



# Y Gaerffili A GAREM THE Caerphilly WE WANT

## **Wellbeing of Future Generations Workshop: The Caerphilly YOU want! Lower Islwyn Workshop Report 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016 – Coleg Gwent Crosskeys Campus**

### **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 Lower Islwyn. 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 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016, 21 individuals took part in the workshop, which was facilitated by the Corporate Policy Unit. One of the individuals present was a Council Member. The workshops were facilitated by Vicki Doyle (Policy Officer), Sian Wolf-Williams (Policy Officer) and Ros Roberts (Performance).

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

- The best and worst things about Lower Islwyn
- 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 Lower Islwyn**

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

##### **Education**

- Primary schools very professional and readily identify needs and referrals
- College is centre of excellence
- Comprehensive schools ok but likely to be gaps in future provision

## **Environment**

- Scenery (including Cwmcarn Forest Drive) a real asset – green areas, good balance
- Canal – nice easy walks, clean, wildlife, green space, a ‘green lung’, educational tool for schools and groups
- Good parks and play spaces – Waunfawr (with toilets/café) and Risca (with toilets) – lots of activities and clean
- Places to visit include Twmbarlwm and Ochyrwyth

## **Transport**

- Individual Valley lines/links pretty good
- Bus passes essential to some people allowing them to get out

## **Community**

- Oxford House and museum – arts school/classes/pottery, adult education centre, sense of community
- Leisure centre, libraries, police station
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## **Town centres/shopping**

- Support the High Street campaign

## **Social issues**

- Friendly/sociable/community spirit
- Established community groups and services
- We have many skills/tradespersons in the area but we don’t have a ‘Caerphilly DIY SOS’ mentality or will

## **Community safety**

- Street pastors help people feel safe

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

### **Jobs**

- People have to commute to Cardiff for better work as local jobs are low paid manufacturing or retail. Low or zero hour contracts in the area e.g. Tesco with 12 hour contracts. No good as the main income

### **Education**

- Educational gaps recently experienced and future in comprehensive schools, particularly lack of special needs provision
- Displacement of comprehensive school children post Cwmcarn H&S issues
- Oxford House – lost funding so not so much adult education and now more expensive

### **Housing**

- There is more LA sheltered accommodation in the Lower Islwyn area than anywhere else in the borough – needs to be more than can accommodate couples not just single accommodation

## **Health**

- Better accessibility to needed services, particularly health. Takes too long to get a GP appointment

## **Environment**

- Lots of old buildings and infrastructure/assets (parks, play areas, public community areas) that are not being maintained – we want to save them
- Rubbish on streets
- Back gardens are a mess and not all back lanes are tarmacked
- Flooding in Crosskeys down to Pontymister – some areas supplied with flood defences
- Litter problems are widespread. Lack of maintenance on the canal, overgrown trees and brambles.
- Fly-tipping and litter on Forest Drive
- Charging and permits for household recycling centres
- Joyriding and burnt our cars on the Forest Drive/Twmbarlwm – slow response from NRW

## **Transport**

- The volume of and danger from traffic is a real issue
- Transport links (cross valley links) particularly affecting the young e.g. takes two buses to get to Newport for work
- Lack of access to work – limited connecting transport
- People's benefits sanctioned because they cannot get connecting transport e.g. get a call from DWP to change appointment for 10am but no buses to take them to the centre at that time and they cannot get back in time to town to go to another appointment
- No car park at railway station in Crosskeys which causes parking issues at Carlton Terrace and surrounding streets. 6 parking spaces at Gladstone but used by residents in the street
- Bus services – traffic problems in Newport have a knock-on effect on services coming up the valleys. Some of the services don't come into the villages
- Train – have to get a bus to the train as there are no enough stations on the line. Only one an hour and they go to Cardiff. The new line has proved itself in the first six months but cannot cope with demand and doesn't have expansion capacity. Platforms are too short for longer trains and it is only a single line. Park and ride overflowing and there is a frequency issue
- Requires a joined up approach with transport organisations working together. Parking problems on the main streets in Risca, Pontymister, Commercial Street and Tredegar Street. No traffic wardens

## **Community**

- Community is not always cohesive
- Need to recruit more volunteers to help with continuity/cohesion e.g. replacement Chair of street pastors church
- No community hall in Ty Sign
- Car park charges in country parks and Penyfan Pond

## **Town centres/shopping**

- Parking facilities in Risca town centre area are poor
- Limited choice of shops – post offices and banks replaced by takeaways and nail bars

## **Social issues**

- Not enough for younger generations to do linked to inappropriate congregation points – youth that can be intimidating
- Young parents need education to manage children – lack of playgroups in villages

## **Community safety**

- Pockets of anti-social behaviour (although in the main feel safe)
- Drug dealing and the way they treat people
- No police presence on the streets
- Issues with drugs and anti-social behaviour (Holly Road)
- Anti-social behaviour – off road bikes speeding through Abercarn, vandalism in Abercarn park
- Community safety issues with reduced policing

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

### **Education**

- Maintain and improve levels of education
- Class sizes halved or double the number of teachers to give people the best start
- Better conditions for teachers, and parents more responsible for their children – better parenting
- Strong concern about young people with special needs losing special education provision across the borough
- Back to basics education – improve standards for all

### **Housing**

- Don't build any more houses – leads to more cars and further congestion. Road infrastructure not set up to cope
- When building houses they need to ensure that they are self-sufficient e.g. create their own electricity via solar panels
- Housing very different from current stock and design. Energy efficient (retrofitted where necessary) with individual outside space. Easy access for disabled people
- More integrated housing to reduce unrest between generations. Integrated housing schemes with intergenerational communities to provide long term community integration and wellbeing. Variable design and reasonable costs – less focus on home ownership

### **Health**

- Less fast food outlets

### **Environment**

- Cwmcarn Scenic Drive needs to re-open
- Keep the parks and canals
- Keep the green spaces big time!
- More environmentally aware communities
- Barrage/tidal use for energy – connection to areas and cheaper cleaner power generation
- To step outside and the environment – protection of key countryside, parkland and natural areas unchanged
- Less litter
- Better environments and environmental education

- Increase community use of canal – navigable to Newport and well used
- Well-kept and litter free green spaces maintained including playing fields, grass areas in communities and wider environment
- Solar panels on every public car park (including Tesco etc.) and particularly public buildings and schools. All new buildings energy efficient and the development of small community generation schemes using renewable technology including turbines in rivers

### **Transport**

- Underground metro system or cable cars/zip wires
- More frequent trains at peak times
- More car parks along the old railway line
- Limited car use – use trams
- No increase in cars. Electric cars and efficient engines. Build new roads with cycle paths. More cycleways and cycling priority on roads
- Fully integrated transport system – community led, cost effective, nationalised and not for profit social enterprise model. Increase in car sharing/parking schemes by all partners including community cars, electric bikes to cope with hills.

### **Community**

- Positivity about the ageing population – they are not the problem they volunteer, provide childcare etc. and contribute massively to the community
- More places to socialise (food/drink) at day and night time – a changed night time economy mix as a place to come for a social night out
- A culture of community cohesion with people more connected. More self-reliance within communities looking back to 40/50 years ago, with the local authority providing advice to communities but not doing everything
- Younger people taking more responsibility – resources are not just money and technology does not necessarily improve communities
- Cross generational ideas – seek good practice where it exists e.g. churches and faith groups, perhaps also sports groups and societies

### **Social issues**

- Better intergenerational facilities for disabled persons (whole of life provision)
- Reduced dependency and more rounded community provision
- Design into communities 'lifestyle opportunities'
- Take in more refugees

### **Community Safety**

- We want a drug free society – don't have drug users all in one place

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

### **Education**

- Improve education levels
- Welsh should be optional not compulsory – other languages more important with French, German, Spanish used more throughout the world
- Make it interesting in real environments – play, life skills, follow the Danish model
- Stop judging by performance stats and look to experience and quality of young person's achievements

## **Housing**

- Build suitable housing for everyone, not just what sells

## **Health**

- Healthy eating and cooking in schools should be brought in for all young people – reduce levels of obesity and make people healthier, learning from a young age
- Improve health appointments – access to GPs and hospitals
- Better mental health services – need more CPN's, earlier diagnosis, reduce waiting lists
- Whole life care – appropriate care remains in the community
- Reduce dependency on medication
- Tests for at risk groups irrespective of age

## **Environment**

- Solar panels on new builds then it becomes the norm to have them – make homes self-sufficient and reliant on electricity not gas
- Turbines in rivers/local renewable energy schemes
- Zero tolerance on litter – role for the whole community including individuals, shopkeepers and local authority, more bin collections not less
- Fly tipping – charges for builders and van owners and licences causing more. Re-introduce community skip schemes
- Canal as a resource for all – clear it, make it fit for purpose and suitable for everyone, cut back and widen towpath

## **Transport**

- Underground metro to improve transport infrastructure