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Caerphilly County Borough Council  
SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION  
STRATEGY 2019-2029



Man gwyrddach ar gyfer chwaraeon a dull byw gweithredol  
A greener place for sport and active lifestyles



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# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCING THIS STRATEGY AND ITS INTENDED PURPOSE

- This strategy sets out a future purpose and direction for the provision of sport and active recreation in Caerphilly County Borough - it establishes the key principles and vision which will inform future decisions and actions.
- Where necessary, as and when required, the strategy implementation will be supported by more detailed communications, consultation, and business cases for action to support reports to the relevant Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and/or Full Council.

## WHAT IS SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION?

The definition of Sport and Active Recreation in relation to this strategy is based on the range of sport and physical activity opportunities provided by Caerphilly County Borough Council in conjunction with our key partners:

## THE RATIONALE FOR THE STRATEGY

- ‘Caerphilly County Borough Council has embarked on an exciting and challenging journey of improvement and change’ The Corporate Plan (2018-2023).
- ‘Rising to the future challenges it is clear that we will need to do things differently - be innovative and willing to adapt and respond to change’.
- To be successful, the Council must fundamentally redefine its unique role i.e. what we do, the services we provide, and how we provide them.
- No longer can we do what we have always done - our future role will be less about directly delivering services and more about enabling the many other organisations who already provide excellent opportunities across our communities.

**To be successful, the Council must fundamentally redefine its unique role i.e. what we do, the services we provide, and how we provide them.**

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## IMPLEMENTING THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT

- We will need to be bold - not holding on to what we have done in the past, but looking forward to ensure that the decisions we make and opportunities we provide are fit for future generations - responding to the emerging needs of our young people, the adults of tomorrow, and of course looking after the different needs of a growing older population.
- We must also make sure what we provide is going to be sustainable i.e. we can all afford to maintain service provision into the future.
- Future approaches will demand that people take greater responsibility for their own health and levels of physical activity. It is the role of the Council to support them to do this for themselves.
- To deliver a 'change agenda' the Council will also have to make a number of critical decisions. It is vital therefore, that this strategy provides a clear rationale and priorities for action. It must provide a vision for where we are going and how we are going to get there, so that everyone understands what we can achieve, what to expect of us, as well as the roles that others have to play.
- Finally, the strategy is not focused just on buildings but the activity that can take place in a wide variety of different places found throughout our County Borough and as a result of many different opportunities provided by a range of organisations.

**Future approaches will demand that people take greater responsibility for their own health and levels of physical activity.**

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## THE FORMAT

In developing this strategy we have set out:

1. What we have to achieve, our core purpose i.e. the better health and wellbeing priorities set out in our Corporate Plan (2018-2023).
2. A review of:
  - a. Our communities and their needs - what we know about our population, the place we live, current provision;
  - b. Lessons learnt from our achievements, building on what we do well, taking account of the views of others;
  - c. What we know about future needs and emerging trends.
3. The major challenges:
  - a. Poor levels of health particularly in certain areas of the county;
  - b. Reducing budgets;
  - c. The large number of facilities across the County and the deteriorating quality of our older buildings;
  - d. Increasing population and consumer demand.
4. The actions - what needs to be done.



# STRATEGY PURPOSE, PRINCIPLES, AND PRIORITIES

## OUR VISION AND HOW WE WILL DELIVER IT

- 'Our vision for sport and active recreation is to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often'.
- We will do this by encouraging a collective responsibility and approach to provide and promote appropriate opportunities across a wide range of organisations.
- We will support others and only directly provide where the need is great and no others have the expertise or capacity to:
  - Promote positive messages about health and physical activity;
  - Encourage physical activity through the provision of varied, attractive and accessible opportunities;
  - Achieve raised standards of performance and celebrate local success in sport.

**'Our vision for sport and active recreation is to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often'.**

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## OUR COMMUNITY & LEISURE SERVICE'S ROLE

- Within Caerphilly County Borough Council our Community & Leisure Service is responsible for leading the promotion of sport and active recreation. Currently the Service looks after a wide range of active recreation activities and places including children's play areas; country parks and open spaces; sports pitches; and leisure centres - usually on Secondary School sites. It also manages Outdoor Adventure Activities and Sports Development - including services ranging from GP exercise referrals to support for sport.
- The Service will ensure it is able to focus on leading and coordinating the future delivery of this Strategy.

**The Service will ensure it is able to focus on leading and coordinating the future delivery of this Strategy.**

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## HELPING DELIVER SPORT WALES' GOALS

- Through this Strategy, Caerphilly County Borough Council will also contribute to Sport Wales's Community Sport outcomes namely:
  - Generating increased frequencies of regular participation;
  - Targeting inequalities and barriers to participation;
  - Providing high quality opportunities allowing our most talented athletes to realise their potential.





## ENSURING THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- This strategy is designed to help deliver the goals and principles set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Act has put into law 7 Wellbeing Goals for a prosperous; resilient; healthier; more equal and globally responsible Wales; with cohesive communities; a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.
- Fundamentally, the Act requires 'responsible and sustainable decision making' - that Caerphilly County Borough Council considers the longer-term impact of the decisions it makes.
- Future decisions made by the Council will need to ensure sustainable developments to deliver wellbeing by:
  - Focussing on securing the sustainability of provision to meet the longer term needs of future generations - not based upon the past;
  - Understanding the root cause of issues to prevent problems from occurring;
  - Involving/considering the diversity of our population and communities in decisions that affect them;
  - Working more with others to secure future provision and sustainable solutions.

**Future decisions made by the Council will need to ensure sustainable developments to deliver wellbeing...**

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## SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION IS NOT A STATUTORY 'REQUIREMENT'

- Caerphilly County Borough Council does not have to provide most of our current sport and active recreation services - it is not a statutory responsibility. So the case for this discretionary provision - the maintenance of our facilities and services, has to be measured against their positive impact on our corporate priorities of health, regeneration, education, and future affordability.
- This strategy is therefore designed to provide a vision and rationale for the future that is directly linked to the Council's Wellbeing Objectives, its strategic priorities, as set out in the Corporate Plan (2018-2023).

**This strategy  
is designed to  
provide a vision  
and rationale for  
the future.**

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## THE CORPORATE PRIORITIES FOR SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION

- The main Wellbeing Objectives in the Corporate Plan that sport and active recreation contributes to are:
  - **Objective 1:** Improving education opportunities for all and improving the learning environment;
  - **Objective 5:** Creating a County Borough that supports a healthy lifestyle and reduces inequalities in health across the County Borough in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015;
  - **Objective 6:** Supporting citizens to remain independent and improve their wellbeing - helping keep older people involved and active in their local communities.

### **Corporate Objective 1: Improved learning attainment and environments**

- Not only does health and wellbeing positively contribute to higher educational attainment, healthier young people are more likely to become healthier adults.
- We will work with our schools to support the provision of an inspirational sport and physical activity offer, fit for future generations and to encourage a commitment to active lifestyle habits leading to our young people growing up to become more active adults.
- In the first phase of our 21st Century Schools Programme (2014-2019) over £56m has been invested in schools to improve facilities, (including the new Islwyn High School to replace Pontllanfraith and Oakdale Comprehensive Schools and Y Gwindy Welsh Medium School) - this includes new sport and physical activity spaces which are available for community use.
- We will support and develop successful approaches to maximise community use of all school facilities. Whether our secondary school facilities are part of a Leisure Centre or not, we will expect and support them to ensure they are available for community use out of school hours. We will expect an equitable standard of service regardless of whether the community use is managed by the Community and Leisure Service or School.

**Not only does health and wellbeing positively contribute to educational attainment, healthier young people are more likely to become healthier adults.**

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**Corporate Objective 5: Creating a County Borough that supports a healthy lifestyle**

- To create a place that supports a healthy lifestyle, helping encourage people to become more physically active, reducing overweight and obesity rates in children.
- To reduce inequalities in health across the County Borough:
  - We will establish a supportive partnership with our schools, securing a commitment from the top (Head Teachers and Governors) and throughout the school, to engage and motivate all children to be physically active by choice;
  - We will encourage physical activity within our communities in the most appropriate and effective ways through support that reaches out and works with others or through specific intervention programmes targeting communities - to create supportive, welcoming, attractive, easy to access activity opportunities;
  - We will aim to increase the number of visits to all sport and active recreation places across the County Borough - whether they are community centres; primary/secondary schools; parks; the countryside; sports pitches or our strategic leisure centres. This will include targeted investment where there is a clear business case to improve the activity offer such that we respond to the greatest areas of need and demand and reach out to the largest numbers of new participants i.e. targeting known popular activities such as fitness, 5 a-side football, cycling, walking, jogging, dance activities etc.

**We will work with communities and local groups to support interventions that help keep older people active and involved in their local communities.**

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**Corporate Objective 6: Supporting citizens to remain independent and improve their wellbeing**

- Helping local community clubs and groups to engage ‘older adults’ in volunteering and supporting older people to lead independent, physically active and healthy lives - stimulating both mental wellbeing as well as maintaining appropriate levels of physical activity, bodily strength and mobility.
- We will work with communities and local groups to support interventions that help keep older people active and involved in their local communities.



## SUMMARY STRATEGY PURPOSE

### Our First Key Outcome: Better Health

- We must achieve a healthier county - recognising that today's unhealthy residents might be tomorrow's customers for our health and social care services. Our long-term plan is to achieve healthier residents and communities although we recognise this will take more than a generation of change - over 20 years.

However due to serious financial constraints, we must also achieve a healthier Borough with less resources - so we will have to be 'smart' in the way we work.

### ● We will achieve our better health outcomes by:

- Inspiring our future generations of children and young people to willingly choose to adopt healthy active lifestyles - this will be the biggest contribution to generational change;
- Supporting and encouraging the provision of more opportunities for more daily active recreation in our communities and work places - by working with a wide range of other providers including encouraging increased use of the great outdoors;
- Specialist interventions e.g. exercise referral, outreach work using physical activity to improve the lives of priority groups enabling people to lead healthier lifestyles on a daily basis in their local communities. However, these will only be targeted interventions where there is evidence of need and no other alternative solution.

### Our Second Key Outcome - Healthier and Prosperous Communities

- This means stronger, safer and improved places to live, work and visit for all - communities with a sense of pride and identity.
- This vision includes:
  - Strong successful local sports clubs at the heart of every community: maintaining local facilities and the environment; providing sport and physical activity; managing events; attracting young people; engaging volunteers; creating safer and socially cohesive places to live and work, helping to keep older people involved and active locally; supporting and promoting sporting success which in turn creates role models, community pride and a feeling of wellbeing and positivity.



- In major conurbations and visitor destinations, commercial leisure attractions can also be a dynamic for regeneration - creating a better place to live and work, attracting employers and businesses and creating jobs, e.g. in North Wales - a new water park and leisure attraction in the Rhyl coastal resort will attract over 350,000 visitors as well as servicing over 40,000 local residents; or in Swansea - LC2 attracting over 750,000 footfalls a year - Wales's most visited paid for attraction for the last 7 years. Our Centre of Sporting Excellence used by Coleg y Cymoedd, Welsh Rugby Union and Dragons Rugby provides a prestigious, specialist regional sports facility attracting visitors to the area, supporting sporting success and stimulating local pride.
- **We will promote Healthier and Prosperous Communities by:**
  - Working with community sports clubs and their governing bodies to help our clubs become bigger and stronger; assisting them to improve their facilities, encouraging more volunteers and creating more sporting opportunities for participation and success;
  - Reviewing the commercial business case and options for a new or improved leisure attraction in the Caerphilly Basin to take account of a growth in new homes and to support our economic regeneration objectives for the area.

**Our Centre of Sporting Excellence used by Coleg y Cymoedd, Welsh Rugby Union and Dragons Rugby provides a prestigious, specialist regional sports facility...**

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**Our Third Key Outcome: securing a more efficient and financially sustainable future offer**

- As well as our aspirations for a healthier, more physically active and successful sporting County Borough and to close the north/south gap that exists in the average life expectancy between our residents, we also have to secure financial savings and achieve these positive outcomes with increasingly less resources. This will demand that we are smart and focussed in our future actions.
- **We will secure a more efficient and financially sustainable offer by:**
  - Maximising the use of all our community amenities and the local environment, encouraging people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing in a sustainable way. Our approach to communities will focus on building on strengths recognising each community is different and it is neither affordable or sustainable for the Council to be expected to provide the same for all and in every area;

- Maximising use of assets through co-locations, invest to save models and aim to reduce subsidy levels at our strategic leisure centres to below a range of £1 to £1.20 per user;
- Creating more sustainable facilities by improving schools use agreements; investment in more attractive strategic facilities leading to a growth in visitor numbers and rationalisation reducing overall running costs;
- Focussing our unique and essential role on providing specialist interventions in communities and with groups where it is most needed whilst recognising and supporting the role of others in providing opportunities;
- Motivating young people will be a key priority as we work collaboratively with others to inspire activity for life - generating more active adults - commissioning and supporting our schools to provide the right learning environment that is also available for community activity at appropriate times;
- Where there is a business case, we will invest in key, strategic facilities to ensure they are appropriate, attractive, inspirational and lifestyle convenient alongside working to maximise the impact of all community amenities;
- Finally, we will ensure that strategic facilities directly operated by us receive the level of regular investment required to ensure that equipment and facilities are safe, functional, modern and inspirational.

**Motivating young people will be a key priority as we work collaboratively with others to inspire activity for life**

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# A REVIEW OF WHAT WE KNOW - INFORMING FUTURE DECISIONS

## **CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS**

### ● **Customer satisfaction**

- In our bi-annual consultation over 85% of residents said they were satisfied with sport and leisure, recreation and sports ground services, with over 90% satisfied with country parks;
- Our customer satisfaction score is 98% which is 8% above the UK national average.

### ● **The performance of our leisure centres**

- We have been able to invest in some of our facilities to improve provision e.g. new fitness suites and 3G pitches. This has generated an increase in visitor numbers and we now also have over 150,000 registered Smart Card users;
- We have also continued to achieve the nationally recognised Quest quality assurance accreditation;
- However, despite our leisure centre subsidy having reduced by over £500,000 over the last 5 years, it still demands over 70% of the sport and leisure budget so the future performance and affordability of our leisure centres needs to be addressed.

### ● **Our parks and great outdoors**

- We have been successful in achieving a Green Flag status at 5 of our outdoor parks where we provide a range of activities and create a place people can enjoy;
- It is important to build on these strengths and the significant amount of green space that is available to promote wellbeing;
- Caerphilly Adventures successfully uses our great outdoors to support the Education Service and Families First initiatives and work with young people and their families improving family relations, parenting, confidence and self-esteem and delivering Duke of Edinburgh Awards.



● **Our children and young people**

- 47% of primary and secondary school children aged 7-16 engage in sport and physical activity 3 times a week and overall, there have been year on year increases in participation;
- Over 57% of 16 year olds are also members of a sports club in Caerphilly County Borough.

● **Sports development initiatives and partnerships**

- Free Swimming initiatives take place at all leisure centres and participation rates have increased year on year;
  - Caerphilly 10K is now in its 6th year attracting circa 3,000 runners and is part of the Welsh athletics annual race calendar;
  - The National Exercise Referral Scheme targeting clients who are at risk of developing, or have, a chronic disease has benefited over 1,000 people a year helping improve those participants' quality of life and life expectancy;
  - The Council is playing a lead role in the Active Gwent regional collaboration for community sport and promoting Positive Futures and Tackling Inequalities initiatives - benefiting children and young people from deprived communities who are living in poverty and being supported through an inclusion programme using sport to engage young people - attendances have grown by over 1,200 to 9,000 in 2017;
  - The Daily Mile Initiative is embedded across our Primary Schools and is helping children get fit by walking or running for 15 minutes each school day;
  - We have contributed to the “large scale change” collaborative programme with Sport Wales, Public Health Wales, Aneurin Bevan Health Board and Blaenau Gwent/Torfaen County Borough Councils aimed at getting females more active to improve health outcomes in the Heads of Valleys area. This has been a successful collaboration leading to a number of success stories and lifestyle changes;
  - Increasing women and girls participation is particularly important for health benefits and the Lets Go Girls Initiative encourages activity providers and females interested in taking part in activity to connect.
- Building on these significant achievements, this strategy sets out the direction for the future of sport and active recreation in Caerphilly County Borough to ensure the continued provision of a wide range of opportunities to benefit the health and wellbeing of our residents.

**Free Swimming initiatives take place at all leisure centres and participation rates have increased year on year.**

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## CAERPHELLY COUNTY BOROUGH - THE PLACE WE LIVE IN

- The County Borough is spread across a wide geographical area and made up of very different urban, rural, more affluent and some very deprived local communities.
- The 5 principle town centres are: Caerphilly; Blackwood; Risca; Bargoed; and Ystrad Mynach.
- Approximately 80% of the County Borough is classed as rural with a variety of attractive outdoor activity spaces i.e. uplands, lakes and rivers, public rights of way, country parks, nature reserves and many other areas that can be used for healthy active lifestyles.
- Spread across the County Borough there are over 500 different sport and physical activity places, many are old and have become 'tired', are not cost-effective to run with inefficient heating, lighting and insulation services and no longer attractive to new participants or fit for future purposes.
- **Looking to the Future**
  - More emphasis needs to be placed on the promotion of the wide variety of opportunities across the borough as well as in neighbouring areas;
  - Different approaches are needed to respond to the highly varied and different local community needs with priority given to addressing the greatest health and activity challenges in the most deprived Heads of the Valley communities;
  - The 5 town centres and population hubs should be the future focus of strategic provision - travel to destinations with good transport links. Furthermore, any future strategic sport and active recreation provision should be shared use on education sites. They are an essential requirement for Curricular and Extra Curricular activity and a cost effective way of providing expensive facilities that also serve community needs;
  - The Council must address the whole facilities infrastructure as any investment to create fit for future generations facilities will first demand rationalisation and savings in order to finance better quality, more sustainable, fit for purpose facilities in strategic locations.

**Different approaches are needed to respond to the highly varied and different local community needs...**

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CAERPHELLY COUNTY BOROUGH... ABOUT THE PEOPLE

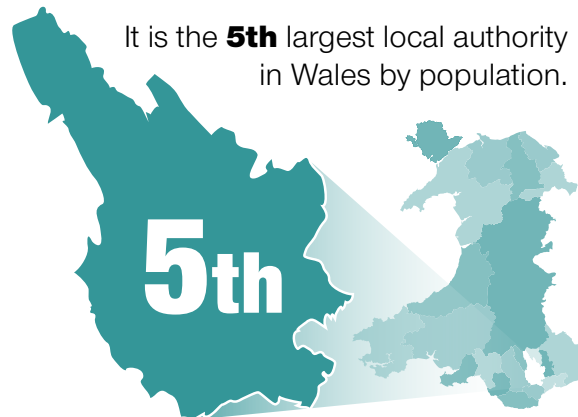
POPULATION SIZE

**180,000**

people live in Caerphilly County Borough.



It is the **5th** largest local authority in Wales by population.



The population is expected to grow by over

**2,155**

people within the next **20** years and alongside this

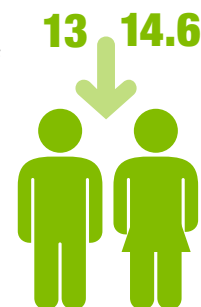
significant additional housing is planned particularly in the south of the County Borough in the Caerphilly basin area.

HEALTH

**74%** of adults in the County Borough do not meet national physical activity guidelines. The percentage of adults who are overweight or obese within Caerphilly County Borough is **4%** higher than the Wales average of **59%**, and by **2050** it is predicted that **60%** of adult men, **50%** of adult women and **25%** of children will be obese.

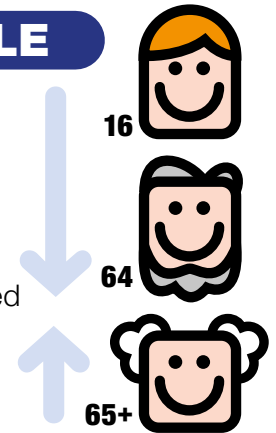


People living in areas of higher deprivation also have higher levels of ill health with life expectancy varying greatly depending on where you live. Between the least and most deprived areas there is a healthy life expectancy gap of **13** years for men and nearly **14.6** years for women.



AGE PROFILE

It is anticipated that numbers of people between 16 and 64 will decrease over the next 20 years, but the numbers of people aged over 65 will increase by nearly **42.2%** in the same period.



ECONOMIC PROFILE

**P45**

Caerphilly County Borough has some of the most deprived areas in Wales. It has the **5th** highest percentage of people claiming benefits and the joint **5th** lowest employment rate of 16 to 64 year olds compared to the rest of Wales.



● **Looking to the Future**

- There is a need to give priority to help increase activity levels to reduce the health inequalities and levels of obesity with a focus on local community solutions and engaging young people - our future generations;
- A growing and changing population will require appropriate levels of provision to meet demand and with new housing developments comes opportunities to negotiate planning gains to support future community needs - this sport and active recreation strategy should be used to support the business case for these plans;
- There will be a growing need to focus on helping maintain active and independent lifestyles amongst an ever increasing ageing population with more diverse needs.

**There will be a growing need to focus on helping maintain active and independent lifestyles...**

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## WHICH OF THE SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION ACTIVITIES ARE THE MOST POPULAR

- People leading healthy active lives do so through a wide variety of mediums ranging from allotment gardening and domestic activities to work place activities, cycling to work, walking to a bus stop, swimming, walking the dog etc.
- As well as this, there are over 87 recognised sport and physical activities to choose from ranging from dance, yoga, netball, fencing, a wide range of martial arts, weight training, gymnastics, angling, golf to team sports like netball, rugby and football.
- However, the most significant numbers of adult participation figures are achieved through individual exercise and informal activities which are easy to access and fit into busy lifestyles - walking, cycling and jogging or using the great outdoors with few activities dependent on our built facilities. The most popular activities amongst adults are:
  - walking - 47% of adults participating;
  - indoor exercise activities - 21% of adults participating.
- The great outdoors - our natural resources are also important for encouraging healthier and more active lifestyles - 35% of adults have identified they would like to visit the outdoors to be more active more often with the range of activities becoming more diverse. An example of this is Parkrun:
  - Junior Parkrun - 44 Juniors (age 4-14 years) are participating each week, from 15 clubs;
  - Parkrun (Age 14+) 166 Adults are participating each week from over 203 clubs.

**The most significant numbers of adult participation figures are achieved through individual exercise and informal activities.**

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## Future Sport and Active Recreation

- **Adults - into the future**
  - 'Acting today for an Active Tomorrow' identifies trends which will transform sport in Wales, in a report produced in 2014 by A Sport Wales's Advisory Group. This identified a number of themes that should be considered by providers in making future plans i.e. the need to be more responsive to:
    - People leading more demanding lifestyles and having less time therefore requiring easier access to doorstep activities;

- Customers having higher expectations needing a more ‘commercial standard’ of opportunity i.e. more customer orientated services as well as higher quality facilities;
- The need for greater use of technology to engage people i.e. through mobile devices;
- A more mixed economy of facility providers as a result of emerging not for profit operators, social and community interest companies alongside an ever-changing commercial sector;
- Future sport and active recreation opportunities need to be ever more “lifestyle convenient”, for example:
  - Easy to Play Sport e.g. Futsal and 5 a-side leagues; Back to Netball and Hockey - social participation for adults; Parks Tag Rugby and other easy to organise and access small-sided team games;
  - Easy to access outdoor fitness activities when it is most suitable to the individual i.e. in safe walking, jogging and cycling settings (Caerphilly County Borough Council already supports many events that help respond to these demands i.e. parkruns, cycling events etc.).

**Future sport and active recreation opportunities need to be ever more “lifestyle convenient.”**

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● **Young People - into the future**

- Sport England’s Youth Insights Pack (August 2014) highlights how it is important to look at ways of more effectively reaching out to young people - they have grown up in an environment that is totally different to that of previous generations - this demands change just to maintain levels of interest amongst each new age group i.e.:
  - Technology is an integral part of young people’s lives;
  - Reasons for young people to take part need to be relevant to their lives - what matters to them, not what matters to adults and decision makers. Teenagers are also increasingly looking towards the benefits of active lifestyles for reasons of looking and feeling good as well as health and fitness;
  - Participation by children is influenced by what they get offered at school, as well as by the views of parents and friends. Once these influences are removed and lifestyles change, activity levels start to decline;



● **Looking to the Future**

- Caerphilly County Borough Council will need to review and adjust its unique role in response to the many competing and alternative offers that are available;
- To significantly increase activity levels there is a need to give priority to the opportunities that are attractive to the biggest audiences. Where possible this will include investment in better quality facilities for the biggest and fastest growing participation activities - those that have become more popular due to changing lifestyles and people choosing to be active for health and social reasons i.e. exercise, fitness, dance, walking, jogging, cycling, 5 a-side football etc;
- Sport and physical activity facilities in schools, particularly our secondary schools, need to be designed to inspire a nation of young people committed to becoming active adults - currently many school facilities do not meet these expectations;
- Alongside activity venues in local communities, strategically located specialist sports facilities are important to provide for training and competition at the higher levels and to deliver the vision for a 'nation of champions', however whilst specialist facilities are needed they are not necessarily required in all Local Authority areas;
- To embrace these recommendations we will adopt the 'Facilities for Future Generations - blueprint for sport and active recreation in Wales'. (Welsh Government and Sport Wales [March 2016]).

**To significantly increase activity levels there is a need to give priority to the opportunities that are attractive to the biggest audiences.**

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# MAJOR CHALLENGES TO BE OVERCOME

## **BETTER HEALTH CHALLENGES**

- Since the Welsh Health Survey started, obesity levels have increased and there has been little evidence of change in physical activity levels. Survey reports have shown that:
  - 58% of adults are overweight and 22% obese;
  - 33% of adults are limited in their day to day activities because of health problems or disability;
  - Only 29% of adults are reported as physically active but there are more men than women active although this decreases with age;
  - Around 1/3 of adults are not physically active at all.
- Low levels of physical activity along with unhealthy eating are leading to significant increases in levels of obesity.
- There are particularly higher incidents of poor health and low levels of physical activity in areas of multiple deprivation.
- Overall it is estimated that the total cost of physical inactivity to Wales is in the regional of £650,000,000 per annum.
- Despite these trends 'Creating an Active Wales' reports how physical activity has many mental as well as physical health and wellbeing benefits i.e.
  - Up to 50% reduced risk of developing major chronic diseases such as heart diseases/ diabetes and some cancers;
  - A 20-30% reduced risk of premature death.
- **Looking to the Future:**
  - Targeted community interventions and low cost, accessible/local, indoor and outdoor health and fitness activity centres are more likely to be attractive to women and disengaged participants who it is difficult to encourage to adopt more active lifestyles.



## MAJOR FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

- Caerphilly County Borough Council has already made considerable savings in recent years - over £82,000,000 but further savings of over £34,000,000 are still needed in the next 3 years.
- For the most part, sport and active recreation provision is not a statutory requirement of local government and although Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to maintaining front line services, it does recognise things need to change.
  - The Community & Leisure Services budget must achieve reductions over the course of this Strategy.
- **Looking to the Future**
  - The more effective use of our many different community facilities will need to be part of the future offer to increase activity levels;
  - This strategy also makes the case for rationalisation enabling some savings to be used to enable investment alongside innovation and transformation.

**The more effective use of our many different community facilities will need to be part of the future offer to increase activity levels.**

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## BUILT FACILITY CHALLENGES

- The Council has too many different facilities including leisure centres, many of which are old and vary in quality with high levels of maintenance required - there is a need for fewer but better quality provision. A summary schedule of the 500+ different sport and physical activity spaces across the County Borough is summarised in the adjacent table.
- Caerphilly County Borough Council's independent review of Leisure Centres in 2014 also reported the need for a rationalisation of the separately managed leisure centres.
- 8 of the 10 leisure centres are on Secondary School sites and used by schools during the day. This use is heavily subsidised through the Sport & Leisure budget. Four Secondary Schools have strategic leisure facilities of which any community use is not managed by Sport & Leisure Services.
- The provision of appropriate sport and physical activity facilities on secondary school sites that are accessible for Curricular and Extra Curricular activities is a requirement - wherever possible these should be managed to be available for community use out of school hours.

Table 1: Summary Schedule of Sport and Active Recreation

Facilities Where Physical Activity Can Occur	Total Number of Activity Spaces
<b>Indoor</b>	
Sports Halls	15
Community Centres	50
Youth Centres	20
Swimming Pools	8
Primary Schools i.e. halls	80
<b>Outdoor</b>	
Artificial Turf Pitches (ATPs) Type 1: Sand based shorter pile more suitable for hockey Type 2: '3G' pitches longer pile with rubber infill more suitable for football and rugby	16 Type 1: 7 Type 2: 9 (2@COSE)
Country Parks	6
Youth Shelters	21
Playgrounds (excluding primary school playgrounds)	104
Multi-use Games Areas	25
Skate Parks	9
Kick Walls	10
Football and Rugby Grass Pitches (excluding school pitches)	116
Bowling Greens	20
Cricket Wickets	9
Tennis Courts	18
	500+

- The majority of the Council's investment (approximately 70%) in 'Sport & Leisure Services' - is taken up by the cost of running traditional leisure facilities - with Caerphilly County Borough Council operating more Leisure Centres than any other Local Authority in Wales.
- The cost of maintaining the Leisure Centres in the County Borough is the highest in Wales - over £1m per annum:
  - The subsidy per person is over £1.50 - to bring this subsidy closer to other areas, this figure should be less than £1 to £1.20 - this cannot be achieved without rationalisation and modernisation;
  - There is a significant capital investment liability due to the age of the leisure centres - currently estimated at over £3m;
  - There is also a need for a capital budget to invest in upgraded equipment such as modernised fitness suites, spin bikes and new 3G pitches which increase levels of use following investment.
- Customer comment reports have also identified the need for improvement i.e. 'changing rooms need upgrading', 'the centre is looking dated now' and the need for change given the current financial climate is also recognised.
- Generally across Wales less than 30% of the adult population visit a leisure centre and many of the County Borough Leisure Centres are not generating more users - in half these numbers are declining. Only 3 key strategically located centres in Caerphilly County Borough are attracting over 250,000 visits a year with the majority servicing less than 100,000 visits per year.

### ● **Looking to the Future**

- Facilities for Future Generations - the blueprint for sport and active recreation in Wales'. Welsh Government and Sport Wales (March 2016) will be adopted by Caerphilly County Borough Council providing the framework for future sport and active recreation facilities. This will take into consideration:
  - The needs of future generations;
  - The need for inspirational learning environments for children and young people on school sites;
  - The need to invest in better quality, more fit for purpose and future facilities that are strategically located;
  - The need to rationalise the existing number of different facilities that are no longer fit for purpose or sustainable into the future set in context with all other active space facilities such as community centres, primary schools, youth centres, outdoor parks etc.;
  - Defining future expectations for and delivery of aquatic provision linked to facility rationalisation.

## **OTHER FACILITY CHALLENGES - MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF ALL SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION AMENITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Outdoor sports pitches**

- Grass sports pitches across the County Borough also present a future challenge. Changing climates and reducing budgets provide an increasing challenge for the maintenance of these facilities alongside which capital investment in improved or new drainage is important to help overcome pitch quality issues. Increasingly long spells of wet weather, has resulted in these important facilities which serve the biggest sports becoming a threat to future levels of activity.
- Furthermore, less than 30% of the cost of maintaining the grass pitches is recovered through income due to the low levels of use that is possible to sustain on the grass pitches.
- In total, there are over 120 sports pitches, 20 bowling greens, 9 cricket wickets and a number of tennis courts, more than any other Local Authority in Wales. There are also a large number of football and rugby clubs - over 130 relying on these facilities. However, many of these clubs are small and 'nomadic' relying on access to different and often poor quality grass pitches. On the other hand, Clubs with owned or leased facilities are able to invest more time and resources into maintaining their pitches to a higher standard and can more easily attract members, generate income and become a stronger community clubs.
- In addition to the natural turf pitches, there are 16 artificial turf pitches - again more than any other area in Wales. Nine of these pitches are 3G football/rugby surfaces - a full sized floodlit 3G pitch can provide the same level of use as 5 grass pitches.
  - Looking to the Future Artificial turf '3G' pitches are an important part of future outdoor pitch provision - they provide a consistent quality of service that can be used in all weathers;
  - There is a case to be made for more strategically located 3G pitches to support grass-pitch provision - also taking account of the potential to maximise the beneficial use of school facilities;
  - Future approaches should include support for clubs to play a greater role in the future management and maintenance of sports pitches and pavilions. This would help and lead towards better facilities as well as stronger, more sustainable community clubs;
  - At least one 3G pitch should be available on all secondary school sites with a community sports partnership that guarantees the out of hours use and the formation of sports clubs hubs.

## MAXIMISING COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

- The Welsh Government and Local Authority 21st Century Schools programme is intended to help create 'fit for the future' sport and active lifestyle facilities for Wales. Investment is expected to deliver:
  - Learning environments supporting improvement and better education outcomes including health and wellbeing;
  - Greater economies and efficiencies through better use of resources including community use;
  - Sustainable facilities that help to reduce costs and carbon footprints;
  - Finally, this is more than a building programme - 21st Century Schools are intended to impact on both public and community learning, health and wellbeing outcomes.
- This strategy recognises the importance of schools as an essential part of the future community sport and active recreation offer. Currently there is an inconsistent approach to access to school facilities for the wider community.
- **Looking to the Future**
  - The Community & Leisure and Education Services will establish a joint vision to deliver the healthy physical activity outcomes in this strategy as well as serving school and wider community needs. This will inform a robust joint use agreement with clear priorities and outcomes supported by appropriate sustainable funding models.

**This strategy recognises the importance of schools as an essential part of the future community sport and active recreation offer.**

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## PLAY AMENITIES

- Caerphilly County Borough has 178 different “play” facilities including fixed play provision, kick walls, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) skate parks etc. Such provision is governed by Welsh Government Play Sufficiency duties and is separately covered by bespoke strategies and plans.



## OUTDOOR PARKS AND THE NATURAL OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

- Of the 42% of the adult population reported by Sport Wales to be 'hooked on sport' in Caerphilly, the majority do so through activities taking place in facilities that don't demand a strategic sports hall or swimming pool.
- High levels of physical activity are enjoyed in a wide range of environments stretching from the countryside to highways, paths and bridle ways used for walking, cycling and jogging.
- The council's active travel integrated network map was approved in February 2018.
- The natural resources in Caerphilly County Borough provide significant opportunities to increase activity levels.
- It has a large number of high quality countryside as well as more traditional formal parks - 5 of which have a green flag accreditation.
- There is a significant level of countryside and open space - the Countryside Service manages parks, rights of way, nature reserves/managed biodiversity sites and a canal network. In addition there is a substantial amount of unmanaged countryside and open space.
- The Council also provides an Outdoor Adventure Service which supports a range of outdoor activities as well as the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.
- Whilst important to this strategy, these areas of provision are separately covered by bespoke, formally adopted plans and strategies.

**The natural resources in Caerphilly County Borough provide significant opportunities to increase activity levels.**

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# WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE


## 1. Corporate Policy

- a. In adopting this strategy Caerphilly County Borough Council recognises that sport and active recreation makes a significant contribution to achieve healthy lifestyles, education, economy and regeneration across the County Borough.
- b. Recognising that it is no longer feasible to provide the ‘same service for all’, the Council’s unique role will focus on:
  - i. Working with others to make the best use of all available opportunities, facilities, funding and people;
  - ii. Making better and more innovative use of the widest possible range of indoor and outdoor physical activity spaces across all communities;
  - iii. Specialist interventions in approaches and places that will have the greatest long term health impact on priority target audiences and where no others are in a position to provide such assistance.
- c. A joint sport and active recreation and schools strategy will be pursued to achieve a single, shared outcome of more young people becoming active adults through more inspirational learning experiences, whilst also ensuring the learning environments are maximised for community use out of school hours. This will include a new fit for purpose, robust joint use agreement with schools with clear priorities and outcomes.

## 2. Facilities

- a. To inform future decision making, the Council will adopt:
  - i. The Welsh Government and Sport Wales Facilities Blueprint for Sport and Active Recreation (See Table 2) informing all physical activity spaces and their use across the County Borough;
  - ii. A decision making matrix for determining the provision of strategic Leisure facilities that are directly managed by the Sport & Leisure Service (See Table 3);

**A joint sport and active recreation and schools strategy will be pursued to achieve a single, shared outcome of more young people becoming active adults through more inspirational learning experiences.**





- iii. An “invest to save” strategy enabling the future rationalisation of some facilities, to help achieve a more sustainable future service alongside investment of some savings secured to enhance the quality and customer offer at strategic sites as well as in local communities.

Table 2: Blueprint for Future Generations - Sport and Active Recreation Facilities

Facilities Framework	Action
<p><b>Facilities Framework Level 1</b> Local community assets and club facilities essential to serve the needs of sport and doorstep activity - enabling daily active lifestyles i.e. the outdoors for green exercise, multipurpose community halls, sports clubs, primary schools, community parks, community centres, health centres, libraries, church and village halls.</p>	<p>Any future sport and active recreation facility delivery should consider all of these assets and their potential to provide locally accessible physical activity hubs particularly targeting deprived communities. Delivery should include opportunities for potential co-location and shared management to maximise sustainability of future community amenities.</p>
<p><b>Facilities Framework Level 2</b> Strategic, ‘travel to’ wider community facilities located on education/secondary school or college sites to maximise use, ensure value for money and because the provision of good quality inspirational physical activity facilities is an obligatory requirement for all schools.</p>	<p>The strategic policy should establish a clear expectation that future school facilities (buildings and pitches) deliver appropriate and fit for purpose physical activity, teaching and recreational spaces as well as contributing to the community sport and active recreation offer including the development of school/community sports club hub management models.</p>
<p><b>Facilities Framework Level 3</b> Large strategic “commercial” sport or leisure tourist attractions of regional or national significance. This would include leisure centre provision in the south west of the county borough and the Centre of Sporting Excellence.</p>	<p>Adopt a future sport and active recreation investment strategy that delivers a commercially sustainable leisure attraction in the south west of the county borough, in response to the significant growth in new housing.</p>

**The strategic policy should establish a clear expectation that future school facilities deliver appropriate and fit for purpose physical activity...**

Table 3: Strategic Leisure Centre Needs Assessment Matrix

Assessment Criteria	Measurement Factors
Impact analysis Number of visitors	1. Over 250k visits pa 2. Shared daytime use with education provider
Need Centre of population Access - travel to location; public transport routes; car parking No competing facilities	1. Easy to access car park, major public routes 2. No other local competing with school/community/commercial offers
Fitness for purpose Fit for future generations 21st Century design Inspirational school	1. Range of 21st century amenities - fitness, dance, activity studio, 3G, spa 2. Strategic standalone facility only in major population centre/visitor destination
Running cost Subsidy per user/sustainability	1. Subsidy per user under £1 to £1.20

- b. A rationalisation of facilities will result in 4 strategic, high quality, multi service leisure centres that are managed by the authority's Sport and Leisure Service. The 4 strategic centres will be located in Risca, Caerphilly, and Newbridge, and one in the Bargoed/Aberbargoed areas to serve the north of the county borough. It is therefore anticipated that the other leisure centres would either transfer to school management (if they are joint use facilities located on a school site, subject to governing body approval) or could close completely.
- c. The Council will clarify the future swimming entitlement along with supporting the rationale for a sustainable programme of aquatic delivery also informing the need for future aquatic facilities.
- d. In terms of Outdoor Facilities, the Council will:
  - i. develop a plan to enhance and maximise the impact of outdoor spaces, playing fields, parks and informal recreational spaces, where possible utilising investment resulting from planning gain;
  - ii. maximise the use of 3G facilities for school, community and weekend competitive use alongside the grass pitch network, supporting the development of stronger sports clubs.

### 3. Sport and active recreation outreach and intervention programmes

The Council will continue to:

- a. Collaborate with schools to motivate children and young people to adopt and continue healthy active lifestyles through inspirational physical activity experiences whilst they are in education;
- b. Provide targeted support to help keep older people involved and active in local communities helping local organisations to provide ways of supporting older people/less independent people lead healthy lives through low intensity, social and easy to access physical activities;
- c. Encourage and support federations of clubs sharing resources, helping to build stronger, more sustainable, and successful sports clubs;
- d. Provide essential support underpinning sporting success;
- e. Provide specialist interventions to reach targeted audiences where there is evidence of need and no other alternative provider;
- f. Lead the regional Active Gwent collaboration programme to increase participation in sport and physical activity in a way that has the greatest impact in Caerphilly.

**The Council will adopt a collaborative approach with schools to motivate children and young people to adopt and continue healthy active lifestyles...**



Caerphilly County Borough Council

# SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY 2019-2029

