

## Join the Caerphilly Conversation



Residents are being encouraged to help shape the future of council services by getting involved in the **“Caerphilly Conversation”**

The survey within this special edition of Newsline provides people living and working in Caerphilly county borough with the opportunity to share their experiences of life across the area; their views on public services, and suggestions for where things could be improved as we look to the future.

Communities and public services right across the UK are facing significant challenges, in light of the COVID pandemic, Brexit, climate change and the subsequent economic issues that these challenges inevitably present.

Despite these challenges however, there are also real opportunities. As we recover from the impact of COVID and address these other challenges, as a county borough we have a unique opportunity to reshape the future that we, as a community, want for our area. You - our residents have a key role to play in this.

Council Leader, Cllr Philippa Marsden said “It has been truly inspiring to see so many communities come together during the COVID pandemic, offering support and help to each other and to those in need. This is real ‘Team Caerphilly’ spirit in action; we all came together - public services, voluntary organisations, community groups and residents alike – with a common purpose. This continued partnership approach will be really important as we look forward.

“Your experiences and ideas for your communities, as well as for Caerphilly county borough as a whole, are crucial in helping us plan for the future, and to shape our place and public services to reflect the social, economic and environmental needs of our residents.”

The council is also required, by law to set a balanced budget and council tax level each year, so your views really do matter. We want to hear from as many people as possible. Please encourage your friends, family and neighbours to get involved in the ‘Caerphilly Conversation’ by completing this survey.



**THE CLOSING DATE FOR  
GETTING INVOLVED IN  
THIS CONSULTATION**

**SUNDAY 3rd  
JANUARY 2021**

**For a chance to WIN one of five £50 high street shopping vouchers -**  
Please complete and return the survey to us before the closing date of **3rd January 2021**

You can complete the survey online at: [www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillyconversation](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillyconversation)  
If you need help completing the survey please contact us at: [publicengagement@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:publicengagement@caerphilly.gov.uk)

## Overall satisfaction

**1** Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by Caerphilly County Borough Council over the last 12 months?

Very satisfied ☐ Fairly satisfied ☐ Fairly dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied ☐ Don't know ☐

**2** How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Waste / Recycling collections					
Street and environmental cleansing					
Public transport					
Highways maintenance					
Parks / Open spaces					

**3** What do you feel is the single biggest factor affecting the appearance of your neighbourhood?  
Please write in:

### Shaping our Place – responding to the COVID pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly impacted upon us all. Last summer, Caerphilly County Borough Council published its **'Team Caerphilly – Better Together'** strategy, which provided a framework for change in the way the Council will provide services to meet the needs of our communities in the future. COVID-19 has provided an additional and immediate challenge, which has prompted the council to accelerate the speed of change previously set out in this strategy. Caerphilly county borough communities have a key role to play in supporting the council and others in shaping both our place and the services they provide, to reflect the needs of our communities.

### Our communities and you as individuals during the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a true partnership approach emerge – between our communities and public bodies including the council – with everyone working together to do their bit to contribute to the wellbeing of our communities. We have a unique opportunity to strengthen this partnership further going forward and building a positive legacy.

### The council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Since March 2020, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, CCBC has had to focus its resources on providing essential services and protecting vulnerable residents: ■ Some additional services were introduced ■ Some services were temporarily withdrawn ■ Most services continued to be delivered but in a different way

**4** How do you think Caerphilly County Borough Council has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Very well ☐ Well ☐ Badly ☐ Very badly ☐ Don't know ☐

5

**During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which of the following council services did you access?  
How do you consider Caerphilly County Borough Council delivered these services during the pandemic?**

	Used	Very well	Well	Badly	Very badly	Don't know
<b>Customer services</b> (maintaining the telephone service remotely/providing online services)						
<b>Communications</b> (news updates, website, digital media etc)						
<b>Support for vulnerable residents:</b>						
■ Letter offering support to residents through the council's 'community response' delivered to all homes						
■ Buddy shopping scheme						
■ Free school meals delivery						
■ Delivering food parcels						
■ Childcare Hubs						
<b>Support for businesses</b> (processing grants, free training/advice/trading standards)						
<b>Supporting safe opening of town centres</b> (introducing barriers/street markings to help ensure people maintain social distancing)						
<b>Supporting communities</b> (continuing to collect recycling and waste/repairs to highways)						

6

**A number of services and buildings have been closed or have had limited access due to COVID-19. The council has offered services in a different way to enable residents to continue to receive that service**

**Please tell us whether you were aware of these repackaged council services, whether you made use of them during the pandemic or would like to make use of them in the future. Please tick all that apply ✓**

	Aware of service	Used during lockdown	Would like to use in future
Enhanced telephone facility to access our customer services team			
Online workouts delivered by leisure centre staff			
Library Link service/remote ordering/collection service from libraries			
Online 'chatbot' introduced to council website			
Tourism venues such as Llancaiach Fawr reshaping their offering to incorporate virtual 'office' settings			
Financial helpline to offer advice to residents concerned about finances during the pandemic			

7

**During the COVID-19 pandemic, how important was it for you to have support from the council, as well as community and voluntary organisations?**

Very important ☐ Important ☐ Not important ☐ Not at all important ☐ Don't know ☐

## Communities playing their part

Caerphilly county borough communities came together with voluntary organisations and public bodies including the council during the pandemic, to provide crucial support to each other.

8

**To what extent do you agree with the following statement? My neighbourhood is a place where people get on well together and help each other.**

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Don't know ☐



**9** Did you or your local community (estate, village or town) organise, contribute to or receive support through any of the following? Please tick all that apply ✓

	Organised or set up		Contributed to an existing one		Received support through this	
<b>A good neighbour scheme</b> – support with things such as shopping and other essential tasks while people shielded	Me		Me		Me	
	My community		My community		My community	
<b>Foodbank</b> – support for those residents in need	Me		Me		Me	
	My community		My community		My community	
<b>Online support groups</b> – (e.g. Facebook groups) for residents to keep in touch with/help each other	Me		Me		Me	
	My community		My community		My community	
<b>Other, please write in</b>	Me		Me		Me	
	My community		My community		My community	

**10** Do you feel that there has been a change in the level of community spirit as a result of the COVID pandemic in your local area (estate, village, town or the county borough as a whole)?

More community spirit ☐ Stayed the same ☐ Less community spirit ☐ Don't know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer:

## What changed for you during COVID?

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of changes to the way we live our lives, affecting how we go to work, go to school, shop, travel and see friends, family and neighbours. We are interested in hearing more about what has changed for you.

**11** How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I've got to know my neighbours better					
People have been doing more to help each other					
I have been doing more to help other people					
I have been spending more time discovering places near my home					
I have been keeping in touch with family and friends online					
There have been less instances of homelessness					
I used the outdoors to undertake more exercise					

**12** Please tell us if the pandemic has affected your employment situation:

I wasn't working before lockdown		I was furloughed	
I am self employed and lost work		I have started a new job	
I have been made redundant		The pandemic hasn't affected my employment	
<b>Something else</b> (please specify)			

**13** Do you have any other comments to make in relation to how we have collectively responded to the COVID-19 pandemic?

# Priorities for recovery

As many council services as possible have been maintained throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, although some may have been delivered differently i.e. remotely.

14	Which service areas do you think are most important for the council to focus on as we recover from the pandemic?	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know
	<b>Support for vulnerable people</b> (continue contact with the most vulnerable in our communities to ensure their needs are met)					
	<b>Homelessness</b> (ensuring those who are homeless are kept safe as lockdown restrictions ease)					
	<b>Food poverty</b> (support and promote food banks, continue free school meal deliveries during school holidays)					
	<b>Council tax support</b> for residents who had difficulty paying their council tax as a direct result of the pandemic i.e. council tax deferment or reduction scheme.					
	<b>Online and blended learning by schools</b>					
	Increasing opportunities for people to be both <b>physically and mentally fit</b>					
	<b>Other, please specify:</b>					

**15** Which council services do you think should be a priority in moving forward? Please write in your top 3.

1		2		3	
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# Supporting Businesses

There has been an unprecedented amount of support to the local business community during this time and a significant increase in the number of businesses engaging with the Council for additional advice and support. Supporting local businesses and the economy will be a priority for the future.

16	Supporting local businesses and the economy will be a priority for the future. What do you think are the most important factors the council should focus on?	Very important	Important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know
	Support for local businesses both in terms of grant support and preparation for when lockdown restrictions have been eased.					
	Promote town centres as a place to visit					
	Support the visitor economy activities and services at our tourist attraction areas					
	Sustainability of culture and leisure venues – pubs and clubs and restaurants					
	Creating opportunities for job creation					
	Business start-up support					
	<b>Other, please specify:</b>					

# Working Better with Communities

Protecting the most vulnerable in our communities involves working closely with local residents and with partners from the voluntary.

The council is currently developing an initiative called 'Caerphilly Cares' which aims to develop a coordinated approach to understand the different needs of individuals at risk or suffering from disadvantage. Our communities have an important part to play in this.

17

Do you currently volunteer?

YES

NO

18

Listed below are a number of ways that you could contribute to the wellbeing of your community. Please tell us if you are, or would like to be, involved in any of the following:

	Already involved	Would like to be involved	Unable to get involved	Not interested
Community volunteering (litter picking, environmental projects etc)				
Act as a school governor				
Involvement in community centre committees				
Learning more about how to increase your wellbeing and that of your community				
Learning more about how to reduce your carbon footprint				
Supporting vulnerable people by becoming a carer				
Supporting vulnerable people through a support group				
Offering apprenticeships or work experience opportunities as a business owner				
Improving community safety as part of a local neighbourhood scheme				
Some other way, please write in:				

19

If the council was to make a community budget available to enable residents to do more things for themselves in future, do you:

Think it's a good idea

Think it's a bad idea

Don't know

If you think it's a good idea, what types of activity/project do you think would benefit from a community budget?

20

Do you agree or disagree with incentives being offered to communities to encourage them to take greater pride in their local area?

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

# Council Service Transformation

Due to the closure of Council buildings during the pandemic, face to face services were stopped.

This included offering services remotely (online or over the phone) wherever possible. With Council buildings still closed/operating on limited face to face capacity, we want to know how you have you adapted to accessing council services in a different way.

21

Do you have a device to access the internet? Please tick all that apply ✓

YES - a smartphone		NO - but I use a computer at the local library	
YES - a PC/Laptop		NO - I can't/don't want to access the internet	
YES - a tablet		OTHER - please specify	

22

Do you have affordable internet access? Please tick all that apply ✓

YES - At home ☐YES - Elsewhere ☐NO ☐

23

How often did you visit Council offices/buildings to pay bills and access services before COVID-19?

Daily ☐2-3 times a week ☐Weekly ☐Fortnightly ☐Less often ☐

24

Have you needed to contact the Council to pay routine bills or access services since the council buildings closed to the public in March?

YES ☐NO ☐

25

If yes, which services did you contact the council about? Please tick all that apply ✓

Benefits and support	<input type="checkbox"/>	COVID-19 / Shielding advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Registrars	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blue badge	<input type="checkbox"/>	Free school meals / delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	School opening / Registration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business support/grants	<input type="checkbox"/>	Highways / Street lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Childcare for keyworkers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing / Homelessness support	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sport and Leisure Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complaints	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paying routine bills	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trading Standards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recycling and waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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If yes, which services did you contact the council about? Please tick all that apply ✓

Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	SMS Text	<input type="checkbox"/>	Email	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/>	Twitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chatbot	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minicom	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leisure Lifestyle app	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

27

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been unable to take cash payments. We have helped people to switch towards paying their bills in a different way and are encouraging people to continue to do so. Do you agree or disagree with this approach?

Strongly agree ☐Agree ☐Disagree ☐Strongly disagree ☐Don't know ☐

Please give reasons for your response:

28

How easy or difficult have you found accessing council services while offices have been closed during the lockdown period?

Very easy ☐Quite easy ☐Quite difficult ☐Very difficult ☐Don't know / Not applicable ☐

29

What could we do to further improve the way residents are able to access services remotely (either over the phone or online)?

30

Which council services, if any, do you feel you need to be able to access face to face?  
Please tell us why ...

## Council budget and council tax setting:

In light of the current circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, councils across the country are unlikely to receive a detailed indication of their financial settlement for the forthcoming year until mid/late December. Councils have a legal obligation each year however to set a balanced budget, with determined council tax levels.



**Council tax raises around £72.8 million a year. This represents 20.4% of our total budget. In 2019/2020 council tax increased in Caerphilly county borough by 4.7%.**

31

Please select one of the following options to tell us your preference about council tax for the forthcoming financial year. **Please select one only.**

I appreciate the council has additional financial pressures, particularly associated with COVID-19, and would support a further increase in council tax of around 4.7%	
I'd support a lower increase but accept that this would only help protect the most important services	
I support a further increase in council tax of around 4.7% but would be prepared to pay an even greater amount to protect services	
I do not support any increase in council tax and understand that this would mean a reduction in the level of services provided (because costs and demand are rising)	

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If you said that you would not be happy to support an increase in council tax, please provide details of how else you feel we can meet the financial challenges the council, like others, currently faces.

## Place Shaping ambitions becoming a reality

The Council is transforming services as part of its 'Team Caerphilly – Better Together' Strategy, looking at how we can do things differently; prioritise our services, explore opportunities for greater customer focus, digital delivery, partnership working and a taking a more commercial approach.

COVID-19 has accelerated the speed and shape of change in the way we deliver our services and we have to adapt quickly. The council has already made significant progress in its journey of transformation, with a number of further priority development areas within its emerging place shaping ambitions.

## Housing:

The council is currently nearing completion on its £261m physical improvement programme to its housing stock through the delivery of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS).

Going forward, the council will continue to invest in its existing housing stock to provide quality, energy efficient, affordable homes, as well as a partnership new build programme.

33

What does good quality housing in Caerphilly county borough look like to you?  
What is important for us to consider?



# Jobs and the Economy:

The council is a key partner in the Cardiff Capital Region, which is made up of ten local authorities. The UK Government and Welsh Government have committed £1.1bn to the City Deal – which is supported by an additional £120m committed by the 10 local authority partners.

The City Deal’s longer term aims are to help boost economic growth, by improving transport links, increasing skills, helping people into work and giving businesses the support they need to grow.

**34** What does a strong and prosperous economy look like to you? As a resident of Caerphilly county borough, what is important to you when it comes to the local economy?

**35** What ideas do you have for attracting new business and visitors to our town centres and high streets, particularly in light of changing shopping habits?

# Education fit for 21st Century – ‘Shared Ambitions’:

The council’s ‘Shared Ambitions’ strategy aims to raise standards and ensure that learners are healthy, confident, proud and ambitious and can benefit from high quality educational opportunities, settings and experiences.

We also have the 21st Century Schools investment programme, which is helping transform schools and other settings into first class educational facilities.

**36** When it comes to education in Caerphilly county borough, what is most important to you?  
Please give reasons for your answer.

# The Environment/Climate Change:

The council has declared a climate change emergency and is committed to the ambitious target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

**37** How concerned are you about climate change?

Very concerned ☐ Fairly concerned ☐ Not very concerned ☐ Not concerned at all ☐ Don’t know ☐

**38** What could you do to help the council and other partners to reduce the impact of climate change over the coming years?

**39** Do you have any ideas for how we could provide services differently in the future and how we could work with you and your community to do this?

40

If your experience of receiving services during the COVID-19 pandemic OR your views on the Council's priorities for future services have been influenced (positively or negatively) because of any of the following; ethnic origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs or non beliefs, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality or responsibility for any dependents. **Please give details below:**

## A bit about you...

**THESE QUESTIONS ARE OPTIONAL:** Your response will help us to ensure that we achieve a representative sample and will help us to check whether the services we provide are meeting the needs of all our local communities.

### I am completing this survey ...

- ☐ As a resident of the County Borough
- ☐ Representing a voluntary organisation
- ☐ As a business person
- ☐ As an elected member
- ☐ Other please write in: \_\_\_\_\_

### I am ...

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

### What is your main language?

- ☐ English
- ☐ Welsh
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other (including BSL), please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

### Are you or a member of your household currently serving in the armed forces or an armed forces service leaver?

- ☐ Yes, I am / was a member of the armed forces
- ☐ Yes, a member of my household is / was a member of the armed forces
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

### Do you have a disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

### Age:

My postcode is: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in adding your details to a register of volunteers?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Would you like to be entered in the Prize Draw?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If YES to either of the above, please fill in your name and contact details below.

Your views given in this questionnaire will be kept separate from your contact details.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for completing the survey. Please return your completed form and any additional comments, either to your local leisure centre or in the post to: Consultation and Public Engagement Officer, Corporate Policy Unit, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Penallta House, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed, CF82 7PG.**

**Privacy notice:** You have a number of rights in relation to the information including the right of access to information we hold about you and the right of complaint if you are unhappy with the way your information is being processed. For further information on how we process this information and your rights please visit: [www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/FOI/PrivacyNotices/Privacy-Notice-Consultations-Surveys.aspx](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/FOI/PrivacyNotices/Privacy-Notice-Consultations-Surveys.aspx)