



# Y Gaerffili A GAREM THE Caerphilly WE WANT

## **Wellbeing of Future Generations Workshop: The Caerphilly YOU want! Caerphilly Basin Workshop Report 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016 – The VanGuard Centre, Caerphilly**

### **Background and purpose of the meeting**

This event was one of 5 local workshops held across the county borough, to give residents, organisations and groups a chance to say what makes the biggest difference to their wellbeing and what is good and bad about their area, in this case the Caerphilly Basin. The group also looked at what issues in particular the Caerphilly Public Services Board should concentrate on moving forward.

### **Method**

At this specially convened event held on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016, 21 individuals took part in the workshop (including 2 Welsh speakers), which was facilitated by the Corporate Policy Unit. Two of the individuals present were Council Members. The workshops were facilitated by Paul Cooke (Senior Policy Officer), Vicki Doyle (Policy Officer), Natalie Kenny (Community Safety) and Lowri Jones (Menter Iaith).

The discussion was broken down into sections. These looked at:

- The best and worst things about the Caerphilly Basin
- Current statistics
- What do we want this area to look like 25 years in the future
- What are the key issues for action

### **What are the best and worst things about Caerphilly Basin**

#### ***Best things about the area***

##### **Jobs**

- Manufacturing still features strongly in terms of employment

##### **Environment**

- The town and the surrounding mountains are lovely

- The countryside is wonderful for walks, fresh air, peace and quiet, and people care for it
- Good balance between access to countryside and access to transport links
- Unique Welshness to people's relationship with the countryside
- Cycle path (Aber Valley to Caerphilly) good for cycling and dog walking
- Semi-rural with access to green space whilst being close to M4 and Cardiff/Newport

### **Transport**

- Public transport is generally acceptable, particularly good in the daytime
- Transport links are excellent, with fantastic access to Cardiff

### **Community**

- Friendly people, unique towns and villages, good community spirit
- A lot going on in the area but not always easy to find out about activities – communication needs to be improved

### **Town centres/shopping**

- There is a good choice of food outlets e.g. supermarkets
- Good quality new library – greater choice of books, good facilities, a place to get a cuppa
- Number of buildings have been restored (Caerphilly Miners, VanGuard Centre, The Old Library) – good use for community based activities, volunteers involvement

### **Tourism**

- The castle is a tourist attraction – bring money into the town, raise awareness, spectacular asset
- Tourist Information Centre is excellent
- Good local history e.g. Aber Valley Mining Museum

### **Social issues**

- Ffilifest – Welsh festival for the whole county borough
- Caerphilly language initiative provides services in Welsh, Welsh schools, Miners Institute – responding to needs of Welsh speakers and learners
- Opportunities for social interaction through choirs/amateur dramatics
- Positive perception of Caerphilly Basin although there are pockets of deprivation. Lansbury Park – perception good when first built but changed over time

### ***Worst things about the area***

#### **Jobs**

- Majority of quality jobs are in Cardiff
- Loss of courts, police station and hospital has reduced jobs, which fed people into the town centre

#### **Housing**

- Suburban sprawl – not operating as a town centre any more
- Over development of area over past 10-15 years of huge housing estates – now at saturation point
- House building must not take over green space
- Ghettoised communities leading to high deprivation figures, poor connectivity between housing estates

- Lack of social housing (especially for single people) – housing stock not suitable for people's needs
- Effects on mental health etc.

### **Health**

- The borough needs a hospital with full services including A&E. Services that are provided in Ystrad Fawr are good but unhappy with having to be referred to Royal Gwent for A&E or anything major – feel it is tired, overstretched, under-resourced and terrible parking

### **Environment**

- Litter and dog mess is a problem in some areas, also fly tipping
- Public bins are often full – need more information on what can be recycled
- Poor quality pavements and footpaths
- Need for safer routes for vulnerable road users – walkers, cyclists, horses
- Motorbikes on commons

### **Transport**

- Traffic can be bad in the middle of town
- Issue with out of hours (evening and weekend) services forcing a reliance on cars
- Need better integration of buses and trains
- Town centre becomes completely clogged up in the morning due to larger school catchment areas drawing in additional traffic.
- Congestion at Cedar Tree roundabout and other junctions
- Public transport is too expensive for people in deprived communities to use to find work
- Lack of maintenance and lots of pot holes
- Back lanes are deteriorating in quality
- Public transport difficult for people with sight loss as no companion pass scheme in place – exists in other local authorities. Available if you are deaf and blind

### **Community**

- Small leisure centre, no athletics track
- Lack of provision of services for children and young people

### **Town centres/shopping**

- Not enough independent shops – shops are closing e.g. clothing stores. Need to spend locally to support local businesses
- Need to tidy up the town and do some renovation so it is more attractive to visitors – poor state of repair, poor design
- Empty shops/offices – could be turned into residential accommodation
- Feeling that there has been 'historical vandalism' in the application of planning in the town centre in the design of shops e.g. Sports Direct, BetFred etc.
- Visual aspect from the Castle spoiled by poor shop front design
- Anglo-centric idea of what city/urban centres should be – need a different model in Wales with urban/country balance to avoid urban sprawl
- A lot of £1 shops, betting shops, charity shops

### **Social issues**

- Need more Welsh speaking staff in libraries, leisure centres, banks, homes for the elderly
- Need more volunteers who speak Welsh

- Street Pastors are active in the town centre looking after people at weekend night times

### **Community safety**

- Not enough visible policing – closure of police station in the 4<sup>th</sup> largest town in Wales
- Under resourced police force
- Anti-social behaviour (often linked to alcohol) and rat runs through lanes
- Issues with domestic abuse – high levels and waiting list for support services
- Distraction burglaries an issue
- Police are focused on town centre all weekend so have less capacity for elsewhere

## **What do we want this area to look like 25 years into the future?**

### **Jobs**

- Need to change the attitude to engineering as a skill to encourage high tech engineering training and high tech jobs in the future. Fundamental problems with our economic modelling. Need to change expectations of young people by the way we teach to reduce low achievers in pockets of deprivation
- Need a full hospital and a university – both would increase local jobs and expenditure by the public
- 100% employment, free childcare for everyone who works, good work/life balance

### **Education**

- Well educated – everyone leaving school with qualifications and lifelong learning addressed
- Schools are failing. Many opportunities that young people are unable to access due to lack of qualifications. Ensure young people are well placed to take full advantage of City Deal opportunities

### **Housing**

- More housing suitable for older people
- Political emphasis on owning your own home – should look at other countries
- Everyone housed in good quality appropriate housing

### **Health**

- More health education in order to respond to illness and obesity
- Good health for all, good local gyms and places to exercise

### **Environment**

- Parks, countryside, trees, environment, Castle, flowers – extend further out of the town centre into the Basin
- Need to maintain and enhance the environment we have and sell it – misconceptions about the valleys remain, Caerphilly isn't really the valleys
- No litter/fly tipping/dog mess, all contaminated land treated (such as Bedwas/Trethomas), new country park (could be on Bedwas Tip), more local renewable energy production

### **Transport**

- More safe traffic crossing points
- Changes in the bus network, especially in areas where there is no bus service
- Monorail system around Caerphilly town centre to castle
- Good integrated transport like metro

## **Community**

- A strong community spirit considering others. Take responsibility for creating a link with other people
- Old hospital was paid for by the miners – now looking to lottery and other funders. Communities need to focus on sustainability within, need to think about how we create a self-sustaining environment
- Better youth services, better links between young and old
- Empowered and happy communities where people feel they have control over and take responsibility for their own lives
- A change in mindset – ALL residents are engaged
- Groups and individuals are given support to provide/deliver services in their communities
- Integrated communities – where local communities are responsible for local wind, solar and even gas production from waste; producing and purchasing local food; being the solution not the problem

## **Town centres/shopping**

- More independent shops
- Legislation to make shop owners keep properties clean and tidy/inviting
- Historical reasons for the towns to develop – coal mining, railways etc. Bad town planning has meant last 30 years taking facilities out of town centres

## **Social issues**

- More Welsh medium services/activities. The ability to use Welsh in the community
- Human level – people cling tighter to things that are familiar during periods of change – need to maintain our heritage
- Need to retain skills from older people by befriending, community building e.g. allotments and rural skills. Will help with mental wellbeing and reduce isolation by growing older population. Ageing population needs closer access to facilities, ideally walking distance
- Happy, healthy families
- More culture and art provision including venues

## **Key issues to be prioritised by the Public Services Board**

### **Jobs**

- Develop local unique employment opportunities, reducing need to travel to work – reduced use of cars in environment
- 100% jobs – clean jobs e.g. tourism

### **Education**

- Children need more attention – support could be provided by family and volunteers in schools, not just teachers. Parental engagement in primary schools is good but needs to be improved in secondary schools
- Less pressure on children and young people to make them happier, better educated, also boost youth services

## **Housing**

- Adequate supply of housing for older people – importance of maintaining independence with adequate facilities and support

## **Health**

- Development of education and support to meet the challenges of health problems and obesity
- Good health services – need more doctors and access to appointments
- Support patients to self-manage conditions
- Better use of facilities e.g. hydrotherapy pool at YYF heated 24hrs but only used 6hrs per day – will create healthier people, improve self-esteem, improve poor mental health

## **Environment**

- Maintain, enhance and utilise the environment we have
- Focus on the tourism offer – integrated tourism plan (castle and heritage, countryside, crafts and rural skills, outdoor activities, weekend breaks, 'green' cycle and footpath network connecting currently fragmented parks and open spaces with communities)

## **Transport**

- Improve public transport to encourage more people to use it. Ensure that buses go to all areas
- Develop fully pedestrianised 'Gateway Square' at train station and outside Irish Tymes
- Redevelopment of Piccadilly Square
- Integrated transport system that works for people not transport companies – look at Manchester, Nottingham and abroad for models that work
  - Reduce price of public transport, make tickets transferrable
  - Metro link train stations using buses in a circular way via employment sites
  - Tram system on key housing-employment routes e.g. Senghenydd to Bedwas
  - Link Energlyn to Bedwas and rail line to Newport via new viaduct and re-opened routes

## **Community**

- Before any further development or change there needs to be a vision for 'Caerphilly' (town/Basin) – needs to be a decision on what Caerphilly is about
- Domestic abuse – individuals/families are able to live in a safe home/place and lead happy, healthy lives without living in fear
- Resilient, supportive community spirit – respect cross generational
- Underpinning principle of community engagement and community empowerment – follow up continuous engagement at an even more local level in villages and towns

## **Town centres/shopping**

- Encourage mixed town centre development including housing, leisure and retail. Halt major development, take a step back and review position. Utilise empty properties and convert into affordable housing which will regenerate the area and make town centre safer with people living there 24/7
- Focus on visitor parking at the top of town to encourage footfall through centre – encourage shops to open

## **Social issues**

- Normalise the use of Welsh in all aspects of community life

**Community safety**

- People need to take responsibility for their actions and support others – they need to support police who cannot do it all
- Police focus and ability to properly deal with recalcitrant offenders