

From: Emma Curtis [REDACTED]@childcomwales.org.uk]
 Sent: 30 January 2018 10:27
 To: Sharma, Elizabeth
 Subject: RE: Consultation on the proposed closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre

Dear Liz

Thank you for your email to the Commissioner,
 As the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales we are unable to respond to consultations in respect of local funding— such interventions could prejudice the Commissioner's independent status.
 However as you have taken the time to contact us we would like to take the opportunity to highlight two points in relation to the existing requirements under the Local Authority's framework and its relationship with Children's Rights. It may be useful for you to be aware that where we are contacted by members of the public in relation to matters such as this we would also make them aware of these points and may consider following up concerns related to these.

- 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 effecting 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 effect them such as this.

You may be aware that recently the Children's Commissioner has published - "The Right Way" A Children's Rights Approach. This guide is designed to help public bodies to meet their duties. The approach is about placing the UNCRC at the core of planning and service delivery and integrating children's rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice. We are conscious that many Local Authorities are already undertaking excellent work in respect of some aspects of the approach on a whole, departmental or service level. I hope this document is useful and that you may like to share it and raise in relevant forums.

Kind Regards.

Emma

Emma Curtis

Cynghorydd Polisi | Policy Adviser

Comisiynydd Plant Cymru | Children's Commissioner for Wales

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth a galwadau yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a galwadau a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd cysylltu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi | We welcome receiving correspondence and calls in Welsh. We will respond to correspondence and calls in Welsh, and contacting us in Welsh will not lead to delay.

From: Sharma, Elizabeth [REDACTED]@CAERPHILLY.GOV.UK]

Sent: 23 January 2018 12:04

To: Post <Post@childcomwales.org.uk>

Subject: Consultation on the proposed closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to you in regard to a consultation on the proposed closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre within the county borough of Caerphilly.

Following an extended period of consultation with the local community during October and November 2017, it has been proposed that the consultation should be extended to a wider stakeholder group including yourself for further comment.

The following link will take you to the public consultation page on our website

<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/involved/Consultations/Proposed-closure-of-Pontllanfraith-Leisure-Centre>

I have also attached a copy of the Cabinet report outlining the proposals and a copy of a survey for your information. If you have any comments, I would very much appreciate if you could return any these to me by midday on 7th

February 2018.

Kind regards

Liz Sharma

Swyddog Ymgynghori ac Ymgysylltu â'r Cyhoedd | Consultation and Public Engagement Officer

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili | Caerphilly County Borough Council

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Mae'r e-bost hwn ac unrhyw ffeiliau sy'n atodol yn gyfrinachol a dim ond ar gyfer defnydd yr unigolyn neu'r sefydliad y cyfeiriwyd atynt. Os ydych wedi derbyn yr e-bost hwn ar gam rhwch wybod i reolwr eich system. Nodwch fod unrhyw sylwadau neu farn o fewn testun yr e-bost yw sylwadau a barn yr awdur yn unig ac nid yn angenrheidiol yn cynrychioli barn Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili. I orffen, dylai'r person sy'n derbyn yr e-bost sicrhau nad oes firws ynghlwm nac mewn unrhyw ddogfen atodol i'r e-bost. Nid yw'r Cyngor yn derbyn unrhyw gyfrifoldeb am unrhyw ddifrod achoswyd gan unrhyw firws sy'n cael ei drosglwyddo gan yr e-bost hwn. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg, Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog (yn unol â'ch dewis), ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill. Cewch ymateb yn unol â'ch dewis iaith os nodwch hynny i ni, ac ni fydd cyfathrebu â ni yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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We welcome correspondence in English, Welsh or bilingually (according to your choice) or in other languages and formats. We will respond in your declared chosen language, and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to any delay.



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**Future
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By email

19/02/2018

RE: Consultation on the proposed closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you for your invitation to respond to the extended consultation on the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.

I have seen in the press that you have decided to postpone your decision for now.

I have received letters from members of the public relating to this issue and also decisions relating to the closure of other sports facilities in the county. I monitor all correspondence I receive to seek to detect any systemic issue which can arise.

As you are aware, the Well-being of Future Generations Act gives a legally-binding common purpose and the seven well-being goals set out a full picture of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being for Welsh Government, local authorities including Caerphilly County Borough Council, local health boards and other specified public bodies. It details the ways in which specified public bodies must work to improve the well-being of Wales and it also requires them to set well-being objectives that enable them to maximise their contribution to the seven well-being goals.

The Act also provides for better decision-making by ensuring that those public bodies adopt the five ways of working: taking account of the long-term, helping to prevent problems occurring or getting worse, taking an integrated and collaborative approach, and considering and involving a diverse range of people. These ways of working are a very important part of the Act as they are about how public bodies need to work differently to make better decisions for future generations. Whilst there is no hierarchy within the five ways of working, involving citizens and community groups in decisions that affect them is crucial to achieving long-lasting change and the Act makes clear that the way public bodies involve people should reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves. Collaboration and integration include a consideration the impact of decisions or policies on the work or delivery of services in the area by others which might sit or not on the public service board, as another example.

As Future Generations Commissioner, I have a general duty to promote the sustainable development principle (including the five ways of working), to act as a guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and to encourage public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of the things that they do. As you

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know, while I do not have a case-work function to provide support to individual cases I cannot get involved in every consultation, the Act does give me the power to provide advice and assistance to public bodies and public services boards and promote and encourage them to consider the long-term impact of what they do and meet their well-being objectives. It is within this context that I provide the following comments.

As Caerphilly County Borough Council is directly covered by the Act, it is important that you apply the sustainable development principle (outlined above) in your work and show how the decision you are taking makes progress towards achieving the well-being goals through your well-being objectives, which includes a Healthy Wales.

To support this process, in collaboration with the Welsh Government, we have recently designed a Future Generations Framework for Service Design to help public bodies to use the Act. I attach it [here](#) as it could be useful to you. The framework can be used by those who design and oversee the provision of services, like leisure services, to prompt thought, have structured discussions, and make decisions to ensure services are resilient and are seeking to improve all four aspects of people's well-being (economic, social, environmental, cultural) now and in the future.

The tool provides a guide for public bodies to think through what the five ways of working mean in practice for services, setting out a series of questions to stimulate structured discussions and enable organisations to make decisions about how they work. We recognise that considering the ways of working throughout the design and delivery of services will, for many public bodies, involve a radical change of working practices. The tool has been developed by a cross-public service leadership group, and tested with practitioners representing a full range of public services. Early findings indicate it will be helpful in a range of ways; from planning a new service; reviewing an existing service; or articulating (and sharing) good practice which is already happening.

The tool is designed to be used flexibly, and adapted according to the particular circumstances being explored. This is an offer to use such tools, rather than an expectation - it is for you to decide if it will be of assistance to you, how you use it, and who to involve. My team would be happy to discuss this in more detail, provide support for using the tool, and would be pleased to hear experiences of using it in practice so it can be refined and made most useful to you. We are keen this should continue to be developed through use. Please contact Heledd Morgan (Heledd.Morgan@futuregenerations.wales) to discuss further.

There are a number of other tools in development that aim to support you in using the Act as a framework for thinking in different contexts. In particular, we have also developed a '[Future Generations Framework for projects](#)', which has been designed to assist public bodies to use the five ways of working and maximise contribution to the seven national well-being goals when designing, developing and reviewing projects.

With specific focus on Pontllanfraith, the letters that we received raised concerns around the integration and involvement of the decision-making process. As I am keen to empower individuals and community groups in understanding how they can use the Act to challenge public bodies, I suggested that they ask the following questions:

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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.

For example, how have the relevant authorities involved people (e.g. residents, community groups, sport providers, health professionals and school children) in discussing how they can improve the health of people in the area, specifically, different options for sport facilities? How have they evidenced that they have responded to what people have told them and has the process been transparent? Have they made sure that the people involved reflect the diversity of the area which the authority serves?

Long Term - The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

For example, how will the loss of the facilities affect the well-being of the people of your area in the long term? How will it affect what your area looks and feels like in the year 2040 (a generations' time)? How have the relevant authorities identified the long-term trends that are most relevant to this issue (for instance, inequalities in health, obesity, youth disengagement). Are the underlying assumptions about future trends that the current provision is based on realistic? What impact does this proposal have on these trends?

Prevention - How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

For example, how will the loss of the training facilities exacerbate problems that the local community faces - social, economic, cultural, environmental? Does the leisure centre support breaking negative cycles such as poverty, poor health or health inequalities? What are the conflicts emerging between different aspects of well-being and sustainability and how have these been resolved?

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.

For example, how will the loss of leisure facilities impact on economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being – it cannot focus on one of these areas, at the expense of the others. Has the decision connected different areas of public policy agendas to generate multiple benefits? Does it impact on both the Council's well-being objectives and the work of the Caerphilly public services board so far? How will this decision impact of the work and service delivery of other organisations in the areas considering organisation on the Public Service Board and beyond?

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.

For example, have the relevant authorities thought about how it could work in collaboration with other organisations - including public, private and third sector organisations, in finding a solution?

Under the Act, I have a duty to assess and monitor the extent to which Caerphilly County Borough Council meet its well-being objectives and I take into account the issues raised in public correspondence sent to me in my assessment and monitoring. One of your objectives is specifically focused on promoting the benefits of an active



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and healthy lifestyle (p. 10-12). Under the Act, public bodies must take all reasonable steps to meet their objectives.

Finally, for completeness, I attach our advice to Caerphilly public services board on their well-being assessment and on their draft well-being plan in case this could be of use to you. The draft well-being plan has objectives and steps relating to asset management with partners, preventative approaches to health and social care and increasing community resilience. One of the issues raised with us in public correspondence was the frustration that the Chair of the public services board (PSB) was not allowing the issue of Pontllanfraith to be raised at a PSB meeting. Whereas we understand that it is not practicable for every single issue to come through the public services board, PSB members could ask themselves what impact an important decision would have on other stakeholders and partners, and indeed on the work of the public services board so far. For example, the closure of the leisure centre could impact on the local health board and Public Health Wales.

I hope that you will find this response useful. Thank you again for getting in touch.

Yours sincerely,



Marie Brousseau-Navarro
Director of Policy, Legislation and Innovation

p.p.



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Blackwood Town Council

Response to Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre

November 2017

1. Introduction & Recommendation

1.1 Blackwood Town Council has been asked to provide its views on Caerphilly County Borough Council's proposals to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre, demolish the facilities and profit by selling the land to private sector housing developers for the purposes of realising a one-off capital receipt payment.

We do so with a deep sense of concern.

1.2. Members are of the opinion that the Leisure Centre is a very popular community facility and as evidenced in the Cabinet report, is extremely well-used. More importantly members noted that the Centre is also one of the *lowest subsidised of all* leisure centres in the Borough, with the exciting potential to increase income streams and new business through new public and partner daytime usage following the closure of Pontllanfraith Comprehensive.

1.3. At a recent Special Meeting of Blackwood Town Council members were **unanimous in their opposition to the proposed closure** of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and that Caerphilly County Borough Council should **continue to operate and maintain** the Leisure Centre.

1.4. **Blackwood Town Council is of the view** that should the Cabinet, regrettably be *mind*ed to agree with their officers recommendations, then there is a third way the Cabinet *should agree to instead of closure*.

This is discussed in further detail in sections 7.9 and 8.2 below.

2. Links to National Strategy:

2.1. Members have grave concerns that the proposed closure and the way in which the proposal has been expedited, would in fact be contrary to the following Welsh Government Acts:

- **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**
- **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

2.2. *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*

This Act states that local councils have a duty to support vulnerable young adults in Group 3 by:

- Helping with a young adult's **well-being**

2.3. Providing access to community-based services (non-statutory or otherwise) that help to maintain or improve health and well-being and is within reasonable walking distance for those most vulnerable within society who *A. do not own a car or B. subsist on extremely low disposable income levels*, is an undeniably important role for a local authority and as such, access to affordable local leisure provision can help a young person immensely in managing their health and well-being and *for those reasons alone is vitally important*.

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

This Act emphasises the importance of our communities being:

- Prosperous
- Resilient
- Healthier
- More equal
- Cohesive

2.5. Perhaps more importantly in the context of the proposed closure of Pontllanfriath Leisure Centre, the Act talks about how public bodies like Caerphilly County Borough Council now have a duty to think about and publically state how they:

- Work together with others
- Involve people in making decisions

3. Analysis:

3.1. *Blackwood Town Council is of the view that the proposed closure conflicts with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in the following ways:*

3.2. A Prosperous Community

The *Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation* evidences very low levels of income locally. Pontllanfraith 2 is in the top 10% **of the most deprived communities in Wales** in terms of both the Household Income and Employment indicators (out of 1,909 communities) and as such provides a *very strong argument for maintaining this local community facility.*

3.3. A Resilient Community

Pontllanfraith has recently seen the closure of the *County's Civic Centre, the Caerphilly Music Services HQ, Pontllanfraith Comprehensive and now potentially it's Leisure Centre and surrounding public open spaces*, all to housing development. **The long-term cumulative effects of such a large-scale local authority service exodus is biting deep and its long-term consequences should not be underestimated.**

Nor should the short-term goal of realising *capital receipts* be the determining factor in this decision as the Department's report principally campaigns for. **A tipping-point** where local resilience cannot realistically be maintained, will be reached should the Leisure Centre close.

3.4 A Healthier Community

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation also evidences high levels of poor health locally. Pontllanfraith 2 is in the top 25% of the most deprived communities in Wales in terms of poor health.

The closure of Pontllanfriath Leisure Centre *will only serve to make this situation worse*, removing an established, well-used and popular centre of health and well-being *in easy walking distance to communities suffering from poverty and deprivation* flies in the face of the values and expectations expressed in both of the Welsh Government Acts referenced above and the Caerphilly Public Service Board's emerging Plan.

3.5 A More Equal Community

With a combined population of 17,048, the communities of Pontllanfraith and Blackwood represent a strategically important and significantly large population cluster around this Leisure Centre and this is demonstrated by the centre's usage data. Relocating (and reducing) provision outside of this large population cluster *will be detrimental to our most vulnerable residents.*

3.6. We reject the Department's assertion that Leisure Centre users will be easily able to travel to reduced provision elsewhere (the so-called 5x20 Rule). *Cabinet should note that the gulf in car ownership between the poorest and the most prosperous residents in Pontllanfraith who do not own a car is striking - 31% and 9% respectively.*

3.7. Therefore we believe that the proposed closure will *have its greatest impact on those who are the most vulnerable within our society* and who have no personal transport to mitigate the effects of costly, uncertain and time-limited public transport and the impossible to navigate on foot (at the distances expected) steep topography of our valley communities, whose road transport links are generally North/South as opposed to East/West and whose street designs and lighting is generally unsuitable for long-distance walking.

3.8. As mentioned above, there exists in both communities an extremely large variance in poverty and prosperity. Income levels in Pontllanfraith range from the top 10% **most deprived** in Wales to the top 4% **most prosperous**, the closure of the Leisure Centre will only serve *to further widen this gap.*

3.9. That is worth repeating, the loss of local provision *will not merely reduce* accessible and affordable community services to all, *but it will increase the poverty-gap* between our poorest and most prosperous residents.

3.10. This report also notes that *hundreds of skilled professional jobs have been relocated out of Pontllanfraith or lost through natural wastage* by the local authority through the closure of local authority buildings and services in Pontllanfraith over the last 18 months. (See 3.3 above and 3.11 below)

3.11. A Cohesive Community

Communities lose their cohesion when local services *are no longer local*. The Civic Centre was a vitally important service access point for residents from both Blackwood and Pontllanfraith. The closure of the local comprehensive school was a hammer blow to parents, grandparents, the community and most importantly the pupils themselves who fought so gallantly to turn the school around and keep it open and who now have to travel out of Pontllanfraith for their education on diesel and petrol emitting vehicles daily.

3.12. However, **Blackwood Town Council is of the view** that should the Cabinet be unfortunately minded to agree with their officers recommendations, then we clearly state *there is a third way*. This is discussed in further detail in sections 7.9 and 8.2 below.

4. A Healthier Wales – further analysis

4.1 Blackwood Town Council is of the view that should the closure proceed, there appears to be serious doubt whether the Islwyn High School facility could in fact have the capacity to take all existing users. Members also understand that the school has already entered into ‘gentlemen’s agreements with clubs and teams currently not using Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and therefore existing users of the 3G facility in Pontllanfraith will have *nowhere to go*.

This in fact highlights the huge unmet demand for 3G provision currently within the Borough, provision which will be severely damaged should the 3G facility at Pontllanfraith be closed without replacement.

4.2. With communities in close proximity to the centre having a relatively low car ownership, as mentioned in 3.6. above (compared with more affluent areas), there are concerns that *current users* would be deterred from continuing a physically active lifestyle, due to the difficulties and costs of public transport in accessing the somewhat isolated new school site and other venue’s in the Borough.

4.3. Blackwood Town Council reiterates its opposition to the Cabinet report and the Department’s assertion at consultation meetings that local people *can easily travel* to Cefn Fforest, Islwyn High, Heolddu and Newbridge, as this fails to take both our most deprived residents and the unforgiving valleys topography into account. Current Leisure Centre users without cars will simply be unable to access provision further afield.

4.4. This coupled with the loss of one of only two competition level 3G pitches in the Borough (funded and accredited by FAW) is a major *regional* concern. The current problems with facilities at the Centre of Sporting Excellence at Ystrad Mynach and *no guarantee or timetable regarding funding* any proposed replacement at Blackwood Comprehensive seems a recipe for disaster, with numerous teams and hundreds of individuals likely to suffer, potentially lose income, membership and even league status in the interim. For them *the winding up of their clubs and activities is a very real operational risk*.

4.5. **A Wales of Cohesive Communities** – Blackwood Town Council recognises that the current facility is at the heart of the community, and already delivers a well-connected, socially diverse and engaged community hub. The Leisure Centre’s closure, demolition and asset sale would decimate this.

4.6 **A Globally Responsive Wales** – the current high usage rates of the Centre is testament to the fact that the local community are already successfully attempting to lead a healthy, physically active lifestyle, and closure certainly would not guarantee the continuation of this but would, with the access problems already identified, **likely lead to a significant reduction in community engagement in healthy living activities.**

5. The Conflict with the Caerphilly Public Service Board's Draft Well-being Plan

5.1. Blackwood Town Council notes that Caerphilly County Borough Council is one of four statutory partners of the Caerphilly PSB and therefore notes *with particular concern* that this rushed proposal to close the Leisure Centre *is in direct conflict with* the following Caerphilly Public Service Board's emerging priorities:

The Caerphilly We Want Draft Well-being Plan:-

- **Positive People** - Empowering and enabling all our residents to achieve their own potential
- **Positive Places** - Enabling our communities to be resilient and sustainable
- **Positive Change** - A shared commitment to cross-sectoral change

5.2. These shared commitments *must be more than words* on a strategic partner document and **Blackwood Town Council as your critical friend and local authority partner**, calls for these principles (detailed further under section 9. below) to be adhered to and enacted when considering the future of Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre.

5.3. However, one priority above all is worth detailing here:

- To support our most disadvantaged communities to be resilient, cohesive and enable them to help themselves

6. The Financial Argument

6.1. Blackwood Town Council is of the view that *the financial implications in the Cabinet report are somewhat confusing and incomplete*. Members rightly point out that the Borough took the decision only last month to spend **over £3million** for demolition of the former much loved Islwyn Civic Centre and the schools at Pontllanfraith (which included the CCBC Music Service headquarters) and Oakdale.

Now to propose an additional **£325,000** to demolish the Leisure Centre *rather than spend £262,000* on Operational Costs & Maintenance Backlog Costs to keep the Leisure Centre as a thriving hub of the community is we believe a curious and strategically ill-considered move in such a short timescale.

6.2. Blackwood Town Council also queries the financial competency of proposing to spend **£500,000** on a new 3G Pitch (if monies can be found) rather than reinvest an additional £200,000 in 2020-2022 to retain the currently FAW endorsed pitch at Pontllanfraith.

6.3. Blackwood Town Council is gravely concerned that the County's planned maintenance and asset replacement policy at the Leisure Centre has been somewhat absent from the usual expectations of managerial financial planning for some years now if these maintenance liabilities are only now coming to light and indeed appear to be costs highlighted for *the future* as opposed to a statement of on-going prudent financial year-on-year budgeting.

7. Under "**Reasons for the Recommendations**" of the original Cabinet report

7.1. Cabinet Report Recommendation '11.1'

7.2. Blackwood Town Council is of the view that the closure proposal appears to be entirely based on the need to realise the full capital receipt potential *rather* than the health and well-being needs of the local community and members are eager to know what the **Caerphilly Public Services Board's view** on these proposals are as they are in direct conflict with the majority of the PSB's emerging draft priorities.

As such we will be writing to the **Caerphilly Public Service Board** separately to ask them to examine any decision to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre and how it may conflict against their emerging priorities.

Additionally, we will be writing to the **Future Generations Commissioner for Wales** to seek her comments on the Departments report and our concerns as expressed in this consultation response and of course to ask her to undertake a review to examine any decision to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre in the context of the *Well-being of Future Generations Act*.

7.3. Cabinet Report Recommendation ‘11.2’

7.4. Blackwood Town Council is of the view that to allow for the smooth transition of current users to Islwyn High School **without** a loss of service is wishful thinking at best and naïve ill-considered guesswork at worst –some very serious questions remain unanswered, how can this be so when the 3G Pitch at the school cannot accommodate any more users than have already been agreed to date and that there is *no guarantee of a replacement 3G pitch at Blackwood Comprehensive any time soon.*

7.5. Cabinet Report Recommendation ‘11.3’

7.6. The Caerphilly Adventures Outdoor Education Service has survived *and thrived* at the existing site, members ask, why wasn’t Cwmcarn considered when they moved from Ynys Hywel initially and why should what seems a *profitable* service not continue on site and assist the Centre’s overall prosperity?

7.7. Blackwood Town Council is of the view that *the timing of this report is as a direct result* of the need for a speedy decision linked to the demolition of the Civic Centre & School Sites, *to the detriment* it seems of all else, especially the local community.

7.8. The report states the emerging Sport & Leisure Services strategy, whilst not fully adopted, does not recognise Pontllanfraith as a potential Leisure Centre.

7.9. That being said, Blackwood Town Council is of the view that any decision on closure *should be seen* in the context of the overall County Borough Strategy *once* agreed by Council and the ability (and responsibility) *to actively engage and empower the local community towards possible asset transfer and community ownership options* and not as a convenient opportunity to asset-strip through demolition and land-sale a successful Leisure Centre with the apparent primary objective of maximising capital receipts.

8. It is therefore recommended by Blackwood Town Council that:

8.1. Caerphilly County Borough Council **Continue to Maintain and Operate** the Leisure Centre in Pontllanfraith.

8.2. However, under the already agreed principals of “*Building Resilient Communities*” and “*Positive Places – Enabling our communities to be resilient and sustainable*”, if Cabinet members vote to close the Leisure Centre, **Blackwood Town Council as a statutory partner of the County Borough formerly requests** that the decision Cabinet makes would be to *defer closure to enable a six to twelve month grace period to enable discussions to take place* with:

- The local Community
- Leisure Centre users and groups
- Partners and other stakeholders

8.3. To explore the potential Asset Transfer of the Leisure Centre to community ownership and to enable all interested parties as described above to develop the most appropriate legal charitable operational model and to explore additional funding routes to ensure such a transfer of assets takes place.

8.4. Blackwood Town Council to formally write to the **Caerphilly Public Service Board** to request that the Board examine any decision to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre that does not also allow for the investigation of asset transfer and community ownership of the Leisure Centre and how such a decision to close may conflict with the Public Service Board’s emerging priorities.

8.5. Blackwood Town Council to formally write to the **Future Generations Commissioner for Wales** to seek her comments on the Departments report and our concerns as expressed in this consultation response and to request that The Commissioner undertake a review (see powers at Appendix A) to examine any decision to close Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre that does not also allow for the timely and thorough investigation of asset transfer and community ownership of the Leisure Centre and how such a decision to close may conflict with the principals and expectations as laid down in the *& Well-being of Future Generations Act*.

9. Reasons for Blackwood Town Council's Recommendations:

9.1. To enable Caerphilly County Borough Council to work in partnership with the local community and others to discharge its commitments and ambitions in accordance with the following National, regional and local strategic objectives:-

- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- The Caerphilly Public Service Boards:-

The Caerphilly We Want - Draft Well-being Plan:-

Positive Change – A shared commitment to cross-sectoral change

- Provide leadership to facilitate organisational culture change, and shift to new ways of working, aligning corporate priorities in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle
- Use our assets and resources more intelligently and sustainably
- Support our residents and partners to contribute fully to the Caerphilly we all want

Positive People – Empowering and enabling all our residents to achieve their own potential

- Facilitate a shift towards collaborative working with an emphasis on prevention to address current and future health and well-being challenges.
- Develop a co-ordinated programme of volunteering, maximising it as a route to personal well-being and employment
- Equip our residents to manage their physical and mental health and well-being needs in partnership with services

Positive Places - Enabling our communities to be resilient and sustainable

- Support our most disadvantaged communities to be resilient, cohesive and enable them to help themselves
- Work with regional partners to create safe, confident communities and promote community cohesion.
- Increase the contribution that the environment makes to the health and well-being of our residents.

9.2. Blackwood Town Council is of the view that the Cabinet allow for reflection on both Acts and on the emerging priorities of the Caerphilly Public Service Board, whose joint partnership approach of all public sector organisations ***supports the rights of local communities to develop local solutions to local challenges, which includes local service delivery and ownership of community assets.***

End of report.

Circulation List:

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cabinet Members, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Pontllanfraith Ward Members
Blackwood Ward Members
Blackwood Town Councillors
Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee Members

The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Caerphilly Public Service Board Members