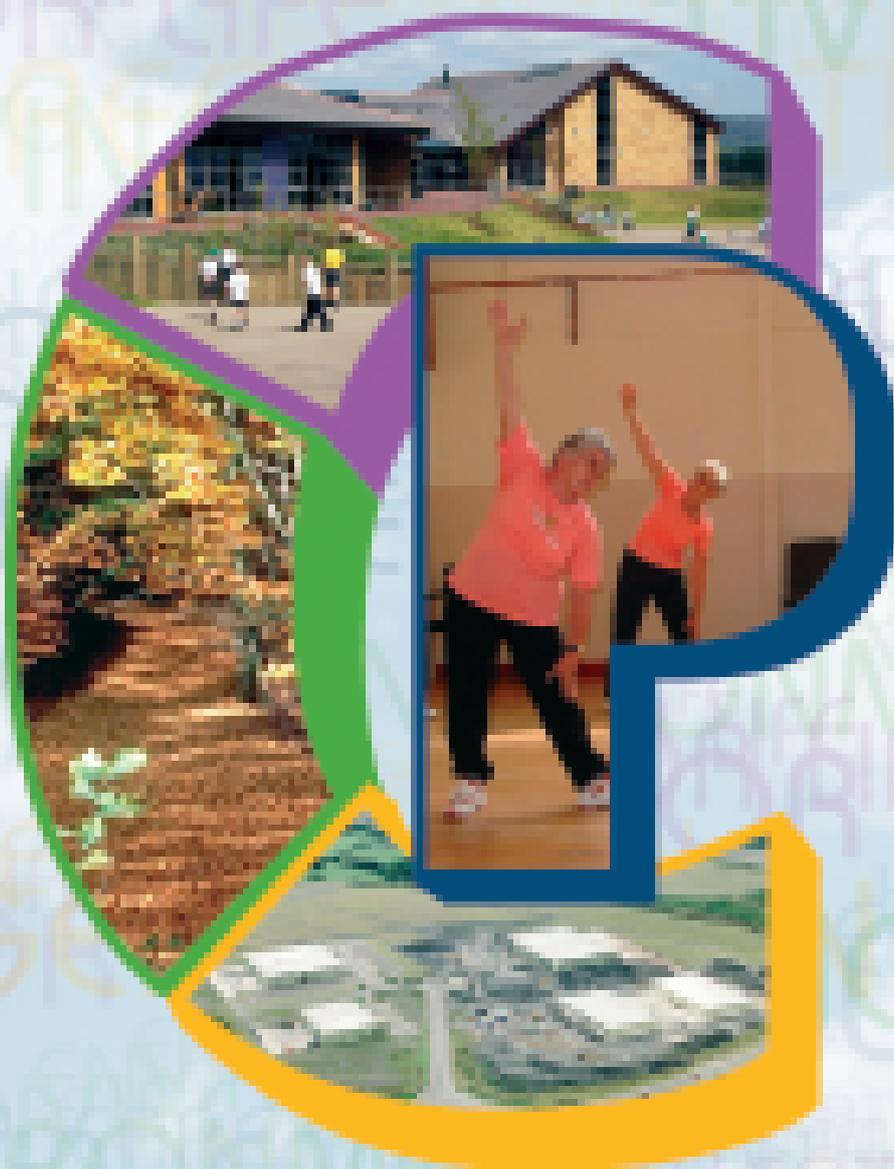


# Caerphilly County Borough



# Community Strategy

Community Planning in Action

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the community strategy for Caerphilly county borough. It is based on four and a half years of work in partnership by public, private and voluntary organisations and local communities (see 'timeline' in Appendix 1). It sets out how we will work together over the next 10-15 years to make this county borough a place where we:

- like to live and want to stay and make a home - our **Living Environment** theme
- can find opportunities for (paid and unpaid) work that we find rewarding - our **Regeneration** theme
- can develop our range of interests, knowledge and activities - our **Education for Life** theme
- can lead a full, healthy life and get treatment, support and care as and when required - our **Health, Social Care and Well-Being** theme.

In all our work we have given a commitment to a partnership approach to planning and delivery of services - involving organisations and communities - to achieve **sustainable** social, economic and environmental improvements. We have also agreed to promote a culture of **opportunities for all**, regardless of colour, ethnic origin, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language or nationality.

The strategy has been developed from a number of stages of work in a logical sequence, covering:

- our assessment of '**where we are now**' in terms of each of our four themes and the arrangements we have put in place to support joint working (this information is presented in Appendix 2)
- our visions of '**where we want to be**', including the objectives we have set to help us work towards to our visions for the area (Chapter 2)
- '**how we are going to get there**', setting out what we will do together to ensure a focus on things that really matter to our communities (Chapter 3)
- '**how we will measure progress**' against our objectives (Chapter 4).

In essence, the community strategy is based on four main 'signals':

- all organisations and communities need to start to work towards the same objectives (and agree targets against them) (those in Chapter 2)
- efforts must be targeted at areas of need and areas of opportunity, with links developed between them wherever this helps to realise our objectives
- a small number of 'beacon projects' are being promoted as priorities for action: all organisations and communities are encouraged to look at how they can contribute to or feed off of these (details in Chapter 3).
- commitment to four strategic partnerships, local community partnerships and co-ordination between them all will be fundamental to success.

## CHAPTER 2: WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

For each of the four themes **'visions'** have been developed. These consist of a number of statements that describe the future we are aiming for in Caerphilly county borough. There are also **objectives** under each of the four themes. These are to ensure that we progress from where we are now to where we would like to be and show what we have to deal with if we are to get closer to our visions for the area. They have been developed in light of partnership working at all levels: with the National Assembly and at sub-regional, county borough and local levels. (Appendix 3 shows the links between the community strategy, other partnerships and the plans they produce). The visions and objectives are shown below for each theme in turn. There are obvious links between these visions and, inevitably many objectives will require actions that cut across all four themes. The process of community planning seeks to develop this way of working to ensure an integrated, 'holistic' approach, with regular communication and close co-ordination of efforts.

It is clear that there is a large gap between 'where we are now' (appendix 2) and the visions as outlined below. There is a need to develop realistic targets for the short (1-3 years), medium (4-10 years) and long (11-15 years) term to work towards the visions. These need to be developed and agreed through the community planning process but, for this to happen effectively, the process needs to be facilitated. Clear requirements and timescales will be agreed, along with defined allocations of resources, responsibilities and accountabilities. Appendix 9 sets out the implementation plan for the next 12 months, which includes production of an initial three year plan with targets. This will include provision for the consideration and development of medium and long term targets.

### LIVING ENVIRONMENT VISION

There is a wide choice of **well-designed, high quality, affordable and efficient housing** to purchase or to rent to suit all lifestyles and aspirations. People are able to choose where they want to live in the county borough, regardless of their needs or choice of tenure

Housing and economic development have been carefully managed to minimise their impact on the environment and have been combined with road transport planning to ensure **ease of access to employment and services** within the county borough and in Cardiff and Newport

People living in towns and villages **value the large areas of countryside**, the large variety of wildlife in the county borough and high quality of the air and rivers. People and businesses take responsibility for enhancing their local environment (both urban and rural), **preventing pollution and flytipping and minimising waste/litter** and use of water and energy

Local people and visitors alike have easy, **low cost access to the rural areas** of the county and local heritage attractions via a good rights of way network and a choice of low impact transport

People of all ages **take an interest in community life** and helping others to find activities to engage in, particularly in areas where anti-social behaviour and fear of crime were once a problem

**People feel safe** in their own homes, neighbourhoods and town centres. A well-known network of local wardens exists to provide advice and help on environmental, community safety and housing issues.

In order to realise this vision, the objectives that we must pursue, as agreed by all partner agencies, are as follows:

### **LIVING ENVIRONMENT OBJECTIVES - We must:**

- 1 encourage the development and maintenance of high quality, well designed and efficient, sustainable homes and environments which can meet all needs
- 2 promote a culture of community self-help, cohesion and citizenship and involvement in decision making
- 3 improve community safety and quality of life by reducing crime, nuisance behaviour and the fear of crime
- 4 increase awareness of opportunities for safe access to the countryside and open spaces
- 5 ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, including the quality of air and river/watercourses, flood prevention, landscape and biodiversity, and our built heritage
- 6 encourage the improvement of town and village centres as a focus for community pride, accessible facilities and activities
- 7 develop and promote local and accessible community based services and activities for all
- 8 improve energy, waste and water efficiency and promote environmentally acceptable renewable energy to reduce fuel poverty, maintain a cleaner environment and help reduce global warming.

### **REGENERATION VISION**

- There has been a successful response to loss of manufacturing jobs, taking advantage of **broadband communications** and other opportunities to diversify the local economy
- **New opportunities for work** of a rewarding nature in a variety of settings have been developed within the county borough without damaging the local environment (e.g. office-based jobs in accessible locations, homeworking, small local businesses, community run enterprises, 'green-based' initiatives such as biofuels)
- **Less people have to commute out of the county borough** to find employment because of the increase in local opportunities and improved access to them
- Regeneration opportunities have been created and enhanced throughout the county borough by substantial **improvements to the rail and road network** (including Bargoed by-pass, Sirhowy Enterprise Way). There are ongoing discussions about further improvements to the Rhymney and Ebbw Valley lines.
- Pressure for development in the south has been successfully channelled northwards **creating several thousand new jobs in a mid valley growth corridor**, with good transport links (private, public, community transport) for job seekers from all communities
- Our **town centres** have been revitalised through increased office employment (in some cases with 24-hour operations), greater variety of retail and leisure outlets accessible to all and increased prosperity within communities - all feeding off of each other

- A substantial **tourism industry with an 'outdoor pursuits' focus** is creating opportunities for jobs directly and in related activities (such as catering, bed and breakfast, retail, crafts, bike hire, stables)
- The **environment is valued as a vital part of regeneration**, providing both the backdrop and a range of opportunities for economic activity
- There are increased opportunities for work - paid and unpaid - and support for those in work (e.g. childcare, other caring responsibilities) resulting in a steady increase in **economic activity rates** to the point where they are on a par with or above national averages.
- The **Business Forum** has built on the extensive knowledge and experience of its members, offers services of mutual benefit and support, encourages inter-trading and helps businesses to play an active role in community regeneration activities

In order to realise this vision, the objectives that we must pursue, as agreed by all partner agencies, are as follows:

### ***REGENERATION OBJECTIVES - We must:***

- 9 support town and village centre and other area based regeneration and develop sustainable tourism opportunities
- 10 generate sustainable, accessible and varied, well-paid employment opportunities locally, to encourage economic prosperity whilst reducing the need to travel
- 11 encourage, promote and develop opportunities for volunteering
- 12 ensure mechanisms that enable equal access to training and employment
- 13 develop and promote business advice and support systems to encourage innovative, sustainable and legitimate business practice including local purchasing initiatives
- 14 expand and develop the use of ICT across all sectors
- 15 develop integrated, efficient local and regional transport systems, including public transport, cycling and walking networks

### ***EDUCATION FOR LIFE VISION***

Local communities value education and young people are encouraged to reach their full potential through appropriate academic and vocational learning opportunities

Formal education in schools is of a high quality and instils confidence and high aspirations in children and young people. Outside school young people are able to pursue leisure and cultural activities that are designed to meet their interests

Education and training continue after formal education has finished and residents are able to access suitable courses and activities to enhance their lives

The importance of pre-school lives of children (and support for their parents) is recognised and activities and support for children, parents and carers are available in all communities

It is no longer necessary to provide basic skills education for adults

Everyone has the knowledge and understanding to make informed choice about lifestyle

Welsh medium education is complemented by increasing opportunities for the use of Welsh in the wider community, resulting in an ongoing increase in the use of the Welsh language

Educational achievements and skills of local residents have risen steadily and are now either on a par with national averages or above average, increasing confidence levels and producing successful local role models for young people to seek to emulate

In order to realise this vision, the objectives that we must pursue, as agreed by all partner agencies, are as follows:

### ***EDUCATION FOR LIFE OBJECTIVES -We must:***

- 16 develop learning opportunities for all ages and abilities with an emphasis on community-based opportunities
- 17 ensure children and young people have a foundation that enables them to take advantage of all life opportunities
- 18 enhance education and training opportunities for 14-19 year olds and improve standards
- 19 provide advice and information on all public and voluntary sector services
- 20 raise awareness and use of the Welsh language
- 21 increase appreciation of environmental assets and utilise their potential for enhanced quality of life and sustainable tourism opportunities
- 22 address pollution and encourage waste minimisation, reuse and recycling of resources.
- 23 increase opportunities for and participation in leisure, sport, cultural and arts activities

### ***HEALTH SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING VISION***

People are living longer, healthier lives

When people are unwell they are able to access the services they need, as locally as possible, within a reasonable time scale

Treatment and care is provided seamlessly between organisations

Services are expanded and reoriented in anticipation of the rising proportion of older people and independence is fostered whenever it is desired

Everyone recognises they have responsibility for their own health and have the information and understanding to make informed healthy lifestyle choices, in the context of wider environmental influences on their health and well-being

The incidence of poor mental health and substance misuse is declining year on year

Indicators of health amongst local residents have shown steady improvement and overall health scores are now either on a par with national averages or above average

In order to realise this vision, the objectives that we must pursue, as agreed by all partner agencies, are as follows:

## ***HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES - We must:***

- 24 reduce health inequalities by tackling deprivation and the wider determinants of health
- 25 improve public health by promoting factors that contribute to healthy lifestyle and well-being
- 26 expand and develop community based health and social care services
- 27 enable independent living in local communities, through appropriate support mechanisms for individuals, families and carers
- 28 develop and strengthen preventative work and service provision for vulnerable children and adults

Running through all of the above visions is the commitment to sustainable forms of development and to equality for all sections of the community. This gives rise to our visions for sustainability and equalities on the next page. Fundamental to successful pursuit of all of the visions and objectives is the need to achieve an appropriate blend of the right environment, service provision and personal capacity/responsibility.

### ***VISION FOR SUSTAINABILITY***

Our vision for a sustainable county borough is one where people are proud to live in sustainable communities where we:

Value our clean environment, where there is prudent use of all natural resources, no flytipping or litter and our waste is recycled and composted

Recognise the potential of our strong communities where everyone plays their full part in society and volunteering and unpaid work are valued. Community partnerships and local voluntary organisations are thriving

Can get to jobs, services and facilities by walking, cycling or using public transport and don't have to use a car or travel long distances

Value our unique environment and mining heritage and take advantage of the easy access to the countryside for recreation and tourism and enjoyment of plants and wildlife

Recognise the effects of climate change and insensitive land use on a range of issues (e.g. flooding; landslips; diversity of plants and animals) and respond accordingly (e.g. minimising use of energy / non-renewable resources; preventing inappropriate development in areas of flood risk and on flood plains; giving due regard to water catchment management and agricultural practice)

Maximise the benefits of being close to Cardiff and Newport and other areas without becoming dependent or losing our own distinct identity

Increasingly enjoy good health throughout our lives

Feel safe in our homes and communities

Have some of the best school results in Wales and retain (and attract/attract back) a skilled and educated workforce for the county borough

Enjoy economic well-being in a way that doesn't jeopardise our environment and allows us to do everything set out above

## ***VISION FOR EQUALITIES***

All institutional processes, assumptions and practices that may lead to discrimination have been eliminated from all organisations within the county borough area

All organisations and businesses operating within the area prioritise equality thereby ensuring that all discriminatory and physical barriers, which prevent equal access to goods, service and employment, have been identified and removed

All residents and visitors to the area feel confident they are in an environment that is free of any prejudice and discrimination

There is equal opportunity in employment so that everyone is confident that all jobs within the area are equally accessible to all, regardless of colour, ethnic origin, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, religion, language or nationality.

All services can be accessed through the medium of Welsh or English and other languages when requested

## CHAPTER 3: HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

The everyday actions of partner organisations and community groups all help in important ways to move us closer to our vision of how we would like the county borough to be. However, often we can improve on current arrangements by ensuring that:

- communication lines are clear and effective
- joint initiatives are considered and pursued wherever this is likely to be more effective than a solo effort
- examples of duplication and inefficiency are identified and eliminated
- priorities and phasing are agreed and reflected in plans
- resources are focused on priorities instead of being spread too thinly amongst a range of projects

The diagram on the next page (fig 1) illustrates the partnership structures that have evolved to facilitate inter-agency working with communities in Caerphilly County Borough (further details in Appendix 2).

One of the purposes of this strategy is to ensure that joint working arrangements are as effective as possible, to maximise progress towards our visions. **If all organisations and groups work towards the same set of objectives** and there is good communication between them, this will help to highlight any duplication of effort and opportunities for working together.

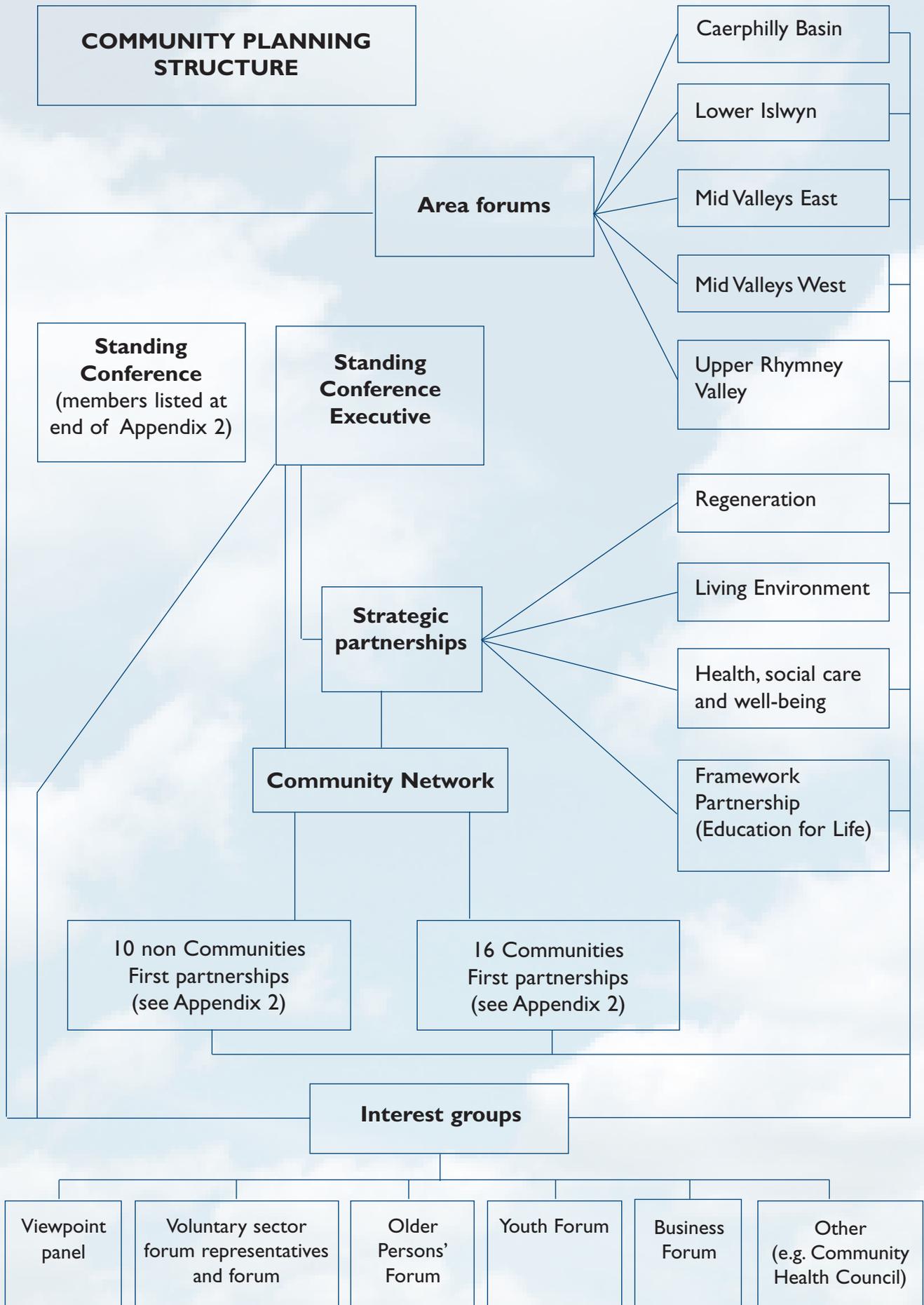
This goes to the heart of the community planning process, which is an ongoing one. It is the process that has enabled this strategy to be developed and it is the process that will take it forward to implementation. Much of the time and effort over the last four and half years has been devoted to getting structures in place to support the process (see Appendix 2 for more details). These structures are needed to provide clear lines of communication between strategic and operational issues and consistency between county borough wide and local approaches. Action plans being developed at the local level by communities, including 'Communities First'<sup>1</sup> areas, need both to inform and be informed by strategic plans at the county borough, sub-regional and Wales-wide levels. In this way, the community planning is neither 'top-down', nor 'bottom up'. It is about achieving the best possible outcomes for communities through a fusion of the ideas from all parts of the process.

This also applies to 'communities of interest'. Some of the important issues that need to be covered by the community strategy cannot be dealt with sensibly on a community by community basis alone. Instead, they relate to groups of people we find in every community and will change over time as the composition of the groups and society itself changes. These include issues relating to older and young people, Welsh speakers, people with disabilities, people in minority ethnic groups, carers, residents with mental health problems, substance misusers, juvenile offenders, and so on. There are some groups already established that can help such communities to feed into the community planning process either directly or with the help of support groups. However, there is scope to develop these links and integrate them more closely into the community planning process.

It is therefore proposed that organisations, groups and partnerships make use of the 28 objectives listed against each theme in Chapter 2 in developing their own plans. Not all 28 will be appropriate in all cases, but it will be a good discipline that encourages 'cross-cutting' thinking. (For ease of reference, the two overarching principles and 28 objectives are repeated in a single list in Appendix 4).

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<sup>1</sup>Communities First is a National Assembly programme targeting support on those communities identified by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 as being in greatest need. In this respect there are clear links between the 'vision framework' developed by the Assembly for use by Communities First areas and the four themes and 28 objectives of this community strategy.



## Priorities and 'Beacon' projects

As action plans develop and are implemented, so we will start to meet our objectives. Some of the projects will be particularly significant because they address a number of problems that residents and organisations think are most important. Work undertaken as part of the community planning process in the autumn of 2003 helped to identify a number of **priorities**.

The prioritisation was undertaken as follows. Based on research, legislative requirements, National Assembly guidance and consultations via the joint working arrangements shown in Fig 1, issues and opportunities were identified relating to each of the objectives in turn. These issues and opportunities were then discussed by partner agencies and community representatives, who then voted on which of them should be tackled first. Some clear and consistent messages were received. A Viewpoint Panel of over 1,000 local residents reinforced feedback from agencies in selecting the following as their top priorities (further details in Appendix 5):

- **Living Environment** - reduce levels of anti-social behaviour
- **Regeneration** - create jobs locally
- **Education for Life** - raise expectations among young people to encourage learning
- **Health, Social Care and Well-Being** - encourage healthier lifestyles

The issues and opportunities do differ from place to place. A spatial strategy is therefore needed to complement the community strategy, essentially to help identify what needs to be done where. **The Unitary Development Plan**, produced by the Council in consultation with partners, is the key document in this respect. It divides the county borough into areas of consolidation (in the south), an area of growth (in the mid-Valleys area) and areas of community regeneration (primarily in the north). This classification was the basis of the division into originally seven and now five community planning areas.

Within each community planning area there are geographical areas of need and areas of opportunity. Partner organisations and community groups have spent time looking at these differences between communities. The spatial strategy, in essence, is to target initiatives at areas of need and areas of opportunity simultaneously, making links between them whenever this can help us to realise our objectives. A detailed report on the characteristics of the different types of area of need and opportunity and a map showing these areas is contained in Appendix 6.

A number of projects have been selected to act as **'beacon' projects** because they:

- are in line with top priorities
- will benefit from the widest possible partnership approach
- will contribute to a number of the 28 objectives simultaneously
- are consistent with the spatial strategy for the county borough

A key part of this strategy is that all organisations and community groups consider the beacon projects as and when they are being developed and look at ways they can contribute to or benefit from them.

Each of the proposed 'beacon projects' is summarised below. Appendix 7 gives further details, identifying the priorities that they address, the strategic partnership that will oversee them and so on. It may not be possible or sensible to take all of the beacon projects forward simultaneously. They will need to be progressed in a manageable way and therefore decisions on **phasing** of the beacons will be vitally important.

## ***I. Public and Community Transport***

Appointment of a Transport/Access officer to develop integrated public and community transport services, bringing together existing public and community transport services and enhancing the network to meet needs identified with communities (extending beyond older and disabled people to include services for young and disadvantaged people). This may be taken forward initially as a pilot to inform strategy development.

## ***II. Town and village centre improvements***

Work has been outlined in town centre action plans for five of the main six centres (Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed, Newbridge and Risca) and in village action plans drawn up for smaller settlements. A plan for Ystrad Mynach/Penallta/Tredomen could also be considered, building on work in Ystrad Mynach in recent years. Town and village centres are home to a range of public, private and voluntary organisations and the works referred to above (largely infrastructural) form only part of the picture. It is really the investment generated on the back of such works by a range of partners that can provide the 'beacon' status.

## ***III. Physical transport infrastructure***

There is a multi-million pounds improvement programme already planned in the county borough over the next five years. Projects include:

- Sirhowy Enterprise Way
- Bargoed by-pass
- New Tredegar 'TRENT' road
- Dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road
- Penallta Link road
- Reopening of the Ebbw Valley railway line
- Resignalling of Rhymney Valley line to enable faster and more frequent services

Whilst the benefits and possible disbenefits of each scheme are thoroughly assessed as part of the normal scheme assessment process, there will be potential to provide 'added value' to schemes. Partnership working can build on the core infrastructure provision by creating a beacon project that draws on other facets of community needs and wider service provision.

## ***IV. Local procurement***

This would involve a concerted effort by all Standing Conference partners to buy local products and services to support locally-based businesses, provided practical, organisational, environmental, financial, quality and legal standards / requirements can be met. There is existing work which provides a basis to build on but more research may be required to identify ways of enhancement via a partnership approach.

## ***V. Healthy Living /Hospital & Community Services project***

This project would build on the current work underway on a hospital and community services project for Caerphilly county borough. This involves planning for a new hospital for the county borough but linked to a rigorous reassessment of the need for hospital treatment and the options for increased provision in local communities. This approach is supplemented by preventative work encouraging healthier lifestyles. One important element of the latter is the development of 'Healthy Living Centres' (HLCs) encouraging more exercise, better cooking/diets, access to health information, giving up smoking / misuse of substances, and preventing accidents amongst children.

Whilst the HLC initiative is currently targeted at areas of greatest need and delivered in a fixed number of community centres there is scope for elements of it to be extended to other areas of need, complementing the reconfiguration of services.

## ***VI: Centre of Excellence for inclusion (based on 'social model' of disability)***

This beacon project would be based upon the development of an inclusive centre of excellence aimed at removing obstacles (physical and psychological) that society creates for people with disabilities. It would offer services to the community at large (e.g. cafe, garden centre) and, in particular, to families including people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities would also receive advice and assistance to help them through a variety of means. This might include employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities, assistance and advice on adapted equipment purchase, use and after care/repair and recreational opportunities. There might also be training opportunities for social workers and for crafts people learning how to install equipment such as hoists, chair lifts, adapted equipment. In the longer term, short stay respite care 'chalets' have been proposed.

## ***VII: Education for sustainable development***

Schools in the county borough are starting to give increased emphasis to education for sustainable development. This involves children learning first hand about the importance of the scarce resources we have and the way we use them. This potential beacon project would build on this interest and involve a major investment in sustainable development within schools. This might include energy and water efficiency measures, waste and litter reduction and recycling initiatives, community safety measures, empowerment via schools councils (and input to local community partnerships), schools grounds projects, projects on local culture, talks from a range of partners and so on. It would be a combination of increased awareness and practical, meaningful projects. By influencing individuals at a young age, the hope is that lessons would stick for a lifetime, resulting in changed attitudes and practices.

## ***VIII: Neighbourhood wardens and rangers***

This project would seek to make links between and expand the network of wardens, rangers and other similar posts (e.g. police community support officers) operating throughout the county borough. A strong message from the prioritisation exercise was the need to increase appreciation of the environmental assets on the doorstep of most communities. To be successful this requires that any damage is repaired quickly, litter removed etc and that appearances are maintained. This is seen as complementary to the education for sustainable development proposal and part of the role could be to promote and encourage better use of the environment. All partner agencies and communities stand to benefit from having an integrated team dedicated to checking and reporting on community assets and ensuring full and proper use is made of them. In particular, there is scope for those with this remit in different organisations to establish closer links and improved communications.

## ***IX: Local tourism***

This proposed beacon has some links to the previous one. However, it is more explicitly based upon encouragement of 'tourism', encouraging and facilitating exploration of the features of the county borough by residents, day-trippers and other tourists. It builds on the characteristic of the area whereby most settlements are surrounded by open countryside, providing opportunities for recreation, play and leisure. It would need to complement / be consistent with existing proposals to

develop tourism, including those in the Caerphilly county borough Regeneration Strategy. A link with the community transport proposal could be beneficial in terms of enabling exploration slightly further afield.

### ***X. Substance misuse abuse amongst young people***

Any beacon project in this area would have to complement or form part of the action plan developed by the Local Substance Misuse Action Team, in conjunction with the Caerphilly county borough community safety partnership. The actions currently proposed include a baseline audit of substance misuse education and strengthening links between the organisations involved; to continue to fund agencies and consider possible outreach workers, to deliver services at an early stage to students misusing substances and to assess effectiveness of prevention interventions; to raise awareness amongst teachers and lecturers about substance; improve follow-up for pupils truanting or excluded; to raise awareness amongst parents, carers and in communities about substance misuse.

### ***XI. Learning network***

The proposal to develop a learning network involves provision of hub and outreach lifelong learning centres, making education accessible to a wide range of potential learners in welcoming, community settings. These access points would be operated in partnership, enabling a wide range of bodies to contribute to the initiative. This would require good geographical coverage to ensure that all communities can relate to a 'hub' and residents can take advantage of local outreach opportunities. Inclusion of provision relating to 0-3 year olds and their parents has been suggested as one aspect of the learning network given the importance attached to this age group.

### ***XII. Summer scheme for young people***

This would involve development and provision of a wide range of activities for children and young people aged from 8 up to late teenage years and possibly early twenties. There is a link to beacon 1 on community transport, which could create additional opportunities in terms of the activities included. It could also link to the beacon projects based on opportunities for outdoor activity.

### ***Next steps***

Over coming months, each of these proposals will be considered in more detail by the relevant strategic partnerships. Each strategic partnership will have a co-ordinator and the four co-ordinators will operate as a team, ensuring that the partnerships communicate with each other and that issues of common interest are dealt with in a consistent manner.

The strategic partnerships will assess how much progress, if any, is possible during 2004/05 with each of the beacon ideas. This will involve looking at opportunities to build on existing plans and to make bids to appropriate sources of funding. In light of feedback from the partnerships, the Standing Conference Executive will agree on a 'first wave' of beacon projects and ask all partner organisations and community groups to consider how they can contribute from mainstream budgets from 2005/06 and beyond and/or to build the beacon development proposals into their own plans. Over the lifetime of the strategy, the beacons will evolve as new priorities emerge so changes in the beacons can be expected over time as partnership work develops.

## ***CHAPTER 4: HOW WILL WE MEASURE PROGRESS?***

There are a number of ways that we can measure progress. A complete review of progress will be undertaken at four yearly intervals. We will look at:

- the extent of use of the 28 objectives by partner agencies and community groups in their strategic planning
- progress with the beacons, based on a number of indicators specifically identified for each
- the overall impact of our combined efforts on a number of indicators selected from 'Quality of Life' indicators devised by the Audit Commission and in use across Wales (enabling comparisons with other areas as well as change over time), supplemented by Policy Agreement indicators agreed between the Assembly and the Standing Conference Executive
- residents' opinions of progress over time based on a number of indicators suggested by the Viewpoint Panel
- the effectiveness of joint working within the Standing Conference and the four strategic partnerships.

### ***Use of the 28 objectives***

Strategic partnerships have an important role to play in encouraging the use of the 28 objectives in developing strategies for each of the four themes. Since the main plans and strategies produced under the umbrella of the community strategy will need to be considered at these partnerships, there is an opportunity for the partnerships to oversee their use. Similarly, community partnerships will be seeking the advice of organisations that sit on the strategic partnerships as they develop their local action plans. Again, this provides an opportunity to encourage and monitor the use of the 28 objectives. Annual reports from strategic partnerships will be prepared for the Standing Conference Executive to give an indication of the success of this part of the strategy.

### ***Progress with beacons***

As part of the task of developing an action plan for beacon projects, strategic partnerships will be asked to identify appropriate indicators and clear targets that can be used to monitor progress over time.

### ***Quality of Life and Policy agreement indicators***

A number of indicators will be selected from the Audit Commission's 'Quality of Life' indicators. These will be supplemented by indicators agreed with the National Assembly as part of a 'policy agreement'. These will be used at a 'macro-level' to measure the impact of the community planning process, taking into account other factors that might influence the indicators. Appendix 8 contains a suggested 'basket' of indicators. As far as possible these have been selected to ensure a degree of coverage across all of the 28 objectives and these links are identified in the tables. It will be up to the strategic partnerships to consider this matter further and confirm or amend the indicators and identify baselines, timescales and lead organisations (for collection of information). They will also need to identify targets for the short, medium and long term and for the five community planning areas. Performance against these targets will then be used to monitor progress and, where necessary, to highlight areas requiring attention. All recommendations relating to the indicators and targets will need to be fed back to the Standing Conference Executive for approval.

## *Residents' views*

A Viewpoint Panel of local residents was asked to contribute to the prioritisation exercise outlined in Chapter 3. Representatives from the panel were also invited to a meeting to identify their own indicators against which they will assess progress. Based on the most popular indicators proposed by local residents, they will be asked whether they have noticed changes for better or worse in relation to various aspects of life in the county borough. These more qualitative measures will enable perceptions of changes to be monitored over time. Again, the indicators have been selected to reflect not only those that were most popular but also to achieve a balance across a number of objectives under each of the four themes:

- affordable housing (relates primarily to objective 1)
- anti-social behaviour (objective 3)
- the quality of the shopping centres in terms of cleanliness and choice of shops (objective 6)
- access to GPs (objectives 7, 26 and 27)
- access to hospital services (objectives 7 and 27)
- local job opportunities (objectives 9 and 10)
- local business start-ups (objective 10)
- vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities for young people (objectives 12 and 18)
- public transport (objective 15)
- play facilities/opportunities for young people (objective 17)
- use of leisure centres (objective 23)
- opportunities for living a healthy lifestyle (objective 25)
- support, where necessary, to help people live at home (objective 27).

These will be used every four years or so at Viewpoint panel meetings to measure residents' perceptions of the area, against their own choice of indicators.

## *Effectiveness of joint working*

Feedback forms are already used at meetings of the Standing Conference. These provide an indication of levels of satisfaction with the content of meetings. This assessment will be extended to include quantitative and qualitative surveys of partner agencies represented on the Executive and the strategic partnerships. This will provide feedback on how well the process is working and identify areas that need further development.

Representatives of community partnerships are now coming together twice a year to discuss issues of common interest and exchange examples of best practice. This network will be used to obtain feedback at the community level on how well the process is understood, how effective it is and any areas that require attention.

Appendix 9 sets out an action plan for taking the community planning process forward over the next twelve months, covering the work programme for Standing Conference Executive, the strategic and community partnerships and a team of co-ordinators to link work across the four themes.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This document sets out the broad framework for the ongoing community planning process. The strategy as outlined is to secure greater co-ordination of effort and to focus resources onto priority activities, with targeting at specific communities as appropriate where there are identified needs and opportunities.

The emphasis of strategy development shifts now to the strategic partnerships, which are required to:

- ensure consistent use of the 28 objectives and identify appropriate targets
- agree on indicators that will be used to measure progress
- come up with proposals for taking forward the beacon projects
- liaise with each other and with community partnerships in taking projects forward
- link up with partnerships beyond the county borough and consider sub-regional and Wales-wide issues
- establish a dialogue with community partnerships to ensure consistency between county borough wide and local approaches

A copy of this document has been sent to the following external bodies to achieve an independent assessment, especially in relation to the cross-cutting issues of equalities and sustainable development:

- Welsh Language Board
- Commission for Racial Equality
- Equal Opportunities Commission
- Disability Rights Commission
- Forum for the Future.

Forum for the Future has undertaken a **sustainability appraisal** of the document, using the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Integration Tool'. This has generated a number of suggestions, which will now be fed into the process along with any comments from the equalities groups (see Appendix 9, Implementation plan).<sup>2</sup>

From the outset, the emphasis in community planning in the county borough has been on developing an **inclusive process**. This document represents a milestone in the process and gives signals for the way forward. However, its production should be seen not as the final outcome of this process. Rather it marks the onset of the next phase of the process building on the strong foundations that have already been laid.

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<sup>2</sup> All comments received on draft versions of the strategy have been recorded and reported to the Standing Conference Executive to determine any changes in arriving at this version of the document.

## *LIST OF APPENDICES*

- 1 Timeline - showing how the community planning process has evolved since 1999
- 2 Where we are now - a summary audit of the state of Caerphilly county borough today on a range of socio-economic and environmental factors and an explanation of the now structures in place to support community planning activity.
- 3 Relationship between the community strategy and other partnerships and plans
- 4 A complete list of the 28 objectives and cross-cutting objectives
- 5 Detailed feedback from the Viewpoint panel on priorities and potential indicators
- 6 Geographical areas of need and areas of opportunity
- 7 Further detail on beacons
- 8 Headline indicators
- 9 Implementation Plan 2004/05