

Team Caerphilly

BETTER TOGETHER

Self-Assessment Report

2021/22 - DRAFT



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Section 1: Foreword from the Leader and Chief Executive

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Cllr Sean Morgan
Leader of the Council



Christina Harrhy
Chief Executive

Section 2: Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our approach

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

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

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

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

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

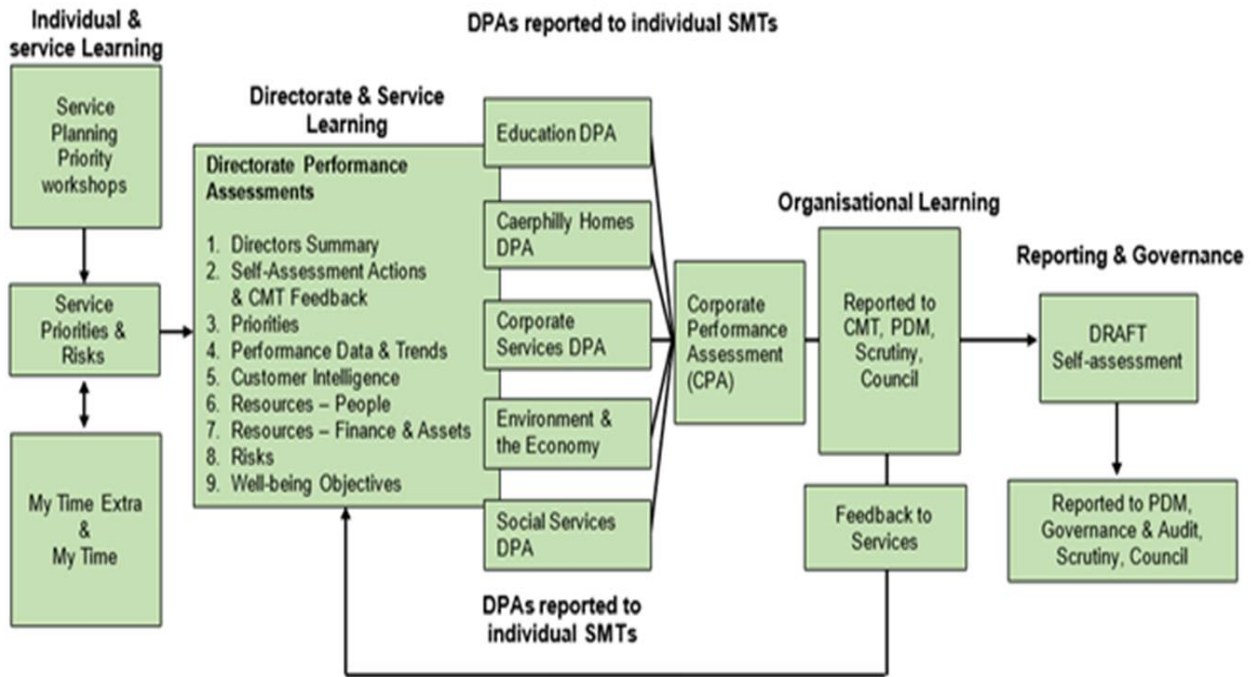
An important tool in how we assess our performance, is the use of a 'Corporate Performance Assessment', or CPA, which is a high-level strategic dashboard that includes a range of information to give a 'snapshot' of performance across the organisation. This is compiled from key data reported in several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

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

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

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

Section 4: How our approach fits together?



Section 5: Our Key Learning from 2021/22

Corporate Planning

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

Progress reported against the Council's current six Well-being Objectives over the last twelve months show:

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

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

This legislative work has seen the Council undertake

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

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

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

Actions to take forward for corporate planning

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

Financial Planning

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

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

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

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

The Council has set aside funding to support the delivery of its Well-being and Place Shaping Programme, which includes, new school builds, the development of respite facilities, improving the quality of the highway infrastructure, and the development of the replacement Welsh Housing Quality Standards Programme. However, there are challenges currently being faced by our public services, in, recruiting to critical internal roles, attracting contactors to undertake works, the increased costs and delivery timescales for materials across global supply chains, which all impacts upon the pace and cost of these planned investments and deliveries.

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

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

Actions to take forward for financial planning

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

Workforce Planning

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

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

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

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

The Council is reviewing and modernising its recruitment and selection processes and has recently secured the appointment of over thirty apprentices. Work is also underway to promote the Council as an employer of choice, to ensure that applications are received from strong candidates, specifically seeking out a career with Caerphilly County Borough Council. The approaches being introduced, are also delivering insight and evidence into what works well and what works less well, and this knowledge, will be used to assist the Council with the current workforce challenges relating to recruitment.

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

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

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

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

Actions to take forward for workforce planning

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

Procurement

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

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

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

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

and has secured significant value for local authorities and schools across Wales through innovative procurement practice.

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

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

Actions to take forward for procurement

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

Assets

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Actions to take forward for key assets

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

Risk Management

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

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

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

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

The Council finalised a revised and new Risk Management Strategy in January 2022 with new guidance approved by our Governance and Audit Committee. The guidance is operational for

services, to help identify, manage, and report on risks. However, risk management is a cyclical and ongoing process, so the new Risk Frameworks, the Strategy and Guidance, will have to be updated to reflect any improvements as required through the decision-making processes during the Autumn of 2022.

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

Actions to take forward for risk management

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

Performance Management

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

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

Our Performance Framework, consists of a Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) Dashboard, complimented by a series of Directorate Performance Assessments (DPAs) Dashboards. These are all regularly reviewed by the Directorate Management Teams, Corporate Management Teams, Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet.

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

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

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

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

Actions to take forward from performance management

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

Section 6: Other Key Council Health Checks



Equalities and Welsh Language

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is some work that needs to be done here, especially at a time when having staff with Welsh Language skills is so important to deliver bilingual services. Following the Commissioner's annual audit, the Council is now addressing a number of non-compliance issues. The Council's recruitment process was a particular focus with the Commissioner requiring an action plan, which you can see in our annual report. [Equalities \(Annual Report 2020-2021\)](#)

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



Decarbonisation

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

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

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

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

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



Consultation and Engagement

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

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Consultations/Consultation-and-Engagement-Framework.aspx>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 7: How to contact us?

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

You can contact us by:

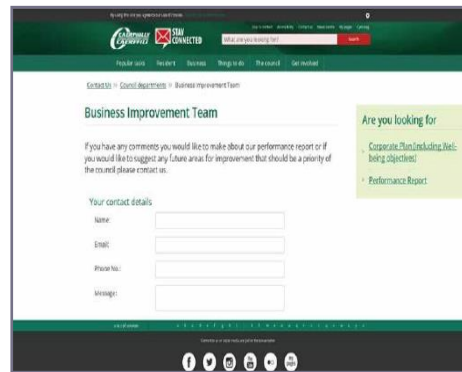
Email: BIT@caerphilly.gov.uk or via the Council Performance webpage and follow the instructions on screen.

Alternatively, please contact:

ROS ROBERTS
Business Improvement Manager
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Penallta House
Ystrad Mynach
Hengoed
CF82 7PG

Tel: 01443 864238

E-mail: roberr@caerphilly.gov.uk



You can contact us via social media.



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