



CABINET – 28TH MARCH 2018

SUBJECT: PONTLLANFRAITH LEISURE CENTRE – CONSIDERATION OF THE CALL-IN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LEISURE REVIEW

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR (COMMUNITIES)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To refer the recommendations from the Regeneration and Scrutiny Committee held on 18th January 2018 to Cabinet.
- 1.2 To update Cabinet on the outcome of additional consultation undertaken in relation to the potential closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and to establish whether Cabinet wishes to re-affirm its original decision or change its decision based on additional consultation.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 On 13th December 2017 Cabinet considered a report on the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and agreed a number of resolutions including the closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.
- 2.2 The Cabinet decision was the subject of a call-in which was considered by the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 18th January 2018 where it was resolved to refer the matter back to Cabinet for further consideration.
- 2.3 This report sets out the basis for the call-in, the further consultation that has taken place as a result and requests that Cabinet considers this additional information and either re-affirms its original decision or considers a change to the decision based on this additional consultation.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, working with people and communities, looking to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals:
 - A prosperous Wales
 - A resilient Wales
 - A healthier Wales
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities
 - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
 - A globally responsible Wales

The content of this report links into: A healthier Wales, A Prosperous Wales, A Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language, a globally responsible Wales and a resilient Wales.

- 3.2 The Community & Leisure Services Divisional Service Plan contains specific objectives to meet a range of statutory and non-statutory targets. The plan also outlines the division's contribution to the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 As outlined above the Cabinet decision of 13th December 2017 was the subject of a call-in which was considered by the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 18th January 2018.

- 4.2 The basis of this call-in was as follows:-

"We the undersigned Councillors request the above decision is called in under the relevant procedure as this does not sit with the Well Being Policy (Act 2015) healthier objectives for residents of the County Borough, surely the Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee should have been consulted, Children Commissioners should have been consulted, Young Persons Forum, and the relevant Regeneration Scrutiny Committee only discussed this matter less than 24 hours before the Cabinet meeting where it was reported verbally only to Cabinet, and we do not feel it proper that such an important matter which affects many service users has been given proper discussion, and fail to see how this is effective consultation especially when the three local members and Councillors in the affected Ward, and in nearby wards opposed the closure, and also was the detailed alternative supplied by Blackwood Town Council colleagues discussed and debated in detail please and given proper consideration".

- 4.3 In considering the call-in the Scrutiny Committee were asked to have regard to:

- (a) Did the Cabinet's decision conflict with the Council's Well-being Objectives?
- (b) Did the Council fail to properly consult by not consulting the Health Social Care and Well Being Scrutiny Committee, the Children's Commissioner and the Young Persons Forum.
- (c) Was sufficient time afforded to this Scrutiny Committee in order to consider the outcome of the consultation and provide its views to Cabinet prior to the decision being made?
- (d) Did Cabinet give proper consideration to the consultation responses generally but having particular regard to the response from Blackwood Town Council?
- (e) If yes to (a) and (b) and no to (c) and (d) was there any information not put before the Cabinet which would have led to a different decision being made by the Cabinet.

- 4.4 The Scrutiny Committee resolved to support the call-in and to refer the matter back to Cabinet with a recommendation that additional consultation takes place with the Future Generations Commissioner, the Youth Forum and the Children's Commissioner. The Scrutiny Committee also recommended to Cabinet that Blackwood Town Council be provided with a formal response to their detailed consultation. .

- 4.5 In relation to the additional consultation recommended, over the period 23rd-24th January 2018 emails were sent to:-

- Office of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales
- Office of the Well-being for Future Generations Commissioner for Wales
- Office of the Older Persons Commissioner for Wales
- The Youth Forum Co-Ordinator

4.6 These emails sought the views of the various Welsh Commissioners and Youth Forum on the proposed closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and requested responses by 7th February 2018. The responses are discussed in more detail in section 4.13 below.

4.7 Prior to outlining the additional consultation responses it is worth Cabinet noting the scope and outcome of the original consultation which took place between 9th October and 24th November 2017.

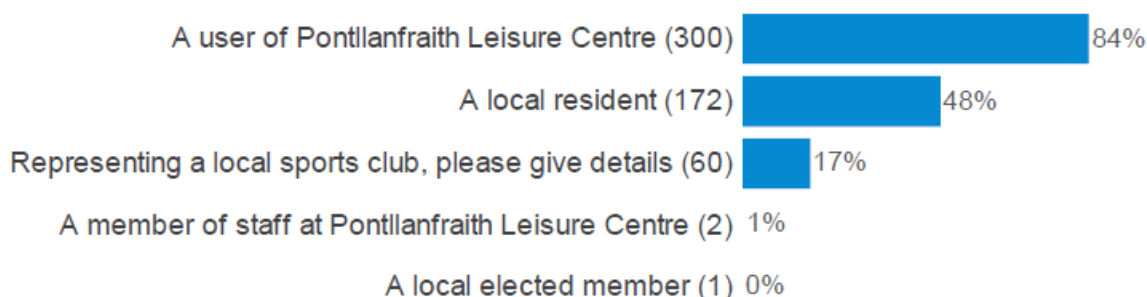
4.8 The original consultation process comprised of the following elements:-

- Notices in Leisure Centre advising of the process.
- Paper comments forms and associated deposit box in Leisure Centre.
- Notification of process on CCBC web-site.
- On-line form for submission of comments.
- 2 public meetings (held early evening on 17th & 19th October at the Leisure Centre).
- One to one consultation appointments with those that expressed interest in a more personal discussion (held on 7th November 2017 and 22nd November 2017).
- Meetings with local members representing wards immediately adjacent to the Leisure Centre (Pontllanfraith, Blackwood, Penmaen & Cefn Fforest).
- Notification to all Town & Community Councillors seeking their views on the potential closure of the centre.
- Consultation with the Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 1st November 2017.
- Further meetings with the Head teacher and Governors at Islwyn High.
- Discussions with staff & Trade Unions.

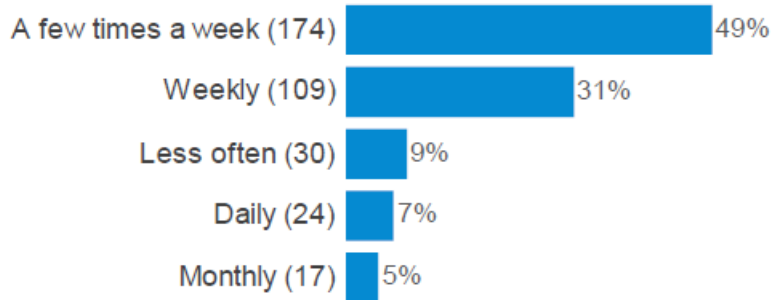
4.9 The outcome of the wider public consultation was analysed by staff in the Authority’s Communications Unit. This analysis resulted in a mix of graphical representations and a collection of specific comments. The summary report and specific comments are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.10 The key graphs from the summary consultation report were as follows:-

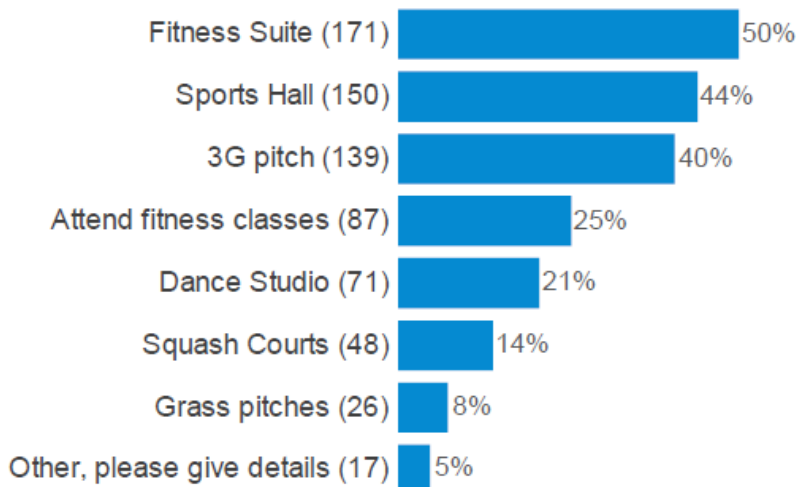
Please indicate your interest in this consultation *(please tick all that apply)*



How often do you use Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre?



What facilities do you use at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre? *(please tick all that apply)*



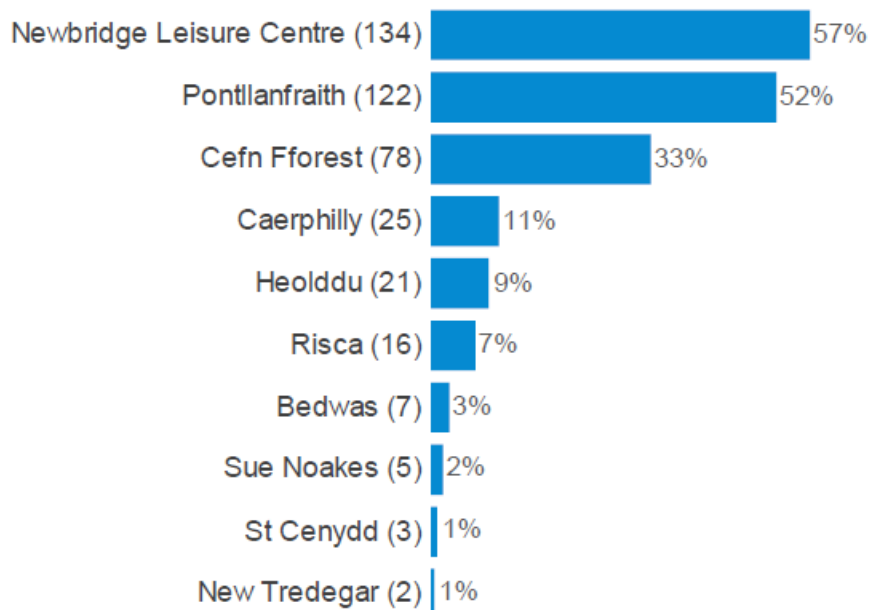
Are alternative arrangements/facilities in place to meet your needs?



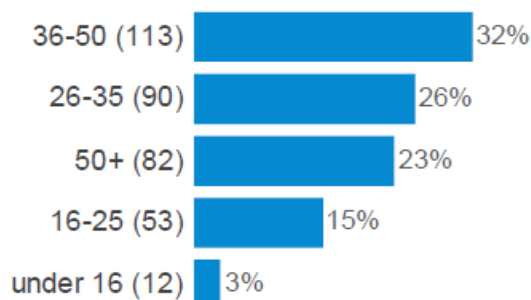
Are you a Caerphilly Lifestyle member?



Do you use any other leisure facilities in the Caerphilly county borough area?



What is your age group



Are you



- 4.11 There are a number of “themes” that have arisen as the consultation analysis has been completed. The table below illustrates the nature of these themes and the comments of officers.

COMMON CONSULTATION THEMES	
Consultation Question: <i>What impact will the closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre have on you?</i>	
THEME	OFFICER COMMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further to travel. • Will not be able to walk to a facility. • Pontllanfraith is more convenient for me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 50% of the Pontllanfraith users travel from outside the NP12 postcode area and therefore travel by car or bus. Other facilities may therefore be closer to many of the centre’s users.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facility includes a 3G pitch which is available in all weathers. • Local 3G pitches are already oversubscribed. • If a 3G is not installed at Blackwood this would have a huge impact. • 3G demand in the area cannot be satisfied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is accepted that the demand for 3G facilities is significant given our changing weather conditions/climate. • While the Authority had no certainty over the development of a new 3G at Blackwood, the bid to Welsh Government was submitted and approved • A range of alternatives are being explored in terms of relocating 3G users to other facilities. • The potential for the 3G pitch at Pontllanfraith to remain until the 31st March 2017 would allow users to benefit from it for the entire duration of the winter period. There is less pressure after the clocks go forward at the end of March.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant loss of facilities and services in the Pontllanfraith area (Youth Centre, Ty Pontllanfraith, School and now Leisure Centre). • Housing Growth in area will place significant burden on local services/infrastructure. • More residents using other Leisure Centres will place additional burden on those other Centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is difficult to comment on changes that take place in society – some of these are for the better and some are not. Unfortunately, in modern society change is inevitable and is driven by economics (in the case of Ty Pontllanfraith), or the need to improve (eg: the education offer in the Pontllanfraith/Blackwood/Oakdale area). • Housing growth is needed as there is a shortage of housing within the County Borough. • The Authority has more Leisure Centres than any other Local Authority in Wales and this number, when combined with their age profile is unsustainable in the long-term. Leisure Centre rationalisation to a fewer number of strategic centres is therefore required in the medium to long-term. The provision of secondary leisure provision should also be noted with facilities for community use provided at Lewis School, Pengam, Y-Gwindy, Caerphilly, St Martins School, Caerphilly, Markham Community House, Blackwood Comprehensive School and Ysgol Cwm Rhymni, Fleur de Lys

COMMON CONSULTATION THEMES	
Consultation Question: <i>Are alternative arrangement/ facilities in place to meet your needs?</i>	
THREAD	OFFICER COMMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3G at Islwyn High is not enough – the Pontllanfraith 3G needs to be replaced at Blackwood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See comments above regarding 3G at Blackwood Comprehensive and 21st Century Schools submission to Welsh Government. • See comments above regarding option to keep 3G at Pontllanfraith open until 31st March 2017.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no alternative facilities that would meet may needs. • A lack of affordable facilities exists in the vicinity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See comments above regarding travel distances etc. • The Authority has a significant number of Leisure Centres, many of which offer all of the services on offer at Pontllanfraith and more (eg: Newbridge). • The Authority's Leisure Centre pricing structure is consistent across the County Borough and membership allows the use of all Centres.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of Leisure Centres are ageing and need significant investment to bring them to a modern standard. The use of Leisure Centres is cost prohibitive and should be subsidised for residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is accepted that the Authority's Leisure Centre stock is ageing and in need of investment. However, there is insufficient funding in the current climate to invest in the vast number of facilities across the County Borough. Consequently rationalisation is required followed by an investment programme in a smaller number of better equipped strategic facilities. • The use of the Authority's Leisure Centres is already subsidised (the subsidy varies from centre to centre dependant on facility mix and user profiles). However, this is unsustainable in the current financial climate.

COMMON CONSULTATION THEMES	
Consultation Question: <i>Please detail how the impact of closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre could be further reduced?</i>	
THREAD	OFFICER COMMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping the 3G pitch or creating another one. • Move or redevelop the 3G pitch quickly at another location. • Keep the 3G pitch but close the Leisure Centre. • If the current classes could be transferred to another local centre and my Caerphilly Leisure membership can still be used to attend classes then it would be acceptable, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See comments above regarding option to keep the 3G pitch until 31st March 2017 and 21st Century Schools submission to Welsh Government. • This is covered in paragraph 4.12 of the original report. However, it does not represent a financially viable proposal. • Other centres offer a wide range of classes and a Caerphilly Leisure Membership can be used at any of our Centres.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Newbridge Leisure Centre bigger and better. • Upgrade other Leisure Centres. • The question makes it sound like it is a pre-ordained event ie no notice will be taken of views expressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See comments above on future investment in a smaller number of strategic facilities. • The consultation process was detailed, thorough and held over an 8-week period and has involved a range of media (one to one interviews, on-line, written forms, public meetings, etc.) • No decision will be taken until the Scrutiny

	Committee has considered the consultation responses and made a recommendation to Cabinet.
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4.12 In terms of the other consultation mechanisms the outcomes were as follows:-

(i) Meetings with Local Members

- A meeting was held with the 3 Pontllanfraith members
- No response was received from Cefn Fforest or Penmaen members in relation to accepting or declining the meeting.
- 2 responses were received from the Blackwood members – one of the members attended the meeting with officers, one declared an interest as a result of a school governing body role and no response was received from the other member.

(ii) Town & Community Councils

3 representatives of Blackwood Town Council attended the meeting with the local member for Blackwood; subsequently a formal response has been received from Blackwood Town Council which is included as Appendix 2 to this report. The response from Blackwood Town Council was largely based around the Authority's duties and responsibilities associated with Well Being of Future Generations Act and maintains that any closure of the Leisure Centre would be in contravention of many of the principles set down by the Act. In addition, Blackwood Town Council has suggested that any closure would be in conflict with the Public Service Board draft well-being plan, "The Caerphilly we want". The Town Council eventually recommends that any decision to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre should be deferred for 6 to 12 months and states that it intends to refer the matter to the Caerphilly Public Services Board and Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. Officers have considered the submission by Blackwood Town Council and are of the view that the Authority now needs to take a long-term view as we know that public services will need to change or be unable to cope with economic, social, and environmental future trends. As is pointed out, a Healthier Wales is a Well-being Goal within the Well Being of Future Generations Act and the Caerphilly Public Services Board draft Well-being Plan and the Council's own Well-being Objectives seek to make a contribution to that Goal. Clearly, the direct provision of leisure services can make a contribution to maximising people's physical and mental well-being, but the sustainability of that service provision needs to be considered in the context of available resources going forward. The Authority has more Leisure Centres than any other Local Authority in Wales and this number, when combined with their age profile, is unsustainable in the long-term.

With regard to the well-being of future generations a healthier Wales will be achieved in the long term, not only by providing leisure centres, but by people maximising their physical and mental well-being through healthy choices and behaviours. For example, the Daily Mile initiative was launched at Pontllanfraith Primary School in March 2017 and we now have over 8000 primary/infant pupils completing this exercise every school day, but many more are still to sign up. Smoking prevalence continues to fall, but still 18% of adults in the county borough are smokers. We agree that our direct provision of leisure services has a contribution to make to well-being, but as set out in the Caerphilly Public Service Board's draft Well-being Plan we also need to ensure that our assets and resources are used more intelligently and sustainably. There have been no responses from any other Town & Community Councils.

(ii) Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matter at its meeting on 1st November 2017. Prior to the meeting a member of the public asked to address the Committee and this was accommodated.

The Committee considered the officer report, the public representation and requested a slight extension to the consultation period which has been accommodated (extended

from 10/11/17 to 24/11/17). In addition, the Scrutiny Committee requested that the outcome of the consultation is brought to the next meeting (12th December 2017) which has also been accommodated. As a result of the 12th December Scrutiny Committee being less than 24 hours before the 13th December Cabinet meeting, a verbal recommendation from Scrutiny will be provided to Cabinet.

(iii) Meeting with Islwyn High School

Meetings have been held with the Head teacher and Governing Body of Islwyn High School. During the meeting with the Head teacher, the Corporate Director (Communities) agreed that a member of Sport & Leisure staff would be provided for a period of 3 months to assist the school with transition of the Sports Hall programme from Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre in the event of the decision being taken to close the centre. It was agreed that this 3-month assistance period would be at no cost to the school. Subsequently, a paper was presented to the Governing Body outlining the programme that would be transferred to Islwyn High School and the 3-months free of charge staffing assistance. It was also outlined to the Governing Body that the programme to be transferred is a mature, block booking programme which will represent guaranteed income for the school.

While the Governing Body were generally in favour of the transition of the mature programme from Pontllanfraith, it was keen not to be seen to prejudice the consultation process and would not therefore make a final decision until the consultation period is over. This was re-affirmed by the Governing Body at its meeting on 18th January 2018.

4.13 In terms of the additional consultation set out in paragraph 4.5 above, the responses from each Commissioner and the Youth Forum are as follows:-

(i) Children's Commissioner

The Office of the Children's Commissioner stated that it was unable to respond to consultations in respect of local funding as such interventions could prejudice the Commissioner's independent status. In addition, the response highlighted two points in relation to the existing requirements under the Local Authority's framework and its relationship with children's rights. These included:-

- Equality Impact Assessments require consideration of the impact of people within recognised protected characteristics including age. There is an expectation that children and young people should be a key consideration in respect of this section given the matter concerned.
- Under Article 12 Children and young people have a right to say what they think on matters affecting them and their opinions taken into account. All public bodies have a duty to contribute toward the realisation of children's rights. Whilst Local Authority consultation requirements vary as the Office of the Commissioner we would expect that children and young people would be afforded the opportunity for meaningful consultation along with evidence that their views, as well as those of other consultees, have been taken into account on matters which affect them such as this.

The email response from the Children's Commissioner is included as Appendix 2 to this report.

(ii) Well-Being for Future Generations Commissioner

A response was received from the Office of the Well-Being for Future Generations Commissioner on 21st February 2018. This response is also included as Appendix 2 to this report.

The response from the Future Generations Commissioner set out the provisions and ethos of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act and the duties it imposes on public bodies. It also pointed out the desire of the Commissioner to empower individuals and community groups to understand how they can use the Act to challenge public bodies. In this regard the Commissioner suggested that individuals and community groups ask a series of questions around:-

- Involvement (the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves)
- Long-term (the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long-term needs)
- Prevention (how acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives)
- Integration (considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies)
- Collaboration (acting in collaboration with any other person or different parts of the body itself that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives)

In terms of these key question headings officer comments are as follows:-

- Involvement – the transition of services to the public from Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre to other establishments has been the subject of extensive consultation which is outlined in this report. The important fact is that services are not being removed but are being transitioned to other facilities. Much of the concern during the consultation focussed on the 3G pitch but this will be replaced with a better facility at Blackwood Comprehensive and in this regard the recent Welsh Government funding announcement articulated below in section 4.19 of this report is of particular relevance
- Long-term – the rationalisation of leisure facility stock and reducing maintenance liabilities across an ageing stock is crucial to the long term sustainability of the Authority's sport and leisure service. The current leisure estate is not sustainable.
- Prevention – acting to reduce its maintenance liabilities linked to the leisure stock and as a result contributing to a more strategic approach to financial planning assists with the ability to continue to deliver a range of other services (e.g. social care, education) which are inextricably linked to the well-being of future generations
- Integration – as stated above, there is no loss of service but a transitioning to other facilities, some of which are/will be state of the art and ultimately represent better service provision. Changes to the leisure service are necessary if we are to maximise the contribution that it can make across the well-being goals.
- Collaboration – the ability to transition services to other facilities/establishments has been/will be achieved by working in collaboration with local schools and the other local leisure centres within the Authority's portfolio

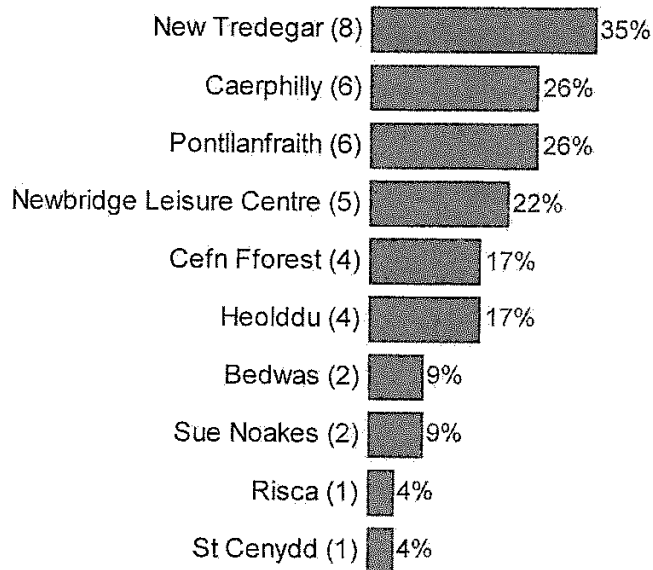
(iii) Older Persons Commissioner

No response was received from the Office of the Older Persons Commissioner.

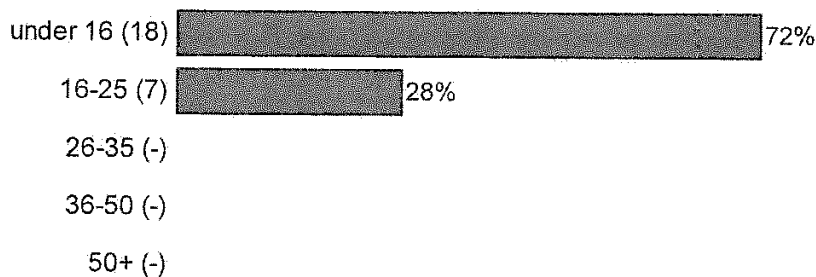
(iv) Youth Forum

This additional consultation was the second opportunity that the Youth Forum had to comment on the potential closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre. The first opportunity was afforded to the Youth Forum as part of the 2018/19 budget consultation where very little comment was made. The additional Youth Forum consultation attracted a total of 28 responses after youth workers attended a number of groups including a forum in New Tredegar, two Borough wide forum meetings and a Borough wide innovate meeting. The key graphs from the additional Youth Forum consultation are as follows:-

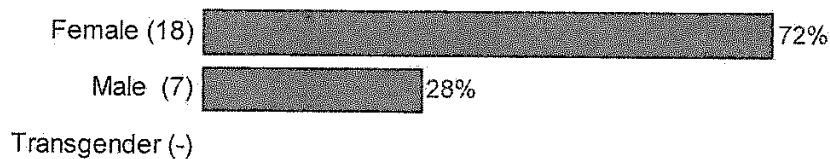
Do you use any other leisure facilities in the Caerphilly county borough area?



What is your age group



Are you



Are alternative arrangements/facilities in place to meet your needs?



Please give details of alternative arrangements below.

blackwood
I dunno
caerphilly leisure centre is close by (5 mins walk)
the rec caerphilly leisure centre
Leave the astroturf. do not close the leisure centre,
Netball, football
Have none
Have none
Have none

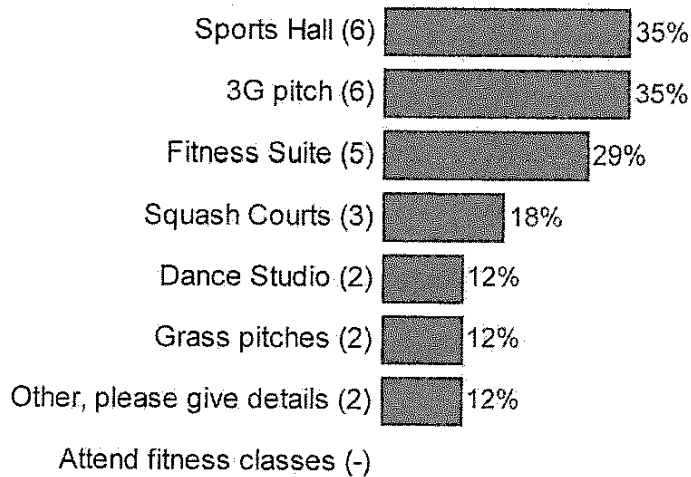
Please detail how the impact of the closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre could be further reduced?

new youth club
school uses the netball courts and dance studio/gym and 3G for pe lessons, if we didnt the school wouldnt have enough space for lessons
By not closing it!
letting people know where their nearest leisure centre is now. notify them of clubs they use i.e. dance which are close by outside of council services
have it open once a week
Dont' close it
More games
More games
More games

Are you a Caerphilly Lifestyle member?



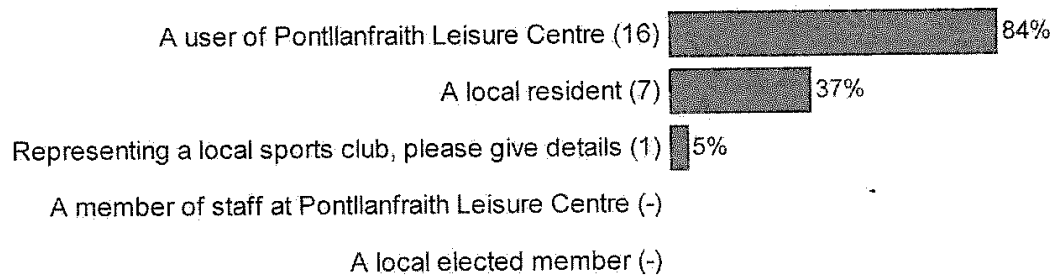
What facilities do you use at Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre? (please tick all that apply)



Please give details

- youth club
- free time
- none
- never

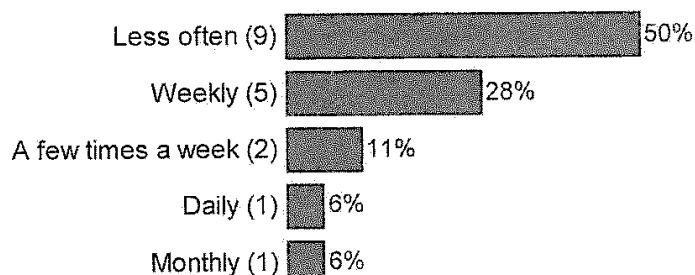
Please indicate your interest in this consultation (please tick all that apply)



Please give details

- Football
- i dont go to this leisure centre but use it at school
- youth forum
- Youth Forum Rep
- I attend inovate

How often do you use Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre?



A full breakdown of the Youth Forum responses is included at Appendix 3 to this report.

- 4.14 Although outside the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet is also advised that on 29th January 2018 a letter was received from Chris Evans MP accompanied by 84 survey forms. These survey forms had been completed by 84 individuals but no addresses were included and no comments were included in terms of the individuals' connection with the Leisure Centre (e.g. member, casual user, club coach etc).
- 4.15 All 84 survey respondents stated that they felt that the consultation process was not detailed and thorough. However, when these comments were analysed it is clearly evident that the extent of the 8 week consultation (on-line, public meetings, one to one surgeries, written forms at Centre, posters at Centre etc) has not been understood. Some of the comments made included "what consultation?", "there was none", "wasn't aware of it", "process was intimidating", "didn't go sorry", "zero communication", "was away when meetings were held".
- 4.16 Cabinet are also advised that on Thursday 15th February 2018, the Authority received formal notification of a potential judicial review being launched in relation to the Cabinet Decision made on 13th December 2017. [At the time of writing this report the Authority's legal representatives are considering the grounds cited in the letter received from the claimant's solicitor].
- 4.17 Paragraph 4.3 above outlined the items that the Scrutiny Committee were asked to have regard to during its consideration of the call-in. Officer commentary is included for two of these specific items below:-
- (i) Potential conflict with the Well-Being Objectives
- There are four key objectives within the Public Services Board Draft Well-Being Plan (positive change, positive start, positive people and positive places) supported by a number of action areas. In addition the Authority currently has five well-being objectives (tackling poverty, maximising income, improving outcomes for all learners particularly those vulnerable to under achievement, closing the gap in life expectancy for residents between the most and least deprived areas, carbon management and reducing our carbon footprint and investment in council homes to transform lives and communities). None of these objectives are explicit in terms of compelling the Authority to provide a specified number of leisure centres or outdoor sports facilities.
- (ii) Consultation with the Health, Social Care and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee, the Children's Commissioner and Young Persons Forum
- Provision of sport and leisure services is outlined in the Council's Constitution as forming part of the remit of the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee and not the Health, Social Care & Well-Being Scrutiny Committee. Consultation with the Children's Commissioner and Young Persons Forum has been outlined above in the main body of the report.
- 4.18 A number of queries have been raised in relation to the input and views of the Public Services Board. However, the terms of reference of the Public Services Board is high level and strategic and does not include involvement in local decision making.
- 4.19 The Cabinet Report of 13th December 2017 included an aspiration to develop a replacement 3G pitch at Blackwood Comprehensive School. Since this report was considered confirmation has been received from Welsh Government in relation to its funding contribution of this new 3G pitch. Consequently the Head teacher and Governing Body of Blackwood Comprehensive School are extremely pleased with this Welsh Government decision and have committed to work with the Authority in developing the new 3G pitch at the earliest practical opportunity during 2018.

- 4.20 Cabinet is also asked to consider the Scrutiny Committee recommendation that Blackwood Town Council be provided with a formal response to their detailed consultation.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sets out the sustainable development principle against which all public bodies in Wales should assess their decision-making. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the well-being of future generations through maximising the contribution public bodies make towards the well-being goals. In using the sustainable development principle it is incumbent that the authority considers the whole of the population it serves and considers the effect of its actions on future generations. The principle, also known as the five ways of working is assessed as below:

LONG TERM- The leisure estate across the whole of the authority is not sustainable in the long term due to cuts in the revenue available to the local authority. Securing the provision of sport and leisure services now and in the future requires that difficult decisions have to be made that balance short term considerations against long term sustainability. The financial climate means that this is not possible continue subsidising all sites and so decisions must be taken now to secure a sports and leisure service for future generations.

INVOLVEMENT- An extensive consultation has taken place with the community, leisure centre users and clubs, democratic representatives, young people and Welsh Government Commissioners. Views have been represented to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. Inevitably residents will wish to see as many local authority services as close to their homes as possible, and this view would be held by all communities within the county borough. In considering the closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre we have sought to mitigate the concerns by accessing funding for a new FAW approved 3 G pitch at Blackwood Comprehensive and ensuring that a programme of activity runs, and bookings can be taken to use the facilities, at Islwyn High School. The other leisure centres and sites in the area have capacity to accommodate the current users of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.

PREVENTION- The promotion of well-being now prevents need in the future and reduces demand on public services. In planning the proposed closure we have sought to maintain sports and leisure services accessibility for the community as far as is practicable.

COLLABORATION- We have collaborated with the two comprehensive schools in the area and their governing bodies to ensure access to the facilities that they can provide.

INTEGRATION- We have considered how the proposed closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre may impact on the well-being goals and in so doing have been mindful of the requirement to provide a sports and leisure offer that is still accessible at other sites.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An equalities impact assessment has been completed and is attached as Appendix 4 to this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The detailed financial implications associated with the potential closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre were included in the Cabinet report of 13th December 2017. However, since this report was considered there have been a number of other changes in the financial landscape relevant to the future of the Leisure Centre and 3G pitch.

- 7.2 In the event that the Leisure Centre remains open there will be an additional National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) liability. The Centre was previously classed as a “joint use centre” situated on a school site and as such attracted significant rate relief. The new rating valuation has recently been confirmed in lieu of the school closure which results in an increase in NNDR of £17k per annum for the Leisure Centre.
- 7.3 In addition to the increased rates liability there are costs associated with standing charges for utilities and for security of the vacated schools premises. These are currently estimated to be £12k per annum.
- 7.4 The Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate previously contributed £26k per annum for the school’s day-time use of the Leisure Centre and 3G pitch. This contribution will be completely lost in the event that the Centre remains open in 2018/19.
- 7.5 In total the anticipated annual costs of keeping the Centre open are £136k as summarised in the table below: -

	£000's
Existing net revenue budget for Centre	81
Additional NNDR liability	17
Utility charges and security of school	12
Loss of contribution from Education & Lifelong Learning	26
TOTAL: -	136

- 7.6 The 2018/19 Budget Proposals presented to Council on the 22nd February 2018 highlighted that alternative savings would need to be identified during the 2018/19 financial year in the event of the proposed closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre not proceeding. At the Council meeting the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance & Governance announced that the decision in respect of the proposed closure had been deferred at that time and that a report would be prepared outlining what savings would need to be reinstated in the 2018/19 financial year to meet the net operating costs of the Centre, pending a final decision on its future.
- 7.7 Cabinet will recall that the 2018/19 Budget Proposals presented to Council on the 22nd February 2018 recommended that savings totalling £537k should be deferred as summarised in the table below: -

Deferred Savings Proposal	£000's
Language Support in Primary Schools (vacant posts)	66
Reduction in School Improvement Initiatives budget	120
Introduction of charges for Rat Treatments	20
Deletion of vacant Community Safety Warden posts	40
Reduction in Air Quality/Contaminated Land budget	15
Partial reduction in proposed saving on Highways Maintenance	212
Introduction of charges for all bulky waste	50
Reduction in Traffic Signal Maintenance budget	11
Reduction in Tree Maintenance budget	3
TOTAL: -	537

- 7.8 As detailed in paragraph 7.5 of this report the annual revenue costs of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre now stand at £136k. Until such time as a final decision is made on the future of the Centre it is recommended that the following deferred savings proposals are reinstated for the 2018/19 financial year: -

- Language Support in Primary Schools (vacant posts) - £66k
- Partial reduction in proposed saving on Highways Maintenance to be reduced from £212k to £142k.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The personnel implications have been outlined in the previous reports to the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
- 8.2 There have been no changes to the personnel implications that were previously outlined.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 The original and additional consultation undertaken is outlined in the main body of the report above.
- 9.2 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Cabinet is asked to consider whether it wishes to:-
- (i) Re-affirm its decision of 13th December 2017; or
 - (ii) Make a new decision based on the additional consultation and other facts outlined in this report; or
 - (iii) Defer the decision (to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre) taken on 13th December 2017 and consider the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre later in 2018 once the 10 year Sport and Leisure Strategy for Authority has been adopted.
 - (iv) Write to Blackwood Town Council in accordance with the recommendation of Scrutiny Committee.
- 10.2 In the event that recommendation 10.1(iii) is supported then Cabinet is asked to endorse a recommendation to Council that deferred savings totalling £136k as detailed in paragraph 7.8 of this report are reinstated until such time as a final decision on the future of the Centre is made.

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Consultees: Councillor Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services
Jeff Reynolds, Sport & Leisure Facilities Manager
Steve Harris, Interim Head of Corporate Finance
Lisa Lane, Corporate Solicitor
Richard Harris, Internal Audit Manager
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager
Lynne Donovan, Acting Head of HR & Organisational Development
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Policy and Public Protection
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sue Richards, Interim Head of Education, Planning, Strategy and Resources

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

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Original Consultation Analysis Report
- Appendix 2 Consultation response from Offices of the Children’s Commissioner & Future Generations Commissioner, and Blackwood Town Council
- Appendix 3 Breakdown of Youth Forum response to consultation
- Appendix 4 Equalities Impact Assessment