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**Wellbeing of Future Generations Workshop: The Caerphilly YOU want!
Mid Valleys East
11th August 2016 Newbridge Tabernacle Church, Newbridge**

Workshop Report

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. This workshop focused on Mid Valleys East, which includes the main settlements of Blackwood, Newbridge, Oakdale and Pontllanfraith.

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 11th August 2016, 12 individuals undertook a workshop, facilitated by the Corporate Policy Unit. Two of the individuals present were Council Members one represented ABUHB, one the Office of the P&CC. Others were residents and some also represented local organisations – GAVO, Groundwork, Menter Iaith, Oakdale Partnership. The workshops were facilitated by Paul Cooke (Senior Policy Officer) and Mandy Keenan (Policy Officer).

A number of young people from MVE attended the previous URV Workshop and their comments have been fed into this report.

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

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

Summary of Key Discussion Findings

A number of key themes ran through the discussions:

Jobs

- Acknowledged that the area had more than average number of job opportunities in a wide range than other parts of the borough but there was a disparity in the quality and pay.
- It was felt that there was a skills gap in the local community which prevented them from taking well paid job opportunities, leading to better jobs going to people from outside the borough.
- There was little evidence of support for the Welsh Language in the local job market.

Housing

- There was a call for a review of housing policy to ensure that all housing development was fully mixed, including low cost homes for local young people, and smaller properties for single people/ people needing to downsize.
- People moving into the borough following the high skill jobs were pushing housing prices up in places like Oakdale and Newbridge penalising local young people.
- A more innovative approach to turning disused buildings into housing was suggested.

Health

- There was a call for more preventative work to ensure children were born healthy and people had a healthy old age.
- A seamless integration of health and social care services was suggested, along with more individual responsibility for good health.

Education

- It was suggested that a more flexible approach was taken towards education to provide for lifelong learning and investment in skills programmes to provide for vocational and well as academic careers.

Environment

- There was strong agreement that the MVE area was generally a good place to live, with parks and allotments and plenty of green space.
- There was a strong feeling that green spaces should be maintained for physical and mental wellbeing.
- There was concern about litter and fly-tipping

Transport

- There was a need for a comprehensive transport policy that focussed on transport connectivity East-West as well as the traditional valley North-South. Bus links to Blackwood were adequate but timetabling could be improved.

- Investment was needed in bottleneck blackspots such as Maesycwmmmer, Crosskeys, Pontllanfraith and Hafodyrynys to link to the need to encourage inward investment by businesses.
- Roads no longer fit for purpose and businesses need good road systems
- Need for increased rail link to Newport, not just Cardiff and connectivity between all forms of public transport.

Community

- People were very positive about the communities they lived in, finding them pleasant and safe, with good facilities such as Newbridge Memo.
- Concern was expressed about the closure of pubs and community education facilities which would lead to greater social isolation with people having nowhere to go to learn or socialise.
- People felt that Newbridge had benefited from the investment and was vibrant.

Young people

- There was a call for more facilities for children and young people to reduce anti-social behaviour where it exists
- There was a positive response to the provision of the new comprehensive school
- More flexible education for those who were non-academic

Key issues for the Public Services Board to prioritize

What	Why
Transport connectivity	There was a need to ensure there was integrated transport facilities, East/West as well as North/South to bring better EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES into the borough
Improved employment opportunities	There needs to be a strong focus on working with education, further education and business to ensure people of all ages have the skills to take up better employment opportunities. Lifetime apprenticeships were considered a good way forward. People needed to be able to access varied HOUSING provision to enable local young people to remain in the borough.
Housing policy	Housing needs to be in the right place and the right type and price to support whole communities.
Countryside and environment	Encourage more appreciation and support for environment, to deal with litter and fly tipping.

Health	Continue preventative measures and encourage people to plan for old age and take responsibility for their own well-being
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