

Caerphilly Public Services Board Annual Report 2021/22




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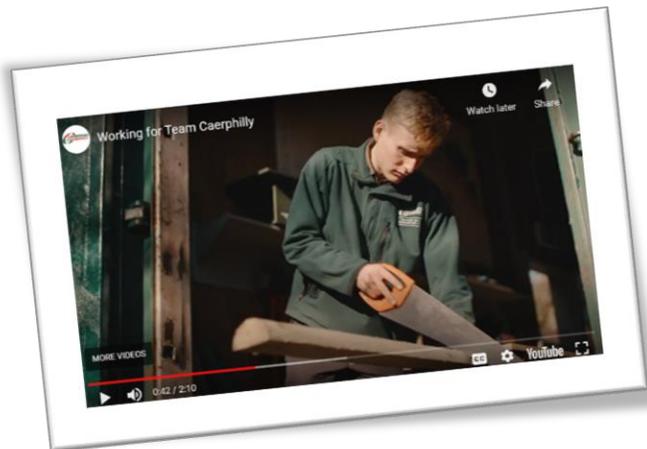
IT'S IMPORTANT LOCAL RESIDENTS FEEL SAFE IN THEIR HOMES AND THE AREAS IN WHICH THEY LIVE.

THE SAFER STREETS PROJECT IS ENABLING US TO OFFER ADDITIONAL SECURITY MEASURES TO THOSE WHO NEED THEM IN PILLGWENLLY AND RHYMNEY.

IMPROVED DOOR LOCKS, MORE CCTV, ADDITIONAL STREET LIGHTING AND CRIME PREVENTION PACKS ARE JUST SOME OF THE WAYS LOCAL OFFICERS ARE TACKLING NEIGHBOURHOOD CRIMES IN THIS SAFER STREETS PROJECT.

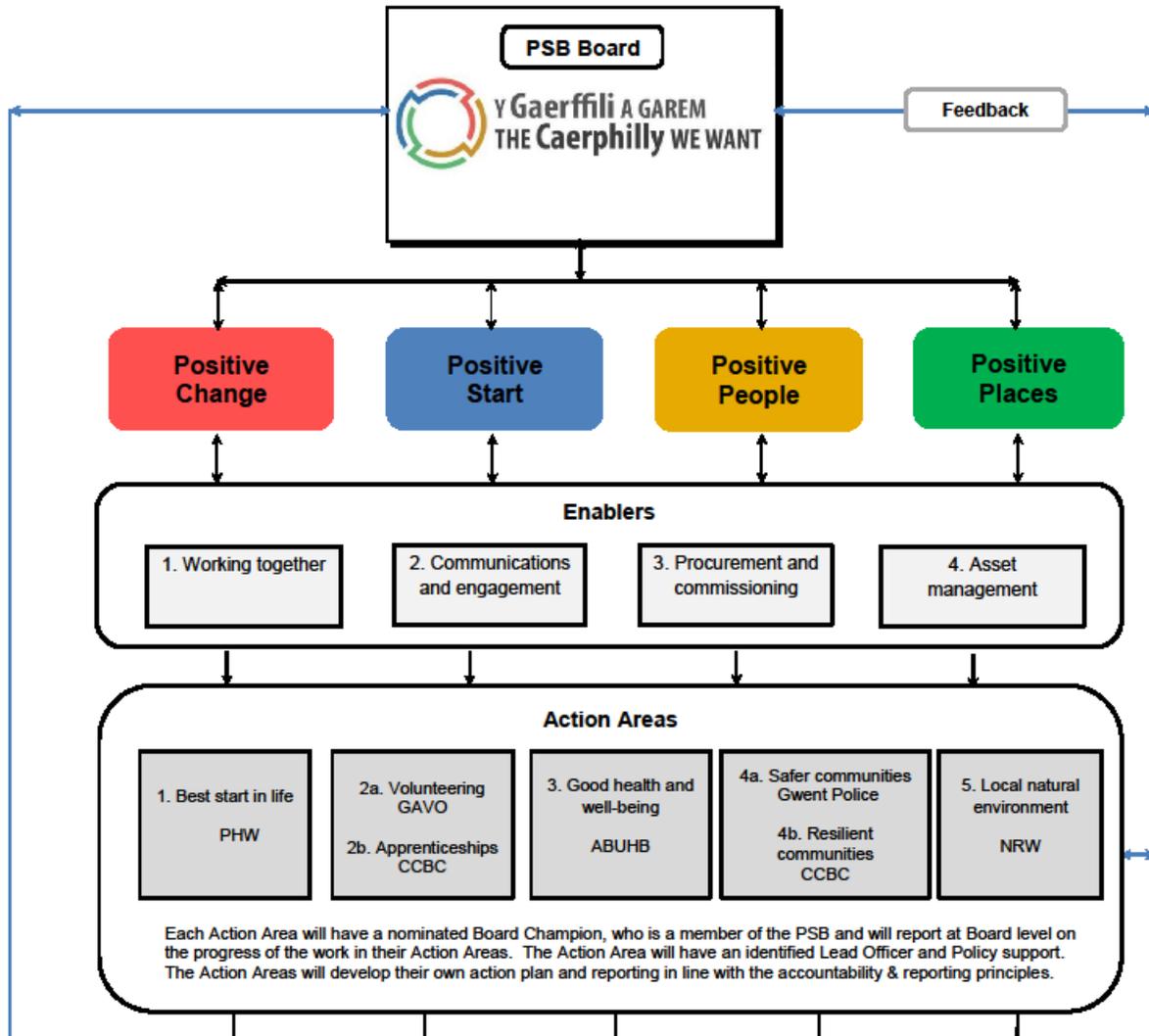
DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE - AMANDA BLAKEMAN

AMODRIFYN & THARWELI MEDDWL
PROTECTING AND REASSURING



The 'Caerphilly We Want' Well-being Plan

The Well-being Plan sets four overarching Objectives (the four Positives) – Positive Change, Positive Start, Positive People and Positive Places. This framework sets out how the work to achieve these Objectives (the Plan) was structured, managed and monitored. These are supported and underpinned by four Enablers and this is illustrated in the diagram below:



The Plan was originally made up of six Action Areas, but as we implemented the Plan, we concluded that additional needs required the addition of a new Action Area, and therefore the "Caerphilly Cares" Action Area has been included this year. This Annual Report is structured to reflect these Action Areas and Enablers as set out below - you can click on the relevant heading and go straight to the individual section of the report in detail if you choose.

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We have also given a separate update on the following which is crosscutting across several of the main Activity Areas:

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Introduction from Leader of Caerphilly County Borough Council, Cllr Sean Morgan

It gives me great pleasure to endorse the Caerphilly Public Services Board's (PSB) fourth and final Annual Report in its current guise, highlighting the progress partners have made against our 'Caerphilly We Want' Wellbeing Plan for 2018-2023. This year's report covers a seven month period – from 1st October 2021, as previous reporting timelines (in 2020 and 2021) were altered, rightly, as a result of the Covid pandemic.

I continue to be impressed by the many examples of how all partners have continued to respond to the challenges that have presented themselves, not least the recovery phase of the pandemic and of course the current cost of living crisis, which is impacting whole communities, not least our residents in most need of support.

While we continue to report on the progress made against the 'Caerphilly We Want' Wellbeing Plan for 2018-2023 to reach this plan's conclusion, we have, over recent months, enjoyed collaborating with our regional partners and forming a Gwent Public Services Board.

While the Gwent Public Services Board provides a simplified and streamlined model, as well as closer alignment to other existing regional board, local delivery groups are established within each local authority area and will continue to deliver against the wellbeing objectives for Gwent at a Caerphilly specific, local level.

As you'll be aware, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act places a duty on Public Services Boards to produce an Assessment of Wellbeing every five years. Colleagues from across the Gwent region have been and continue to work tirelessly to develop this assessment process for the whole of Gwent, with delivery plans for the five local authority areas of Gwent also being included. This will be published by 5th May 2023, and I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all concerned for undertaking this significant piece of work.

I look forward to working with colleagues from across a broad spectrum of the public and community sectors, both regionally and locally over the coming months, and am sure you will find the content and many examples of excellent progress contained within this report as impressive as I have.



Cllr Sean Morgan,
Leader – Caerphilly County Borough Council

Action Area 1 - Best start in life

During the last five years substantive progress has been made in the Gwent Early Years Integration Transformation Programme work. Originally the work started with the First Thousand Days, Children First, and trauma informed work around impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences. This quickly changed in 2018/19 into the system change work of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme.

Stakeholders across the system (families, professionals, funding bodies, organisations) recognised the complexity of the system developed through multiple different funding streams. And the criteria meant that some vulnerable families in need of support were not able to access it and others relied on intervention services instead of using their own strengths, family networks and support available in their local community. Organisations were offering a diverse menu of services and support but often unable to adapt the support to meet family needs due to the prescriptive nature of the menu offered and monitored.

The system change work has been designed to identify and build upon the family and community strengths to respond to “What Matters” to the family members. This shows the importance of voluntary sector organisations and community groups.

In Caerphilly, funding streams have been brought together to create integrated Early Years teams, bringing a range of skills and experiences together to support families and communities to build their resilience and removing barriers of postcodes or assessment criteria. Staff within these teams have been given permission to use their skills in a more tailored manner to address What Matters for the family to meet their needs/priorities: - spending more time tackling root causes and preventing a revolving door of re-referrals for support.

The findings from the pilot project in the north of the county borough have informed and energised system changes, guiding the way to a county borough wide Early Years’ Service base on need.

The Caerphilly Early Years Hub acts as a pivotal expert resource to have the What Matters conversations with families to identify the right worker to work alongside them to meet their needs. This was in addition to continuing to centrally process childcare placement applications and centralise information of early years and childcare using the Dewis database. Information for families and staff has been made more accessible through the new [Caerphilly Early Years and Childcare website](#) which joins with the ABUHB Healthier Together website. An electronic App, Midwifery Notes, for families expecting a baby, is also being developed.

The next stages are to evaluate the implementation and impact of the changes made, to understand if the system is better for families and staff. Work is ongoing to measure how we make a difference to families. A major priority is to further develop information sharing between partners, to meet the request from families to only tell their story once and to reduce

frustration and duplication of efforts for all involved. This time can be better spent with families.

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Action Area 2a – Volunteering

The Volunteering Action Area remains a key part of the partnership work in the county borough to address the priorities of the Caerphilly We Want Well-being Plan.

The Buddy Scheme initiative between Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) and Caerphilly county Borough Council to employ a Volunteer Coordinator to recruit and manage a pool of volunteers to support the most vulnerable in the community continued. Utilising staff volunteers who had been the mainstay of the scheme initially, and community volunteers who were recruited in the latter stages to replace people returning to their jobs. The scheme in reducing the support as pandemic restrictions were lifted sought to work with organisations that had set up to provide community support such as Risca CV19UK and The Parish Trust to ensure that vulnerable citizens had alternative support as the project withdrew.

The Employer Supported Volunteering element of the Action Area was launched by CCBC during October and has grown steadily since. It utilises the Volunteering Wales system to advertise Caerphilly based volunteering opportunities that council staff can undertake and works with the Buddy Scheme and is supported by officers from both organisations.

In an effort to support third sector organisations to reopen their buildings to the public safely and with confidence, GAVO and partners were successful in a bid to the reinstated Volunteering in Wales Fund. The project enabled community buildings to undertake a full risk assessment and provided them with guidance and ongoing support to re-open and restart activities.

The Volunteering Action Area has retained links with other priorities within the Well-being Plan and, has been able to add value to a number of activities throughout the year including working closely with the Integrated Wellbeing Network programme and culminating in the support for the Green Spaces Tree Planting Initiative which engaged 105 volunteers from the community, groups and statutory sector helping to plan 4,500 saplings.



1. Tree planting



2. Tarragon Centre, Bargoed



3. Tarragon Centre, Bargoed

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Action Area 2b - Jobs growth and employability support (formerly titled Apprenticeships)

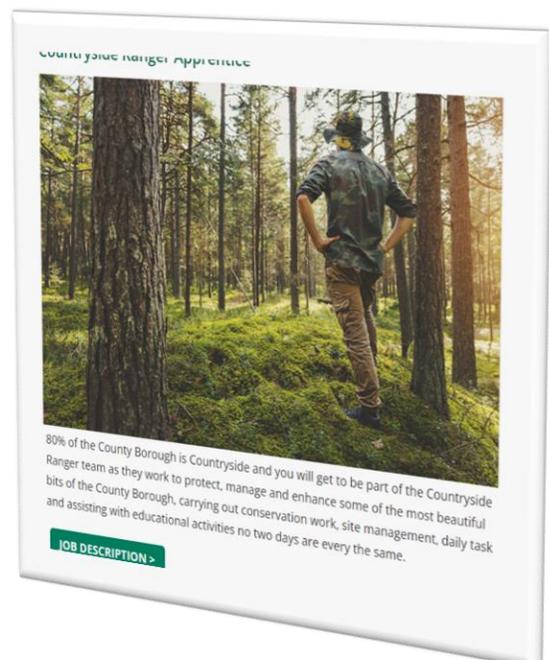
We have seen a lot of activity this past year within this action area, as recovery from the pandemic continues. In particular, CCBC has seen significant growth in its apprenticeship offer, driven forward by the HR team. The Caerphilly Academy is also now beginning to deliver as intended prior to the onset of the pandemic, with individuals supported into Kickstart positions, additional paid placements and apprenticeships, with the support of the Academy mentor proving central to the success of these placements in many cases.

We also seen success in terms of general job growth in both the public and private sectors, with local employers being supported by employment support teams to fulfil recruitment needs in the form of an appropriately skilled workforce. Some of the highlights are in the following paragraphs:

CCBC Apprenticeships - CCBC Workforce Development working together with colleagues from Communications and Digital Services, and with support from the Employment Support teams (including Academy), have developed and implemented an apprenticeship recruitment campaign for 2022.

As part of the campaign we aimed to maximise exposure through the development of media and new digital content to highlight our services, job opportunities and good news stories from our current apprentices. We targeted our marketing to raise the profile of our apprenticeship opportunities within local schools and colleges, and for people on our Employment Support Programmes.

We redesigned our recruitment pages and developed a specific page for our apprenticeships providing a synopsis of the roles and direct link to a simplified process for application.



We worked with our service area to develop new job descriptions that used simplified language, focusing on making all specifications relatable and achievable for people from all walks of life including our school leavers and long term unemployed.

Through the development of a new application form and application process, candidates were able to complete a single application form but apply for multiple apprenticeship opportunities. The success of these new approaches was reflected in the incredible response we received - nearly 700 applications from approximately 300 people. We are now in the process of finalising recruitment with a series of interview events scheduled for the 19th – 24th May.

Kickstart (Caerphilly Academy) – Over the past 6 months, 8 unemployed young people were successful in gaining employment with CCBC through the Kickstart Scheme. CCBC supported the scheme by increasing the wage offered by the DWP from National Minimum Wage to Foundation Living Wage. The Academy team worked closely with departments to create job roles that would allow the successful applicant to gain the much-needed experience and knowledge to start a career in their chosen field. The Academy Mentor also worked closely with CCBC HR Department to provide a smooth onboarding process for the successful applicants and in most cases the very tight turnaround time from interview to start date was met, resulting in the success of Kickstart as a joint venture.

All applicants were offered support from the Academy and the CCBC employment support programmes at every opportunity. The successful applicants were introduced to their future mentor at interview stage and have developed and continued that relationship. The 8 Kickstart employees have now been in post for between 5-8 weeks and are receiving support not only from their supervisors but also meeting regularly with their mentor to discuss future plans. This mentoring support has been essential in ensuring retention of some individuals whilst they have been settling into their placements, for example where liaison with managers has been required in resolving initial “teething” issues.

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Action Area 3 – Good health and well-being

Highlights on this action area are as follows:

The team is continuing work on the roll out of **Covid-19 vaccinations and boosters**. Partner agencies are supporting uptake of this by responding to vaccine hesitancy. This work is being replicated for Childhood vaccination and partner agencies are supporting the uptake of this by responding to vaccine hesitancy. The team will look at revamping the “V for Vaccination talks” to focus specifically on families of children who are unsure about the Covid vaccine, following feedback from parents who are worried about their children getting vaccinated.

Caerphilly Neighbourhood Care Networks (NCNs) have again this year invested in the Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner role which is now fully recruited and are aligned to our 21 GP practices. The NCNs have actively promoted and invested in the IRIS Training and support programme which enables GPs and GP practice staff to identify patients affected by domestic violence and abuse and refer them to specialist services, benefiting the patient and saving NHS resources. An additional investment is available to continue with the additional counselling capacity with Caerphilly Mind who support the primary care mental health service to address the volume of referrals received.

Caerphilly NCNs have undertaken a recent pilot of mindfulness sessions with staff groups to support their wellbeing. A review of the pilot will be undertaken and if proven of value to staff and service delivery, will consider extending this in 2022-23 period.

The **ABUHB intranet webpages** has a dedicated wellbeing section and staff can access this and signpost to support and advise. We have funded delivery of 132 modules of Gwent Connect 5 (GC5) – each GC5 course has 3 modules - 44 full courses.

From a **third sector perspective**, we have seen an increase in groups setting up to support dementia and mental health treatment. Particularly following the pandemic, mental health groups will likely be the theme going forward, and we need to ensure they are set up appropriately and have the correct support.

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a democratic process that enables local people to have direct decision-making power over how public budgets are spent. The overarching aims of PB are to increase community participation in decisions affecting their lives and enable spending decisions that better reflect local needs and address inequity. The steering group overseeing the rollout of PB has been exploring delivery of the PB programme in conjunction with CoPro Wales and have recently received a proposal from them, which is currently under consideration.

Financial wellbeing is a concern for many with rising costs of living, energy prices surging and no increases in pay. Financial wellbeing is likely to become a significant issue for all sectors in the coming months and years. This will have a direct impact on people's overall physical,

mental and emotional health. We are looking to work more closely with Citizens Advice, and local credit unions on how we mitigate these issues. Financial issues could also see a rise in crime and substance misuse.

Integrated Well-being Networks (IWN) place-based collectives were held in its focus areas - Bargoed, Rhymney, New Tredegar and Risca - in February 2022 and will continue on a quarterly basis. These will help inform the new Participatory Budgeting opportunities being developed in conjunction with CCBC, GAVO and others which will be supported by ABUHB Connections funding for new post-COVID wellbeing activities and initiatives.

New CWTSH community weekly wellbeing guides to local wellbeing activities for each focus area have been developed with Dewis Cymru, Caerphilly Wellbeing Friends and the Community Connectors. Feedback has been hugely favourable to date. These will expand their location reach as appropriate in coming months. A new CWTSH website with details of these and more wellbeing information has been created and is being enhanced.

One of IWN's focusses has been on the Rhymney area. Working with partners, a new revamped weekly Talking Café (Cwtsh Café) at Rhymney Library has proved very popular in reconnecting people and helping to address isolation. A biweekly Caffi Croeso through the medium of Welsh has similarly proved popular which will become weekly in April. A new Social Strollers group along with community-led heritage walks are developing and starting to get people more connected and physically active whilst a new men's mental health group is about to commence.

We produced a series of 15 short wellbeing films highlighting the work and opportunities of groups and services across Caerphilly and encourage members of the public to get involved. These are being made available to partners and are being loaded onto a new YouTube Channel.

Monthly Wellbeing Friends coffee mornings have continued, as requested by the attendees. These are seen as a great resource of information and a great way of connecting with others across the borough. Several new community members have joined and engaged with promoting good health and wellbeing messages. Talks during this time have included Bonesetter Reese heritage talk, Coeliac UK awareness session, Walking Friends, Community transport discussion, Covid restriction updates and general messages for Health and Wellbeing.

Following feedback from IWN meetings, a Rhymney 'Chatty Café' has been formed to tackle social exclusion falling from Covid isolation. These started in February 2022 and have been extremely well attended by community members and support services alike. We have also used this as an opportunity to consult with the community on their wellbeing needs.

GAVO has worked on a Transport to Health scheme, ensuring transport options for communities are more suitable, affordable, and accessible in order to access their health

appointments. 3 transport schemes have been supported in Caerphilly, in partnership with three third sector groups.

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Action Area 4a – Safer communities

Over the last five years there have been some really positive enhancements to the way the community safety partners work together and share information in Caerphilly. In 2018 the Safer Caerphilly Hub was established which has enabled key partners to be co-located together in designated office space in Penallta House. This has significantly improved information sharing, enhanced partnership activity including projects and events, reduced the number of meetings that were being held and resources such as travelling expenses and booking venues for meetings.

The Hub holds fortnightly partnership tasking meetings with a range of community safety representatives to analyse the crime and disorder priorities for the area. Partners then distribute and deploy resources to the identified priorities. This ensures that the partnership maintains an intelligence led approach to its work and addresses identified locations and individuals appropriately. A Gwent WASPI (Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information) agreement has been developed for partners to share personal information.

In addition to the fortnightly Tasking meetings that analyse the local crime and disorder priorities a multi-agency Organised Crime Group has been developed for Caerphilly to assist investigations and intelligence gathering. Community Safety Partners support Gwent Police in dealing with their most prolific/high profile offenders. The partners share intelligence and look to use their tools and powers to address offending. In 2021 partners worked together to obtain a court order against an individual who was part of an organised crime gang. The case is now used to demonstrate best practice and an example of good partnership working.

The community safety partners have also worked together to develop a new initiative called 'Community Assist Events' which are multi-agency community engagement events that are held in communities where there are emerging crime and disorder issues. Unfortunately these events had to be put on hold throughout the pandemic but we are now starting to plan more sessions again.

The Community Safety Partnership oversees the Prevent and Channel Counter Terrorism statutory duties for Caerphilly Council. The Community Safety Team have worked with partners across Gwent to review the Home Office Prevent Duty guidance and develop a regional action plan for Prevent delivery. The Community Safety Team manage Prevent referrals, provide Prevent training to appropriate frontline staff and co-ordinates the monthly Channel Panel meetings to manage and support individuals identified as being at risk of radicalisation.

Throughout the pandemic the Safer Caerphilly partners have worked together to maintain existing approaches and develop new initiatives to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour within the Caerphilly County borough area. Throughout this period partners have excelled in adapting to new ways of working in a rapidly changing environment whilst ensuring that our communities continue to be supported throughout these unprecedented times.

In addition to maintaining existing services and the above updates some examples of new developments include the following pieces of work:

Problem Solving and Reducing Demand:

Gwent Police have formed a new Problem-Solving Team which will focus on reducing the Crime and ASB demand drivers and will also concentrate on Crime Prevention and Engagement within the communities. They will work closely with the Police Neighbourhood Teams, Partnership Hub and the local authority Community Safety Team.

To complement this –“We don’t buy Crime” has also been introduced within Gwent Police, this is the acquisitive crime taskforce. The team use analytical techniques to identify areas of risk and highlight emerging trends. They work with victims of crime and businesses to provide security advice, deliver SmartWater packages and minimise the chance of repeat offending. They also assist in delivering bespoke training to partner so that they recognise signs of organised crime and criminal exploitation.

Safer Streets Funding Round Three:

The Home office granted nearly £300k to the Safer Streets Funding programme for the area of Rhymney, Caerphilly. The project was finalised in March 2022. The funding was intended to implement measures to prevent and reduce acquisitive crimes such as residential burglaries, theft from person and robbery that included:

- Additional CCTV and a review of street lighting
- Replacement of door locks
- Dusk-til-Dawn lighting to be provided to front and rear of dwellings in line with Secured by Design recommendations
- SBD approved Property marking kits to be distributed to victims
- Crime Prevention Signage along the A465 laybys
- Lighting and CCTV of laybys
- Police engagement with Haulage companies to deliver crime prevention

Door to door surveys were carried out and homes identified that would particularly benefit from measures such as security lighting and CCTV doorbells. These were properties that had previously been burgled or were identified as being potentially vulnerable due to the circumstances of the occupiers.

As a partnership, Caerphilly County Borough Council and Gwent police have successfully delivered the following interventions:

- A total of 201 households have been fitted with CCTV, ring doorbells, 24 hr night security lights, Smart water and a new TS007 door lock.
- Additional home security measures (car security packs, night-time shed sensors and locks, burglary tremor packs and bike security locks) have all been distributed to the community via local events.
- Industrial estates have been visited and Smart water property marking, and crime prevention advice provided to businesses and hauliers.

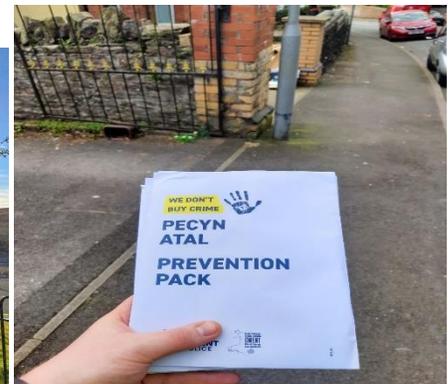
- Second-hand retailers have signed up to a force wide agreement to identify stolen property and have been given guidance and training. Additionally, CCBC Trading Standards and retailers have been given ultraviolet torches to identify items marked with Smartwater.
- 15 new CCTV locations have been established and 8x 4K ready 4G CCTV cameras purchased that are re-deployable to respond to crime demand throughout the Rhymney valley.
- 200 signs have been installed throughout the Rhymney valley to alert potential criminals that the area is protected by Smartwater property marking. Research from other areas of the UK has shown this to be an effective means of reducing crime.
- There have been 10 local engagement sessions held in the community and at local schools to provide home prevention advice. As a result of this engagement a further 300 residents signed up to the Smartwater home security pack.



4. Police Officers in the community



5. Gwent Police Officers



6. We don't buy crime Prevention Pack

Safer Streets Round 4

In March 2022 the Home Office announced a further round of funding under the Safer Streets programme. They have invited bids from PCCs, Local Authorities and Community groups to develop projects intended to reduce neighbourhood crime (burglary, theft, robbery, vehicle crime), prevent / reduce violence against women and girls and / or prevent / reduce anti-social behaviour.

Following wide consultation during March 2022 it was decided that the Gwent PCC would lead a bid in partnership with each of five local authorities within Gwent. This bid focuses on preventing and reducing neighbourhood crime and tackling ASB. One of the areas that feature within the bid from the Caerphilly Borough is Blackwood and Cefn Forest. There has been consultation with Caerphilly County Borough Council in relation to current CCTV infrastructure. If the bid is successful, then Gwent Police will again lead on the delivery of the project and will work closely with key partners and the community safety representatives.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Throughout the pandemic anti-social behaviour has been a challenge for Community Safety Partnerships. Caerphilly was not exempt from those challenges. Over the last year with restrictions lifted there were significant spikes in anti-social behaviour as communities readjusted. Town Centres were particularly affected and to address this we established a new 'Town Safe' initiative which is currently being piloted in Blackwood. The initiative will seek to work with community safety partners, business and the community to address local identified issues.

The Safer Caerphilly Anti-Social Behaviour Strike 4 process aims to address individuals who commit acts of anti-social behaviour in the community. During 2021-2022 a total of 14 multi-agency strike meetings were held to discuss 93 cases. Of these, 5 individuals continued to offend, and the community safety partnership applied for and obtained Civil Injunctions at court.



7. Community Safety Officer



8. Safer Caerphilly Community Hub



9. Safer Caerphilly Community Hub

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Action Area 4b - Resilient communities

The place in which we live has a huge part to play in individual personal perceptions of wellbeing. Having attractive, well-used and connected communities with easy access to the natural environment, affordable and sustainable housing, local job opportunities and low crime levels will help to support community resilience.

Housing

The Council continue to work with Pobl to redevelop the former Civic Offices in Pontllanfraith to provide much needed local homes for local people. Referred to as The Chartist Gardens, the scheme is proposed to be an exemplar garden suburb development. This incorporates sound placemaking features (including best practice for sustainable drainage systems), integrated well designed open space and formal children's play, comprehensive landscaping, active travel and high-quality housing within a parkland setting. The development will provide up to 125 new homes with a mixed occupancy.

The Council are also working with Pobl and United Welsh to redevelop the former Windsor Colliery Site in Abertridwr, whilst Caerphilly Homes are actively developing publicly owned land for future housing development throughout the county borough at Ty Darren Risca, Oakdale Comprehensive School, and a number of other sites are in the process of being assessed to determine their suitability.

Coalition for Change.

In November 2020 the Council introduced the Caerphilly Cares Service to provide a new approach to service provision, This aims to build bridges with communities, mobilise individual and community assets, and enable a process of co-production, with individuals as active agents in their own lives. This new approach enables easier and earlier identification of vulnerable people within communities; better engagement; the ability to identify what the new service needs are in the community; the opportunity to build on and expand community and voluntary support; the mobilisation of community assets in empowered co-production and advance the holistic work of the Resilient Communities strand of the Public Service Board's (PSB) work.

The long term vision is for a much larger range of services to work collaboratively 'under the umbrella' of Caerphilly Cares to support early intervention and prevention in order to meet the needs of all residents in Lansbury Park and indeed across the Caerphilly county borough as a whole. The focus is on reducing inequalities and supporting the most vulnerable in our borough. to provide an environment for effective communication and coordination that puts the needs of residents at the heart of service delivery. The Caerphilly Cares workstream is reported separately and the Resilient Communities strand has therefore been refocused at the request of the PSB to concentrate on Town Centre Recovery post Covid 19.

Town centres

Town centres throughout the UK are facing a series of significant challenges to their economic viability post Covid-19. The pandemic saw an overnight change in how people used our town centres. Shoppers' spending and travel habits changed, and whilst demand for public services increased, many people took advantage of online platforms to access these. Most town centres were already having to adapt to a significant period of change before the pandemic, as they have done in the past, reflecting societal changes over decades. But rarely has such drastic change happened in a short period of time, as restrictions were imposed on movement and business operations nationwide.

Our Business community has had to adapt quickly, and local and national government support had to be rolled out quickly and tailored accordingly, Welsh Government and Council officers administered over circa £62m of grant support in the County Borough to help businesses survive the crisis. Besides the many challenges faced, the restrictions also created opportunities for many businesses that adapted their operating model to reflect changing habits, and as restrictions ease, businesses that adapted quickly have benefitted from increased footfall, as people choose to stay local for shopping, work and leisure.



10- High Street modifications- New Parklet

A series of modifications have been made to many of our town centres to help businesses, including the introduction of parklets to help businesses trade outdoors. In addition, business grants have provided much needed financial support to help to transition to the new way of working and the Council is also working with several property owners to bring town centre premises back into beneficial use which Welsh Government funding support.



11.- High Street modifications- New Parklet 2

The focus now is to provide support and action to enable our towns to recover whilst continuing to support the Wellbeing Objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2018-23. The economic recovery framework has been prepared to deliver on this strategic objective.

Events

As Covid restrictions eased the events team delivered a successful programme of craft and food fairs to our key town centres before and after Christmas 2021 that delivered an uplift in Footfall across Bargoed, Caerphilly, Ystrad Mynach and Blackwood Towns.

For example, the Ystrad Mynach spring event increased footfall by 365%, with an attendance in the town centre of 6,400 on the day of the event compared to 1,376 the week before, effectively creating more than an extra two and a half Saturdays!



12.- Ystrad Mynach Spring Fair

In addition the Caerphilly Food Festival took place in May 2022 for the first time since lockdown and was back to its full capacity in terms of entertainment, stalls and activities. It was the first event since lockdown whereby all restrictions were lifted so a 'normal' event was permitted to be hosted with no hindrances to the layout. The event increased footfall with an attendance in the town centre of 13,949 compared to the previous Saturday of 1,588.

Shop Local

In 2021/22 the Council introduced a shop local promotional campaign with marketing collateral including town centre banners, window stickers and social media paddles to support case study video content generated featuring high street owners. The campaign has been well received by local business.



13.- Choose Local

Visit Caerphilly and the Valleys Regional Park

Work is ongoing with partners to develop the three regional significant Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateways at Caerphilly Castle, Cwmcarn Forest and Parc Penallta. The aim of the Valleys Regional Park is to unlock and maximise the potential of the natural and associated cultural heritage of the Valleys to generate social, economic and environmental benefits.

Following significant investment from Natural Resource Wales, Cwmcarn reopened the forest drive in June 2021 after it closed in 2015 to allow for the felling of 150,000 trees affected by the disease Phytophthora Ramorum. The reopened drive incorporates seven car parks to allow visitors to absorb the breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding countryside, three new adventure playgrounds for children to enjoy, together with sensory tunnels, a woodland sculpture trail and several all-ability trails.



14.- Refurbished Cwmcarn Forest Drive- Reopened in 2021



15. New Adventure Play Area at Cwmcarn Forest

In addition to the significant investment at Cwmcarn the Council is working in close collaboration with Cadw in respect of its £5m Caerphilly Castle Investment Programme which will transform Caerphilly Castle from a sleeping giant into a world-class heritage attraction. The plans include improved visitor facilities in a new reception building at the entrance, refurbishment of the current shop, and access improvements to paths throughout the castle to ensure visitors of all abilities can enjoy the site.

Central to the project is a £1million overhaul of site interpretation including new state-of-the-art digital techniques, presenting the stories of the men and women who built and lived in Caerphilly Castle. The plans also include proposals to re-dress the Great Hall, the largest of its period in the country, to recreate the ambience and grandeur of its medieval heyday.

Carved from a former coal tip the third of the areas Discovery Gateways is Parc Penallta, which is well known for being home to one of the largest figurative earth sculptures in the country, "Sultan the Pit Pony". Sultan attracts visitors from far afield who come to see and admire him, whilst the High Point Observatory in the park provides panoramic views across the South Wales valleys. To add to the offer at Parc Penallta, the Council are in the process of exploring the possibility of providing a long-awaited new education hub to complement the existing facilities in the park.

This investment in the Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateways is crucial in ensuring these sites have the capacity to provide safe and welcoming spaces that can be enjoyed by the local community, as well as visitors from further afield.

Providing Opportunities for new Companies to start up and thrive

Whitebeam Court is a Joint Venture partnership between Caerphilly County Borough Council and Welsh Government. The development is the latest phase of an ambitious sustainable mixed-use development for Ty Du by Welsh Government and Caerphilly Council. A major scheme to undertake the enabling highways infrastructure works, including installation of services and estate roads was successfully completed in 2019 and has prepared the 18hectare landmark site for future residential and commercial development, which will include around 200 homes (including provision for affordable homes) and an area for employment use.

The development was part funded by the European Regional Development Funds through the Welsh Government and part funded by Caerphilly Council. The first phase of the employment area has created a managed business park offering five self-contained terraces of employment units that are available individually or combined. The units are of high quality, low maintenance set within a landscaped environment. The development has been designed to use traditional forms similar to barns and natural colours so that they harmonise with the surrounding landscape.



16.- Whitebeam Court, Ty Du, Nelson

The Lawns – Silver Birch Court

The Council delivered 15 new starter business units totaling 15,000 sq. ft. of additional industrial space in the Spring of 2022 which are available for a waiting list of over 30 prospective tenants as part of regeneration objectives for the Upper Rhymney Valley. Located just 2 miles south of the A465 Heads of the Valleys road, with excellent links to the M4 and just an hour's drive from the M50. Rhymney Railway Station links directly to Cardiff Central with a journey time of one hour.

The site (which currently hosts a number of existing units) has three new buildings of 15 individual units. Units are available to lease from the Council and consist of eight 50 square metre units, four 75 square metre units and three 98 square metre units. This project has been made possible with funding from the Council and the European Regional Development Fund through Welsh Government providing a much welcomed boost to the local economy and the prospects of employment for local people.



17.- The Lawns- Silver Birch Court

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Action Area 5 – Protect and enhance the local natural environment

Projects

Tree Planting Group

The Tree Planting Core Group which is a sub-group of the Green Spaces Group organised a Tree Planting Week in March at Ynys Hywel Farm, Cwmfelinfach where a total of 4,500 trees were planted.

The opportunity was initially advertised via [the Gwent volunteering Wales website](#). Combined with social media outlets, email networks and through Corporate Volunteering. All opportunities that are accessible to staff was administered under the Caerphilly Cares Banner on the Gwent Volunteering in Wales website. Enabling attendance to be registered and hours to be monitored.

Across the 6 days volunteers from; CCBC, Llamau, Keep Wales Tidy, Groundwork Wales, GAVO, EOTUS, Coleg Y Cymoedd, Parent Network, Monmouthshire Building Society, Target Financial Services, ONS, Community, Shade, Gwent Police, Youth Service staff, Early Language and Play Team, Next Generation Police Cadets and Disability Supported Housing staff and residents. In total across the 6 days 105 participants took part.

Next Steps

Further Planting locations are required for next planting season, an exercise will be undertaken to identify sites. This will include the mapping of land holdings of partners and looking at existing data which could be used to identify areas for planting such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The results of this exercise can be used to inform planning for the next 5 years and contribute to meet the 2030 carbon neutral target.

Quotes-

A lady travelled up from Langstone, she has been working from home during COVID, her place of work is Bristol. "I am here today to give something back, get outside from my four walls, engage socially and physically and look after my mental health in doing so".

74 year old gentleman rang me, "could I get involved in the tree planting as I'm so bored?" He signed up for 1.5 days and achieved the full 6 days planting, he brought with him his freeze gel and anti-inflammatory medication to deal with his arthritis and thoroughly enjoyed the engagement. He wore a mask and continually gelled his hands, he took measures to keep himself safe. I took a photo and framed it for him as a memory of his experience, a talking point.

A Cabinet member joined us for two days, she tries to engage 5 days a year, and had been helping locally with local food banks, but a lot of restrictions had been put in place due to COVID. The outdoor experience had been fabulous and a promise made to join us on the next scheduled plant.

A Mum joined who lives locally, she initially signed up for 2 days, walked to the farm daily and stayed the full 6 days of the plant. On the final day of planting she WAS overwhelmed with joy of the achievement of the physical activity. Since the day the lady has returned to the farm and assisted in the planting of wildflowers and is hoping to extend the interest of family and community engagement at the site.



18. Tree planting



19. Tree planting



20. Tree planting

Cwmcarn Forest Enhancements

Cwmcarn Forest in Caerphilly County is, managed by Caerphilly Council, and has multiple downhill bike tracks and glamping, camping and caravan sites which attract bike and outdoor enthusiasts to the park. 20 fruit trees have been planted in the camping and glamping areas. The fruit trees will enhance the biodiversity of the glamping and camping areas, the site of the trees was carefully planned to allow campers and community members easy access to the trees, for maintenance of the trees and access to harvest fruit.

The Trees

The trees were sourced from an organic fruit tree grower based on the Welsh Border, who follow agroforestry and permaculture principles and has been certified Organic by the Soil Association since November 2020. They feed their soil with a range of green manures composted on-site and fed back into the soil, negating the need to apply artificial chemical fertilisers. Pests are controlled by a routine spray programme comprising organic seaweed extract, bio fertilisers and garlic oil throughout the growing season, which also helps with disease resistance as well as to promote strong healthy growth.

Cuttings for new trees are taken from a collection of Shropshire and Welsh Border varieties, some of these are varieties rediscovered by the company, such as Bringewood Pippin, Gypsy King, Round Winter Nonesuch and Rhymer

The trees approximately 2 years old were chosen and planted. The benefit of planting trees of this age instead of whips (which are less than a year old), means that a large proportion of the trees will be fruiting within the next two years. Being at this stage in development, also means the trees require far less protection from grazing animals such as rabbits and sheep.

Therefore, the success rate, whilst being properly pruned and looked after is far higher than that of whips.

At each of the sites a variety of apple, pear and plum trees were planted, ensuring pollination groups were kept together to allow for the best chance of successful fruit cropping.

Impact

20 trees were planted covering 591m². In addition to improving land, other environmental benefits of planting the orchards include:

- Increase in local biodiversity and air quality.
- Providing pollinator habitats.
- Providing food for humans in later years of growth and food for wildlife in the early years – an apple tree can yield 320kg of apples in a year.
- Reducing surface water runoff, therefore reducing flooding.
- Increase in shade.

Social impacts:

- Strengthening of local pride and community cohesion, through ownership and interaction within the community - Orchards have played an important role in communities for many centuries, providing a focal point and gathering space for work and relaxation.
- Intergenerational planning and working takes place around orchards, reducing social isolation.
- Providing beauty to the area and attract new users to the site.
- Providing a place in which training of traditional skills can occur, such as pruning and grafting.
- Providing an area for education about the conservation of rare and endangered species of trees.
- Providing refuge for peace and tranquillity, part of wellbeing through nature goals.
- Orchards provide a place where people work together with nature to create abundant harvests.
- Social aspects of orchards include 'Apple Days' which bring communities together (usually over a weekend in harvesting season), where people bring their crops e.g., apple to be juiced, swap grafts from trees, children are involved in art competitions and apple bobbing games, apple baking competitions and recipes are shared.
See : <https://marlborough.news/news/marlborough-celebrates-apple-day-as-it-inherits-rare-wiltshire-breeds-for-generations-to-come/> for an example.
- Community orchards provide fresh fruit with zero food miles, and little or no pesticides used in the growing process compared to commercial farming. They provide a place for physical exercise and improve wellbeing. Spending time in nature (whether tending trees, harvesting or serving coffees for community volunteers) has a positive effect on physical health wellbeing and increased community cohesion and pride.
- Local businesses can connect with community orchards and their initial setup and maintenance, for example, donations of soil, manure or materials needed.

- Tree adoption and memorial schemes can be set up to increase the size of orchards.
- Schools can link activity to the National Curriculum, therefore can be used to enhance learning.

Other Projects

Several partners from the Green Spaces Group have been involved with Big Bocs Bwyd and Food for Life initiatives which actively contribute to one of the Green Spaces Group priorities which is the Grow it, Cook it and Eat it. Valleys Regional Park has been supporting the roll out of Big Bocs Bwyd school food and growing projects with 3 schools in the Caerphilly area



21.-Big Bocs Bwyd



22.-Big Bocs Bwyd 2

VRP continues to work strategically on issues like a Valleys wide, Local Authority verge management framework, green social prescribing and the development of the National Nature Service concept. In Caerphilly VRP has been supporting the evaluation of the Nature Prescribing Pilot with a range of partners such as the Aneurin Bevan integrated wellbeing network, Wildlife Trust, Groundwork Wales to name a few. The Wellbeing Work hub is also well on the way to completion at Parc Bryn Bach which will provide a spectacular remote working environment for the area.

Food for life

In April, Groundwork Wales hosted a live webinar event as part of the Food for Life 'Get Togethers' promotion. The scheme is designed to create and share a series of events to share knowledge and inspiration to enable communities to connect through food. Rachael hosted the event, supported by one of our volunteers demonstrating how to create edible

hanging baskets. Using fruit, vegetables and herbs, Rachael showed how to create and maintain simple, cost effective and nutritious hanging baskets. The event was viewed live by 181 people from all over the UK and has been posted on the Food for Life website. [Network Events | Food for Life Get Togethers \(fflgettogethers.org\)](https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/network-events/food-for-life-get-togethers)

This initiative was inspired by Groundworks Routes 2 Life site in Pontllanfraith. Leading volunteers, local community groups and schools, to help grow and maintain vast amounts of fruit vegetables and flowers, sharing knowledge and skills to help people become more sustainable and self-sufficient.

Next Steps

Groundwork is planning to host another event in the Autumn, potentially demonstrating what dishes can be made from the humble pumpkin. Valleys Regional Park (VRP) continues to help develop and support opportunities for communities to become involved in learning conservation skills at these local green spaces through the Guardian Scheme.

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Action Area 6 – Caerphilly Cares (a new Action Area added in 2021)

As a result of the pandemic our communities have and will continue to suffer from economic, health and other social challenges. Well-being issues and inequalities existed in our communities before the pandemic, which has only served to exacerbate these and the coming months and probably years could prove particularly difficult as a result. However, conversely, the pandemic also resulted in strengthening of resilience both individually and at community level.

In February 2021 Cabinet endorsed the establishment of the Caerphilly Cares service and associated resources. The service was subsequently launched in April 2021 and the following report provides both an update on its implementation and an evaluation of the service to date.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 underpins the delivery of Caerphilly Cares, providing support at the earliest point to reduce the need for statutory intervention and helping people to help themselves. Ensuring the ‘what matters conversation’ is intrinsic to all support offered and is relevant and directed by the individual not the professional deciding what someone needs.

The ethos of Caerphilly Cares is about a changing relationship with our residents and communities, it’s about mobilising assets within communities, promoting independence and increasing people’s control over their own lives. It is a key strand within the Council’s Strategic Recovery Framework Principle four, which aims to wrap support around individuals and communities and enable them to help themselves prosper and grow.

If Caerphilly Cares had not been implemented the pressure on other Council Services is likely to have been far greater. And whilst this is not clearly demonstrable at this point in time, over 1,700 people could have ‘slipped through the net’, 788 people would not have had their income maximised and over 2000 people would not have had food. As awareness of Caerphilly Cares grows and the impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt this number is likely to grow substantially.

However, Caerphilly Cares is not a ‘service’ that operates in isolation, it reflects the ethos of the Transformation Strategy #TeamCaerphillyBetterTogether that influences how we engage with our residents and how our services respond. COVID-19 has created intense pressures on local authorities to respond to unprecedented challenges. Communities have become even more reliant on public services and as a result, building social resilience and self-reliance in citizens is even more important than ever. With potential budgetary pressures due to changing patterns of demands and lingering levels of dependency we will also need to continue to deal with the longer-term impact of the pandemic alongside driving forward any plans for longer-term transformational change.

The need for strong networks, effective communication and collaboration across services and programmes that support our residents is essential to achieve this aim. We anticipate our communities will suffer from economic, health and other social challenges as a result of the

pandemic for years to come. The gap between the most deprived and the most affluent has widened, and with the increase in living costs, fuel costs, National Insurance, and inflation this is likely to be exacerbated. This highlights the need to take an in depth look on how we intend to support our communities moving forward to respond to the anticipated growing demand for support.

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Enabler 1 – Communications and engagement

As the work of the Caerphilly PSB to deliver the Caerphilly We Want Well-being Plan 2018-2023 comes into its final year of delivery the role of the Gwent PSB is increasing. For this reason the communications and engagement activity over the past year has largely been around the development of the Gwent region local assessment for well-being as the precursor to the new Gwent well-being plan from May 2023.

Over the course of the first six-months of the year partners across the region, representing all of the PSB member bodies, were involved in public and stakeholder engagement in their local communities and with their communities of interest to understand the conditions for well-being required in the region and to ensure that the views of communities and stakeholders were reflected in the assessment of well-being. To achieve this a new formal group was set up under the Gwent PSB, the Communications and Engagement Group, to manage and coordinate the activity across the partners and bring a degree of consistency to the process over what is now a very much wider geographical area.

[Chapter 3 of the local assessment of well-being on the Gwent PSB website](#) describes the process employed, the outputs and how they have fed into the main document. While engagement was a challenge during the pandemic period, when physical meetings were restricted, the outputs have provided a rich source of information to inform the assessment.

The Gwent PSB has determined that its own openness and transparency is important and is revising its terms and conditions to improve this. If approved, at the June 22, meeting this will mean making meetings open to the public, providing recordings of its meetings on the website and allowing questions from the public. A communications officer from one of the partners will attend each PSB to live tweet proceedings.



23.- Gwent PSB logo



24. Gwent PSB branding



25. Caerphilly PSB website

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Enabler 2 – Procurement

The Procurement Delivery Group continued to be actively involved on a Gwent regional basis with the progressive procurement project, working in conjunction with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and Welsh Government. The areas of focus were redefined during 2021 and covered: Construction and Retrofit (Decarbonisation), Simplifying and Sharing Best Practice (Procurement Policy) and Food Procurement. CLES involvement in the project concluded in late 2021.

Progress had been made with respect to the identified themes and there is a definite appetite to continue to progress a collaborative community wealth building approach to procurement going forward. The workshop discussions have brought anchor institutions of different sizes and sectors together, leading to the development of new relationships and connections. The process has facilitated a considerable sharing of best practice and has elevated strategic issues which require a pan-Wales, Welsh Government enabled response. This relationship building is particularly important in the Gwent context with the pending single PSB structure.

An excellent example of the work undertaken via the project is from the Food Procurement Group and includes:

- Caerphilly County Borough Council has contacted all suppliers who produce food locally, looking to develop a consolidated list of local food producers.
- Monmouthshire County Council has also collected data on local suppliers.
- Torfaen County Borough Council has undertaken a food mapping exercise (producers and groups involved in tackling food poverty).

The above work supplements Monmouthshire's data platform and there is a shared aspiration to collate information to produce meaningful food related data across the Gwent geography and use this to produce a gap analysis and inform future supply arrangements. There is also a shared goal across Gwent and nationally to influence the wholesale supply chain to increase the percentage of food produce purchased from wholesalers which is produced and/or processed locally.

The establishment of the Procurement Delivery Group helped bridge the gap following the announcement in 2018 by the First Minister that the National Procurement Service would cease to operate in its current format. The Group were keen to fill the void in conjunction with the Welsh Local Government Association to positively take forward collaborative procurement on a regional and national footprint and to invest in procurement to deliver for future generations. Key success during the last five years include:

- Actively supported a collaborative response to the Covid-19 pandemic by participating in daily TEAMS calls with representatives of Welsh Government, WLGA, NHS and Social Care representatives in relation to Supply Management. The main commodity area discussed during those calls was the supply and distribution of PPE with the objective of ensuring a co-ordinated and collective response to this crucial area of supply regionally and across Wales. These relationships have continued post the pandemic and now

consider various other Procurement related matters such as (but not limited to) procurement reform, decarbonisation, Social Value and Community Benefits etc.

- Development and implementation of the Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) measurement framework on a regional and national basis and the TOMs were predicated on the 7 Well-being Goals. This work was undertaken in conjunction with the WLGA, National Social Value Taskforce Wales and Social Value Portal. The Taskforce is an ongoing stakeholder forum comprising of public sector bodies and entities including Welsh Government, The Office of The Future Generations Officer, Transport for Wales, Natural Resource Wales as well as a number of Councils and Housing Associations.

Procurement can be a powerful lever for delivering Cultural, Social, Economic and Environmental initiatives associated with organisations Well-being Objectives. A number of areas of focus identified over the past five years via the Procurement Delivery Group will continue to be taken forward on a local, regional and national basis.

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Enabler 3 – Asset management

There has been some increase in activity within the Corporate Office accommodation as officers continue to return to the workplace. Many teams are now returning on a more blended approach as Covid restrictions continue to ease whilst awaiting the outcome of the Agile Working Review. At Ty Penallta, a café style working environment has been created to support the new ways of working and assist the return to the office environment. The space supports agile working with the provision of flexible working space offering access to desk space and WIFI.

CCBC secured money from WG's Valley Taskforce programme to create two co-working hubs in the County Borough. One hub is located at Ty Penallta and one at the Winding House, New Tredegar. The creation of the café style facilities and agile working space ties in with the preparation of the Co-working space, within the Glass Restaurant area, which will be available to employees of public sector partner organisations.

The opening date of the hub is yet to be finalised, but the green light has been given to open. There is a requirement for a welcome pack to be in place, this is currently being prepared in readiness for the opening. Facilities Management who manage Ty Penallta will provide operational guidance. The Hub based at the Winding House is already operational and open to the general public. The hub offers ample parking, a dedicated high-speed internet connection and a range of refreshments from the in house café. The hub will be open 09.30 – 17.30, Tuesday – Saturday and a launch date is likely to be in October 2021.

The Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) currently has a crew rest room based in Tredomen Business Centre.

The former Woolworths building located on High Street, Bargoed has been redeveloped to facilitate the relocation and development of a collaborative, multi-agency service.

Past achievements and ongoing tasks within Property Services

Various property development projects have been undertaken over the previous 5 years. These are managed by the Property Services team. Projects delivered by Building consultancy amount to circa £10,000,000 per annum. These include all types of projects from small to major projects for the various service areas. As an example, the demolition of Ty Pontllanfraith Offices. A housing scheme based on the Garden Village concept is being developed on site.

Work is ongoing to better utilise the existing property portfolio and all opportunities to rationalise are explored. Leased in buildings are given particular scrutiny. A number of leasehold sites have been released back to the respective Landlords and a number of sites held within our non-operational portfolio have been released, either via freehold sale or via

lease agreement. As an example, Penmaen House was vacated by the occupying service as there was an opportunity to relocate to existing Council buildings

This presented the opportunity to offer the site to a partner organisation who now occupy via a lease agreement. In the past year the Estates team have facilitated the disposal of 9 sites, achieving capital receipts totalling £1.543m. 398 council owned sites have been inspected, surveyed, photographed and documented for estate management purposes. We have recently vacated and returned Unit 5/6 De Clare Court and Ty Pontygwindy to the Landlord. Closure of Ty Pontygwindy has facilitated better use of existing buildings with the opening of Ty Caledfryn and associated moves to other offices. This results in improved use of our own assets and reduces our liabilities associated with leasehold assets. Facilities Management also support and coordinate various moves throughout the authority as required.

Most recently, occupancy levels of leased out industrial sites and office property has been maintained close to being fully let in the high 90%'s throughout this period and currently, all industrial units are fully let. A new estate of 15 units in Rhymney is due to be advertised as available shortly.

Over past 12 months, Property Services Facilities Maintenance Team have provided continued support to the free school meals service. There has been a continuation of adaption to ever changing Covid 19 regulations throughout the 14 corporate sites. Facility support workers assisted with the delivery of over 10,000,000 items of PPE to the residential care settings.

The condition of the Council's buildings is regularly surveyed. There is a rolling programme in place and this process is managed within Property Services. Available Asset Management maintenance funding is fully utilised each year with projects selected broadly using a selection hierarchy. Capital projects, all of which help raised the quality of the estate are project managed by Property Services are undertaken and planned on an annual basis. New buildings and building improvements continue and are planned. The Property Team continue to project management these and support colleagues in other service areas.

Property Services also provide a reactive maintenance service, coordinating remedial works where required. Approximately 10,000 calls are received by our Helpdesk each year from the various service areas. The team also coordinate and manage the statutory maintenance contracts ensuing statutory duties are fulfilled. On average, the team will organise and oversee approximately 3000 remedial tasks as a result of the statutory maintenance inspections carried out.

The Asset Management Strategy – Property and Land was revised and approved in 2019. Service Asset Management Plans are in the process of being developed with relevant service areas. Where in place these are being reviewed on an annual basis and will lead the delivery of the associated actions. This is also associated with the activity within the Corporate

Reviews, in particular work being undertaken within the Walk in Service Review and Agile Working Review.

We have recently secured a storage solution for new kitchen equipment being delivered on a large scale. This is facilitating the delivery of new kitchen equipment and roll out of installation at various school sites. This is required to support the delivery of free school meals at Primary School sites from September 2022.

Refurbishment of Longbridge Pavilion. This is a refurbishment of a dilapidated changing facility at Longbridge Playing Fields and will include demolition of selected elements including an outside pool. The project is underway.



26.-Ty Penallta Café area 1



27.-Ty Penallta Café area 2

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Welsh language and culture

The PSB continues to be very keen to support and promote the use of Welsh within the county borough area. Menter Iaith Sir Caerffili has been a key partner in developing 'The Caerphilly We Want' Well-being Plan 2018-2023 and the Well-being Assessment, by facilitating the voice of Welsh speakers in their development. Menter Iaith also assists with the PSB's communications and engagement work, supports volunteering through the medium of Welsh, as well as supporting Welsh learners. During this period, Menter Iaith has also contributed as an organisation and facilitated opportunities for Welsh speakers and learners to contribute to the latest Well-being Assessment which will inform the 'Well-being Plan for 2023-2028.

Third Sector Welsh language organisations assist PSB members in delivering the actions in the Council's 5 year Welsh Language Strategy, which aims to improve services for families, children, communities, the workplace and help improve infrastructure. By working with the voluntary sector, the PSB is assured that it has the best expertise and capacity to assist with the important task of making Welsh an everyday part of the culture of the area. A key piece of work which has begun to develop in partnership with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Forum is the development of new, digital resources which will provide important and comprehensive information regarding the opportunities to raise children bilingually in Caerphilly County Borough and the choices parents have in terms of Welsh medium education. These resources will be published during the coming months and represent the collaboration between Third Sector Welsh language organisations and PSB members in delivering the actions of the Five Year Welsh Language Strategy and the Caerphilly Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Menter Iaith coordinates the Welsh Language Forum for Caerphilly county borough which includes a range of Third Sector organisations, statutory partners and educational organisations. The Forum plays a key role in delivering the Welsh Language Strategy and during the past year its members have collaborated successfully during the process of developing a new Strategy for 2022-2027. This Strategy will ensure that all partner organisations plan and agree targets which will ensure that opportunities to use the Welsh language on a community level, for all ages, continue to develop and that there is a thriving Welsh language and culture across the borough.

The new Strategy for 2022-2027 will be launched during Ffiliffest on June 11th 2022, Menter Iaith's annual Welsh language and culture festival. The festival returns for the first time in two years to the Owain Glyndwr Playing Fields in Caerphilly Town and is a celebration of the Welsh language, culture and heritage. It provides an opportunity for communities across Caerphilly County Borough and beyond to use the Welsh language or learn about all the opportunities locally to use the Welsh language. In November 2021, Menter Iaith was also able to hold its annual Christmas Fair at Llancaiach Fawr which is an opportunity for communities across the borough to enjoy performances by local children, visit stalls by local businesses and organisations as well as visit our Welsh speaking Santa!

Menter Iaith has continued to respond to the challenges of COVID-19 and has adapted its services to ensure that Welsh speakers and learners were able to access support and opportunities through the medium of Welsh. A clear link between well-being and access to Welsh medium services was highlighted by the pandemic and Menter Caerffili has responded by providing a range of digital opportunities in addition to outdoor activities when appropriate and safe.

The majority of opportunities, services and activities have now returned as face-to-face and in person and include weekly discussion sessions, workshops and activities for children and young people, walking activities, volunteering opportunities and support for vulnerable Welsh speakers across our communities. This work has been supported through funding from the Summer of Fun and Winter of Well-being initiatives by Welsh Government and has enabled Menter Iaith to provide a large and varied programme of Welsh medium activities and opportunities for children and young people within their communities.

This programme has supported young Welsh speakers locally to meet other Welsh speakers in their area and develop new skills and interests through the medium of Welsh. During COVID-19 many Welsh speaking young people were unable to use their Welsh language skills and therefore Menter Iaith's programmes have been crucial in supporting young people as Welsh speakers.

Similarly, Menter Caerffili was successful in securing funding from Welsh Government's Volunteering in Wales Grant, administered by WCVA. This funding has enabled Menter Caerffili to recruit and support Welsh speaking volunteers to take part in meaningful and varied volunteering opportunities across Caerphilly County Borough. These opportunities have supported many activities and services as well as vulnerable and isolated individuals. Volunteers which have taken part have also noted that the project has contributed positively to their well-being and has supported them to take part in further opportunities within their communities.

Menter Caerffili have also recently updated its Language Profile for Caerphilly County Borough which highlights the latest research in community use of the Welsh language. If we are to support the thousands of Welsh speakers to use the language as part of their daily lives, it is imperative that opportunities and accessible services of a high standard are available to them. By providing sufficient opportunities, we can demonstrate that it is possible to participate in community life through the medium of Welsh, and that using the Welsh language as a skill enables you to make a valuable contribution to your local community's development. Menter Caerffili has an important role in developing new Welsh-medium services for local Welsh speakers. By developing new Welsh-medium services, we are creating a local demand for Welsh-speaking workers and volunteers and enabling Welsh speakers to use their skills locally and see a significant value in those skills.



28.- Ffiliffest 2022 poster

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Looking to the future

'The Caerphilly We Want' Well-being Plan 2018-2023 is now coming to the end of its delivery schedule. We hope that our annual reports have demonstrated that public services (working with communities, individuals and the voluntary sector) have helped us make significant inroads into the plan's objectives. We have all had to adapt significantly due to the Covid-19 pandemic and incorporated new objectives to meet these extra challenges.

The Future Generations legislation is designed to bring about generational changes in well-being and therefore the PSB are always mindful of much longer horizons than five years. As we have already highlighted, we are already working on the new Well-being Plan with our partners in Gwent and this will be published in May 2023. However, our focus will always be on the well-being of local communities and we will continue to assess needs and respond, as partners, within the Caerphilly county borough area.

Measuring our progress

Progress against our four Well-being Objectives (Positive Change, Positive Start, Positive People and Positive Places) is supported by the activity under the Action Areas and Enablers discussed above.

Regular reports have been provided to the PSB on the progress of each of the Action Areas and these are scrutinised by local Councillors who hold the PSB to account. If you would like to look at any of these performance reports you can find them on the [Caerphilly PSB website's progress reports page](#).

Contact us

If you have any comments to make regarding the contents of this annual report, or in relation to the Caerphilly or Gwent PSBs more generally, please contact us as follows:

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