycling is presented and collected from trade customers.
- 2.3 A review of the trade services was undertaken in 2023 with support from Local Partnerships and WRAP Cymru, to determine what action Caerphilly needs to take to adapt for compliance with the new regulations, but also provide sufficient flexibility for future demand from Caerphilly businesses. The review concluded that the Council retain the residual and food collections while seeking a partner to collect and process the dry recycling elements in the short to medium term. This is largely due to the constraints that the Council face around the storage and processing of the separately collected dry recycling materials.
- 2.4 The quickest route to market was determined as using the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to run a mini competition, rather than an open tender. To maximise value for money the Council will be seeking a 3-year contract with annual extensions up to a

maximum period of 5 years. This will align with the wider strategic changes proposed for the domestic recycling which is currently being consulted and provides time to consider future options for recycling collections.

- 2.5 Whilst this process has already commenced it is anticipated that contract award will not take place until May 2024, with the service commencement taking place thereafter. Consequently, there will be a delay between the regulations coming into force, on April 6<sup>th</sup> and contract commencement which is anticipated for May/June. Therefore, it is proposed that the Authority undertake an interim arrangement utilising existing staff and a combination of existing and short-term hire fleet for the period.
- 2.6 The Council currently follow a traditional pricing structure which encourages recycling by having 50 percent lower price charges for recycling collections over the residual stream. This historical subsidy was introduced to encourage businesses to recycle.
- 2.7 The trade service costs are also heavily reliant on the residual collection income which equated to 83 percent of service income in 2022-23, which is significantly subsidising the recycling service. If the Council are to ensure all trade services achieve full cost recovery the recycling and food waste trade charges will have to be realigned.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 3.1 Note the requirements of the Workplace Recycling Regulations and their impact on Council owned buildings, trade customers, and the Council's trade waste collection service.
- 3.2 Note the outcome of the review into the trade waste service, the preferred outcome and the approach to Market.
- 3.3 Support an interim 'compliant' service to be undertaken by the Council from April 6<sup>th</sup> to service commencement.
- 3.4 Approve a full cost recovery approach to realign the recycling and food waste charges from April 2024. This will further be amended once the outcomes of the procurement and customer demands are better understood. A new charging structure will be brought forwards in consultation with Cabinet Member and delegated to the Corporate Director for approval.
- 3.5 Approve an uplift in the annual Waste Transfer Note charges from £21 to £40.
- 3.6 Approve an additional £180,000 to purchase additional containers for businesses to meet their requirements under the regulations. This is to be funded from uncommitted Capital earmarked reserves.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 In order to comply with legislative changes outlined in the new Workplace Recycling Regulations.
- 4.2 To ensure that all costs associated with the collection of trade waste are recovered.
- 4.3 The Authority is at risk of circa £2m per annum fines for not achieving statutory recycling targets. These proposals maximise recycling from businesses which links to the key objectives of the draft waste and recycling strategy.

## 5. THE REPORT

### 5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 On 4 December 2023 the new Workplace Recycling Regulations (the Waste Separation Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2023) were laid by the Welsh Government. These new regulations impact on all business, charities and third sector organisations in Wales and will come into force 6th April 2024.
- 5.1.2 All businesses and workplaces must present specified recyclable materials for collection separately from each other and separate from residual waste. This will apply to all Local Authority trade customers and Local Authority owned buildings. The materials must be presented as follows.
- Glass.
  - Paper and card.
  - Metal, plastic, and cartons.
  - Food waste from premises producing 5kg of food waste and more/week.
  - Unsold small waste electrical and electronic equipment (sWEEE).
  - Unsold textiles.
- 5.1.3 Local Authorities and those that collect the specified recyclable materials must collect them separately from other recyclable materials; and keep the materials separate once collected and not mix them. The new recycling regulations will be regulated by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Both workplaces and business waste collectors will face fines or enforcement action if they do not comply with the requirements.
- 5.1.4 The Authority currently provides a weekly trade waste service for residual waste, recycling and food waste. This is co-collected alongside the domestic collection stream. The number of customers and tonnages collected for each stream is indicated in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Trade Service Summary

Material type	Number of customers	Proportioned tonnages (t)	Cost recovery position	Compliance position after 6 April 2024
Residual	1084	2133	Positive recovery	Yes
Dry Recycling	611	616	Not achieving cost recovery	No – service change required
Food Waste	123	350	Not achieving cost recovery	Yes

Textiles and sWEEE	0	0	n/a	Service provision required
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1174</b>	<b>3099</b>	<b>Positive recovery</b>	

5.1.5 Whilst the regulations do not require a change to the existing residual and food waste services, the current co-mingled recycling service will not be compliant from April 2024, so the Council must make changes to the way dry recycling is presented and collected from trade customers. In addition, the service must prepare for a potential increase in recycling demand that the new regulations may generate as businesses change their collection requirements.

5.1.6 Under the Councils legal duty of care simply sign posting businesses to a private collector is not permitted. Under Section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which places a duty on local authorities to arrange or facilitate for the collection of trade waste from premises in its area if requested by the occupier to do so.

## 5.2 Preferred Trade Solution

5.2.1 A review of the trade services was undertaken in 2023 with support from Local Partnerships and WRAP Cymru, to determine what action Caerphilly needs to take to adapt for compliance with the new regulations, but also provide sufficient flexibility for future demand from Caerphilly businesses. To prepare for the new collection requirements various approaches were considered for compliance which included recycling collections by the Council and processing through existing infrastructure.

- 1) recycling collections by the Council and taken to a partner for processing.
- 2) seek a partner for recycling only, retain residual, and food collections.
- 3) seek a partner for recycling, textiles, sWEEE and food, retain residual collections.
- 4) externalise all trade collections and processing.

5.2.2 Upon review it was found that there were several constraints that limited the viable options open to the Council. Whilst the current collections fleet could be utilised (although not ideally configured for a long-term solution) the existing infrastructure has limited flexibility to accommodate the separately collected waste/recycling streams. As the collected materials cannot be mixed with other recycling materials, they would require additional and new storage areas, that currently do not exist. The low tonnages collected would require long storage periods to make onward haulage cost effective and could create permit issues for the existing Caerphilly sites.

5.2.3 In exploring options to tackle the infrastructure challenges, market testing and discussions with neighbouring authorities yielded little opportunities for a viable solution. Equally, externalising all the trade services was not a sensible approach as the service is currently making a financial surplus overall. Such an approach is not in the spirit of the corporate vision and such change is not required as the service is already suitably configured to support residual and food waste collections. The only challenge area to address is the separate collection of dry recycling and the associated processing.

5.2.4 The longer timeline for the wider strategic changes for domestic collections and infrastructure changes were also considered. The required infrastructure changes may take two to three years to complete, so any solution would ideally mirror this timeline.

5.2.5 In summary the review concluded the best solution for Caerphilly at this moment in time was to retain the residual and food collections while seeking a partner to collect and process the dry recycling elements. The Council will remain in full control of the trade services offered and administer the customer contracts. The partner will simply provide the dry recycling collections and processing. In summary:

- The trade contract is held between the Council and the Trade premise.
- The Council will provide all containers that the customer requires and state the service parameters offered.
- Residual waste collections and processing remains unchanged and are provided by the Council.
- Food waste collections and processing remains unchanged and are provided by the Council.
- Separate dry recycling (paper, card, metals, plastics, cartons and glass) will be collected by a partner and processed at their facility for onwards sale.
- Adhoc collections of textiles and SWEEE will be provided by the partner.
- The partner will provide vehicles, resources and processing facilities for the materials they collect.

### **5.3 Route to Market**

5.3.1 Various options for the procurement of a partner have been considered and the preferred low risk approach with the quickest route to market is via the Dynamic Procurement System (DPS). Interested parties will be invited on to the framework and then a mini tender completed for the dry recycling contract.

5.3.2 A three-year contract (with possible annual extensions for a further two years) will be advertised. This approach will provide any partner a sufficient length for investment in vehicles and resources, but also provide the Council with time to deliver the wider infrastructure changes to provide separate collections over the longer term. A period of three to five years will provide the Council the flexibility to consider their approach to trade services in the future and either take the dry recycling elements back in house, continue with the short to medium term partner approach or seek a new arrangement.

5.3.3 Even with the DPS route it is estimated that the contract award will not take place until May plus the partners mobilisation requirements are currently unknown. Based on market testing it is hoped that the appointed partner will be able to provide a Compliant service by June 2024.

### **5.4 Interim service support**

5.4.1 As outlined in 5.3.3 the procurement will not be concluded until mid-May and the partner mobilisation lead-times are not known at this time. This could leave Caerphilly exposed to not providing compliant trade recycling services. Therefore, an interim solution has been developed, where the Council will provide the required separate recycling collections for the period between April and the contractor being in place. The authority will utilise local outlets for processing and onward transportation of materials via existing contracts that are already in place and negotiations are underway to ascertain the costs.

5.4.2 The interim position will utilise a combination of existing fleet and short-term hire as well as existing resources to provide the collections. An additional vehicle may be required to ensure there is sufficient capacity across the domestic and trade service,

but this will be closely monitored in line with customer demand.

- 5.4.3 It is not currently viable for the Council to undertake the dry recycling collections with the current infrastructure as a long-term option, but for a short period the service will be able to make contingency arrangements for the separately collected materials. By ensuring all trade customers have access to a compliant trade service from April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 this will protect the Council from negative attention from the regulator, guard the Council's reputation and help maximise customer retention.

## **5.5 Customer Readiness**

- 5.5.1 Whilst the Welsh Government are running a national campaign around the new regulations, the Council will support the trade customers with a comprehensive engagement and communications plan beginning ahead of April. All trade customers will have to be contacted to ensure their contracts are amended to reflect the need to recycle in line with the new regulations.
- 5.5.2 Whilst the new regulations come into force on the 6th April, it is envisaged that it may take several weeks or even months for all customers to transition to the new service. The Council will aim to ensure all trade customers are encouraged to make the required changes as quickly as possible, but the service is ultimately reliant on the trade premise to co-operate. The Council will aim to have provided all the required container changes ahead of the contract award.
- 5.5.3 As a result of the move to separate recycling and food waste services, it has been estimated that the current customer base may require over an additional 1000 new recycling containers and almost 2000 food caddies. The initial outlay cost could be circa £180,000, however these costs will be recovered through the trade charges over time. Additional staff resource may be required to ensure timely deliveries of the containers, but this will be gauged in line with customer demands.

## **5.6 Regulator engagement**

- 5.6.1 The new regulations will be enforced by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). To protect the Council's position and reputation, engagement with NRW is ongoing. NRW are aware of Caerphilly's commitment to provide compliant services and the current constraints that the Council face. Officers will continue to provide NRW with regular updates as the Council transition the trade services.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

Based on the review undertaken and to ensure Caerphilly are in the strongest position for the demands of the new Workplace Recycling Regulations it is recommended that the trade service adopts the following:

- Complete the tender process for a dry recycling partner,
- Introduce an interim 'compliant' service which will be undertaken by the Council from April 6<sup>th</sup> to service commencement with the newly tender partner organisation.
- Approve a full cost recovery approach to realign the recycling and food waste charges from April 2024 and this will be further amended once the outcomes of the procurement and customer demands are better understood. A new

charging structure will be brought forwards in consultation with Cabinet Member and delegated.

- Approve an uplift in the annual Waste Transfer Note charges from £21 to £40.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 It is difficult to measure the cost to the Council of collecting and managing trade waste recycling as materials are collected on the same rounds as household collections which is how the service is undertaken currently. A WRAP calculation based on current customer receptacles has been used to derive tonnages, which was subsequently used to pro-rata costs.
- 6.2 Assumptions have been made due to uncertainty of demand level. Officers have looked at current requirements and types of business to predict recycling containers required. Additional food caddies have been factored in due to regulation changes requiring any business producing over 5kg of food waste per week to arrange a separate collection. As a direct result, residual waste containers have been downsized due to the subsequent separation of recycling and food.
- 6.3 There is a financial risk due to numerous assumptions used when calculating the newly required Dry Recycling service. Customers may choose to use an alternative private supplier for their Trade Waste service, particularly as other suppliers could offer a more dynamic pricing schedule.
- 6.4 All trade customers must have some element of recycling in their new contracts after April 2024.
- 6.5 It is projected that 25 percent of the current residual tonnage from trade premises could move to recycling and food waste collection services.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 **The link to the IIA**

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Council currently follow a traditional pricing structure which encourages recycling by having 50 percent lower price charges for recycling collections over the residual stream. The residual collection charges currently subsidise the recycling charge to try and encourage more businesses to participate in recycling.
- 8.2 The trade service costs are also heavily reliant on the residual collection income which equated to 83 percent of service income in 2022-23, which is significantly subsidising the recycling service. If the Council are to ensure all trade services achieve full cost recovery the recycling and food waste trade charges will have to be realigned.
- 8.3 A benchmarking exercise (Table 2) has also identified that the annual Waste Transfer Note (WTN) charges that each trade premise is required to pay is almost 50 percent lower than neighbouring authorities. Caerphilly currently charge £21/year.

Table 2 – Local Authority, Waste Transfer Note charges

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>WTN charge (WLG A benchmarking data)</b>
Cardiff	£61.50
Monmouthshire	£35.19
Pembrokeshire	£40.70
Rhondda Cynon Taf	£30.00
Merthyr Tydfil	£46.60
<b>Average annual charge</b>	<b>£42.80</b>

8.4 To ensure a robust charge setting that provides full cost recovery for the Council and balancing the fairest approach for Trade customers the costs will be amended based on current projections from April 2024. This will be further amended once the outcome of the procurement is concluded. Trying to predict the possible charges may expose the Council to unnecessary risk or over inflate charges for trade customer. However, if the current customer base remains static the food charge would have to increase significantly to ensure full cost recovery.

8.5 The following charging principles are proposed:

- Recycling and food charges will be realigned to ensure full cost recovery from April 2024, this will be further refined after the procurement exercise has been completed.
- Residual charges will remain higher than the recycling and food charges to encourage recycling although the exact costs of the compliant recycling service is not yet confirmed.
- The Annual WTN charges are realigned to the regional average.

8.6 It has been estimated that the current customer base may require over an additional 1000 new recycling containers and almost 2000 food caddies. The initial outlay cost could be circa £180,000, however these costs will be recovered through the trade charges over time. Additional staff resource may be required to ensure timely deliveries of the containers, but this will be gauged in line with customer demands.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 For the interim arrangements, existing staff will be utilised and where necessary may be required to work additional shifts over the short term. This will be undertaken on a volunteer basis. Initial discussions with staff have identified sufficient resource availability.

9.2 Temporary staff may be required to provide additional container delivery support, but the existing staff will be utilised wherever possible.

9.3 Waste officers already manage multiple waste related contracts, any additional training requirements identified will be implemented.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 On 8 February 2024, a meeting of the Waste Members Working Group was held to



provide an update on the trade waste service following an initial session which was held in October 2023. Members were asked to consider the various options and challenges faced for complying with the new Workplace Recycling Regulations.

- 10.2 Members were asked to endorse the preferred solution to seek a partner for the collection and processing for dry recycling, as well as support the approach to market in order to allow the Council flexibility to take all trade services back in house at a future point. Discussions and validations were also sought to revise the charging structure to ensure full cost recovery.
- 10.3 The Waste Members Working Group endorsed all three elements of the proposals.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 The following statutory powers are identified:

- Workplace Recycling Regulations (the Waste Separation Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2023)
- Environment Protection Act (2010)
- Revised Waste Framework Directive (2018)
- Environment Act (2021)
- Waste (Wales) Measure (2010)
- The Controlled Waste Regulations (England and Wales) 2012

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Gadewir y dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol