

Annex 6o: Additional written responses

Resident (18 November 2019)

Why is Castle View Caerphilly in darkness after 11pm. Surely this will encourage crime. Also any savings are they sent to the poll tax payer or to the council. Why not charge for firework bonfire night like mostly everyone else. This will bring cash in and hopefully get our lights back on as energy saving.

And further response

Thank you for your response. Explained fully but hope crime does not increase due to this. Be useful for this to be observed and maybe included in your updates.

Resident (18 November 2019)

Do Not get rid of the County Crossing Patrol People. Good Idea.

How much money do the council put on a child's life? Bad Idea.

Response required please.

Resident (21 November 2019)

Hi, Kevin, quite simply I would be opposed to any cuts or increase in council tax, and would like to see, if cuts being made, in Council offices to achieve greater efficiency by reduction in wages, closure of some Council Departments, reduction in councillor numbers, Chauffeur driven vehicles, jollys to Cannes etc, and I am sure there are other areas within that huge building where savings could be made. i.e. Restaurant

It appears that the amount they are trying to save is an effort to claw back monies paid to the C.E.O whilst suspended.

Due to council not resolving the matter earlier, this together with money being wasted by unnecessary works being carried out in the Caerphilly area.

Public have suffered austerity for too long, it's supposed to have come to an end now,

Where has all those savings gone, made from previous increases in council tax and public service closures.

Council and their officers said in past years we are all in austerity together, so let's see some real cuts in Council higher end staff wages, and weed out the staff not required a complete overhaul of wages expenditure is where it has to start in an effort to become more efficient, before hitting the residents of Carrphilly who have time and time again trusted this labour to deliver better services for old and vulnerable which they have failed to do within their budgets.

It looks like it's more about bad management than anything else how can a CEO command a wage of £137,000 with all its added extras at the same time she wants to make cuts and take more money from people who can't afford to pay extra council tax etc

I suspect all views will be taken into account but the Council will proceed without taking any notice.....

Resident (13 December 2019)

Before I complete the survey I would ask what percentage increase there will be in council property rents in 2020/21.

You are proposing an increase of 6.95% on council tax when pensioners are receiving an increase of 2.5%!

The cost of living for pensioners is going to increase considerably if those of us who have been in receipt of a free receiver license have to pay> There is forecast to be a rise in gas and electricity.

2.5% averages out at £3 per week.

Perhaps if the council recovered sums paid to an employee for doing nothing the general public would not be burdened.

Resident (02 January 2020)

Trehir Proposals

Good afternoon all,

I am writing to express my concern at the CCBC proposals to close the Trehir refuse facility under its proposed budget cuts. This is a ludicrous decision.

Along with many people I have spoken to I think this will be ONE BIG MISTAKE. There is enough fly tipping going on at present and this action will certainly add to this environmental problem. Why is it that this Lower part of CCBC is being left disadvantaged. Is it right that if this closure goes ahead people from this area will be

expected to travel to Penallta? This is totally unacceptable. Can you please pass on my views to the relevant person dealing with Caerphilly Conversation. Again, this consultation did not extend down to the Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen area. The closest meeting place was Caerphilly Library at a time which was not suitable to many, including me and I am retired. Why are we being left out yet again.

I would like your views on this and for any action you can take to ensure my views are made known and the Trehir facility will remain.

Kind regards and thanks again.

Cllr. Farina-Childs (02 January 2020)

Subject: COMMUNITY SAFETY WARDENS

I know that I have mentioned this in the past but please if the new budget settlement allows can we look into retaining the Community Safety Wardens. I have experienced first-hand how good the CSWs are and what a crucial role they fulfil in our Communities.

Regards

Response from resident following Viewpoint Panel (25 November 19)

I wanted to add another idea but forgot to say at the time.

The subject of Libraries came up and the desire to keep them open. People carry books around on their phones these days and I appreciate they mainly (probably) serve the older community more than the younger community.

With that in mind, would it be possible if you merged Citizens Advice Bureaus into the library. Without losing the staff of course.

Eg. You could pop in to borrow a book and or get information on pension scams and the like.

With any merger, the empty building could be turned into housing and sold off creating monies for the council?

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Resident (13 January 2020)

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As a resident of Blackwood ward, I have recently filled in the budget consultation and through experience and knowledge I would like to follow up and highlight to you concerns and opportunities that could possibly create or alleviate financial pressure off annual budget constraints, apologies for no set order, they are set out below:

Have you considered piloting schemes for street lights to be turned off in various areas over the county borough? This could give you an accurate impact assessment overview and a thorough community engagement plan to strengthen your framework. Also, is there additional funding from Welsh Assembly to assist you developing a strategic green street lighting policy in order to achieve short, medium and long term government targets?

New projects, have you considered on major applications, with developers, yourselves and utility companies, ie Welsh Water, strategies to implement hydro electric resources on various sites to help you support, maintain low green level street lighting, communal charging etc.

I recently attended the public consultation at the Pontllanfraith civic centre site for developing new homes, that will create a substantial amount of social rent and affordable homes.

It was clear from this consultation that the model proposed on a public asset favours the developer and not the user.

The most common sense of housing policy is admitting what is unaffordable about affordable housing and that is not the cost of building the house but land it will be placed on.

Councils are best placed to provide affordable land but people and communities are best placed to build the homes, raise their children and pay the utilities bills. Residents have the incentive to invest well in their homes, maybe more insulation, sustainable heating and lighting sources, create car free neighbourhoods and encourage community values.

Have you considered for this council to change their approaches from a conservative building model and move to a more innovative approach?

This approach could lead you to strengthen local economic growth, community engagement and local business integration (social heart - commercial head).

As an example, imagine a prospective buyer looking for an affordable plot of land (public owned) and apply to lease it - income generated through to future generations and sustainable income on an annual basis could aid affordability to lower income households together with connecting with an array of local services and companies (local lenders) who can help customise varying needs and financial constraints.

This could vary in options:

A group / social enterprise / or individuals can commission a builder or manufacturer (off site construction) to make a house for them, others can self build, with planning applications secured for such a multi build scheme, the results could provide genuinely affordable homes, social rent and market needs sustaining and future proofing community environments that will be affordable, beautiful, socially resilient and loved by the very people who helped shape them. This model option is not just about building homes but creating innovative infrastructure that will satisfy everyone.

In order to create a strong affordable housing network we will need the very people and council to engage, work together building and strengthening communities infrastructure, local economy and place making.

Green Social Housing - regenerating or reviving existing communities leads to positive investment, green network, community values, community engagement and involvement, there is a lack of mixed used housing within our communities.

New zero carbon homes, I was also very disappointed with the lack of foresight to use Pont civic centre site as a benchmark to utilise its green space and surrounding ecology through the use of zero carbon homes. The use of hydro surface catchment tanks could generate low level zero carbon street lighting. This site could be an ideal opportunity to gain additional funding from welsh government to aid and develop green homes on a site that offers so much through it's biodiversity and natural heritage. A landscape visual impact assessment would have highlighted opportunities to develop and integrate green homes, setting a high precedent and promote this site for the whole borough, possibly wales and local communities to become more aware of how we should adapt and move forward with the ever changing climate. I understand completely, that it may be too late for this site but please consider future proofing new housing models and how best they will really provide garden villages from 2020 onwards. We all have a duty of care to not just engage with communities but also our enhancement and integration with our environment and natural heritage too.

Engagement, integration And sustainable land use could be a common sense approach to utilising public assets - in a digital, print and outdoor media to generate a sustainable income. Advertising local businesses, their services and promotions of art, cultural events, sports events throughout the borough.

High street regeneration - I have recently seen the announcement of very drastic drop in footfall within our town centres. All too often users, local businesses, building owners, town councils become disenfranchised with stagnate, loss of shops, business and poor investment on our high street.

Could you consider possibly allowing mixed use for creative spaces, no single packaging use incentives to businesses, mixed use lease per property to share

overheads and rateable square metre spaces. Allow investment to revive businesses, through the use of social networks, encouraging business owners to use up to date on line marketing, buying / selling online as business options, resources, local advertising and promotions, encouraging 'caerphilly conversation'. All too often we are part of the problem as consumers as we lead very busy lives and fall in the trap of quick shopping which leads us to buy on line, using supermarkets and avoiding what our high streets offer.

We now live in changing environments, there is nothing stopping or not allowing existing and new businesses to regenerate with the latest technologies on line, forming community engagement is a priority, we rely too much on businesses second guessing our habits and consumer requirements, instead of engaging with users and asking what would bring us to shop in our towns. We need to constantly adapt to challenges that are currently seeing declines in footfall. A town council place making scheme could provide opportunities for people to express their needs, requirements and cultural habits. We need to understand each other and then communicate, without comprehension, how is it possible to communicate.

In order to change the way we shop we have to create diverse high streets that are sustainable encouraging out of area footfalls too. Provide pop-up shops in our care homes, community buildings, supported living schemes.

I have been fortunate enough to travel to a lot of sporting venues, school 3G and 4g pitches that advertise the aforementioned above on their fencing and reception areas, not just on buses and trains. I'm sure there are plenty of local businesses who wish to advertise their services and products, for a fee that could help towards funding schools with their sport equipment and school curriculum, particularly upgrading their technology.

Litter - I have on many occasions volunteered for the local litter pick group and west wales beach cleans. I also walk locally along the Sirhowy river and take a bag with me to pick up litter. From my involvement and witnessing the litter problem we have, I find it very difficult to understand why people litter so much, from dog walkers throwing their full bags in trees, fast food packaging on the side of roads and pathways, together with general waste flytipping.

Can you consider targeting problems at source, fast food outlets, additional rates for using non-bio degradable packaging, if people have take out packaging then consider they have to pay more for the packaging. If biodegradable or returnable packaging is used than is it possible to lower rates as an incentive?

Schools, can you consider allowing schools in smaller groups to go on litter picks as part of their environment awareness subjects etc. This could be a big incentive to make children think about what happens to the packaging they regularly use.

Removal of some school crossing patrols, similar to street lighting, it may be beneficial to pilot areas of low, medium and high risk to evaluate findings and make parents / guardians and schools aware of the risk factors. There has been recent top up funding for 20mph zones, can this be considered in higher risk areas as a funding element to alleviate the risk and removal of crossing patrols?

Social heritage sites - have you considered using these sites for more green manufacturing and natural resource solutions to provide green energy? Look back at our industrial revolution and what infrastructure could be utilised to provide such valuable and possible funding sources to service the uk and wider communities.

I have been involved with the focus accessibility group at Cwmcarn scenic drive and there is so much potential to multi use this site and natural environment and infrastructure to provide alternative resources for hydro energy and possibly making it a zero carbon zone in years to come. The project manager is including my input on creating areas and spaces but has suggested I highlight the idea for green resource to generate additional funds to yourselves.

I trust my concerns and opportunities could possibly give you a viewpoint of additional income sources for the very stakeholders who really care about their communities, businesses, place making and ensuring our ever changing environments can be adapted and regenerated for future generations too.

Kind Regards

CAERPHILLY CONVERSATION – COMMENTS

CLOSURE OF TREHIR RECYCLING CENTRE

This proposal has caused much concern and anger in the Caerphilly area and since I posted about it on the Caerphilly Then and Now Facebook page, it has received well over 100 comments, with I believe not one in favour of it. Apart from the usual uncomplimentary comments about the Council, there have been concerns about increased fly tipping (which is already bad), the movement away from a large centre of the population and the increased pollution which is likely to occur from the increase of traffic volumes on the by-pass. In June 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency in Caerphilly, well this is only likely to make matters worse.

Would it not be possible to shelve the proposed expansion at Penallta and instead create a replacement for Trehir, close to the Llanbradach roundabout on the site used by the contractors for the Pwll-y-Pant improvement to store equipment and materials. This piece of land is just inside the gate to the existing site and has been roughly surfaced, although that area by itself would probably not be big enough, but without knowing details of the surrounding land, it may be possible to expand and create a one way system in and out of the site at the same point as the present exit on to the by-pass.

INFRASTRUCTURE-REDUCTION IN CARRIAGEWAY MAINTENANCE

The proposed reductions in Carriageway and other Highway maintenance budgets is not likely to be well received, as some of our roads leave much to be desired.

CORPORATE SERVICES – CATERING

Why are Meals Direct and school meals proposed to be increased by between about 4% and 7% or more? while meals in the staff canteen are only looking at a 3% increase. I would guess that these meals are already subsidised, which is not a luxury that many workers in the Borough enjoy.

From: Cllr. Aldworth, E.M

Sent: 13 January 2020

Subject: P & R Meeting Tuesday 14th January 2020.

Dear Steve,

With regard to the Report Agenda Item 8 and the section 5.5 5.5.1 Page 25.

The possible closure of Tre-Hir site as a civic amenity for Caerphilly Basin, Aber Valley and B.T.M. areas is very significant. Its popularity and usage is evident in the figures I have seen.

I can recall monies put aside years ago in relation to the ending of domestic waste tipping – and this refuse dump has ceased operating as such. Surely, the amount recorded in the report is sufficient to maintain and improve Tre-hir?

To consider closing, will lead to further problems, certain residents might not be so keen in travelling further up the Rhymney Valley to another available site. Dumping will probably get a lot worse, especially in the country lane areas.

Can I ask for your opinion on this topic please?

From: Resident

Date: 12 January 2020

To: "James Cllr. Pritchard" <pritchj@caerphilly.gov.uk>

Subject: Caerphilly Budget

Hi.

As much as I disagree with some of the Council point I don't think they are responsible for doing absolutely everything. The lights bring out don't really affect me and the one time I was in the car lights are still on junctions, roundabouts etc. I did state I would like the Council sickness policy reevaluated and less agency people used. More needs to be done regarding fly tipping and not just deal with clearing it up afterwards. I would like more enforcers to deal with littering/dog fouling/fly tipping etc. Can this be undertaken by parking wardens etc?

Thanks

Resident

First of all I have some queries please:

1. I cannot see anything in the proposals identifying night light reduction even though I have been told by the Highways Department that this was consulted on in the proposed budget reduction public consultation. Can you pick this out for me please or is this it as below? "Infrastructure - Reduction in Street Lighting maintenance budget. Saving £40k. Reducing maintenance costs by undertaking a reactive response to outages rather than a proactive replacement strategy. Further savings will also be achieved from the ongoing rollout of new LED Lighting. Impact on the public LOW"
2. Were the behind the scenes impact assessments on these proposals made available as part of this public consultation via direct links from the Newline page?

Here are my comments on the budget reduction proposals:

1. There is inconsistent clarity throughout the information given and even in some cases no description at all so this will undoubtedly have impacted on the public understanding of the issues highlighted for cuts. There is a great deal of internal "corporate" speak used which generally means nothing to the public and so unless the public has managed to glean sufficiently from some of the descriptions of the proposed cuts, or contacted the authority to learn more, then cuts proposals undoubtedly will have gone undetected and will not instigate responses. This is likely to show in my anticipated low level of responses from the public to this consultation. From experience I suggest that senior officers will have worked on these proposals for some time and elected members will have had this shared with them in meetings and even seminars, so to put this to the public as consultation without sufficient clarification (even within the summary) is unsatisfactory. Is this a matter of complacency and disregard for the public or as a suspicious person may wonder, intention to dissuade responses and let the cuts sail through?
2. In line with the above point, across the spreadsheet you can't see the woods for the trees so to speak! The descriptions are authority jargon and in many cases lack any detail and meaning that the public can make out in "real" terms. Therefore the cuts may happen undetected and then the proverbial could hit the fan afterwards when it will be too late for the public to turn the decisions around. Is this fair? I don't think so. As just one example among the very many in this sense: "Corporate Property - Reduction in DDA budget. Saving £30k. A reduction of 50% is proposed. There have been significant investments in recent years to ensure DDA compliance and this reduced budget will be sufficient to address any residual issues moving forward. Impact on the public NONE" My issue is not about the term DDA although other members of the public may not realise this.
3. I presume that the assessments and evaluations sitting behind the proposals and done beforehand have been done internally and without any public consultation? I can see from one of the links you sent me that this particular exercise has been done using corporate guidance (and even possibly a corporate matrix assessment tool) but nonetheless officers have clearly used subjective judgement and therefore assumed the impact of proposed cuts on the public, partner organisations and other agencies. Is this appropriate? I don't think so.
4. The proposed cut for Social Services as "Temporary use of reserves to underpin alternative ways of working. £800k Based on current information the projected 2020/21 growth requirement for Social Services is £800k. For 2020/21 only it is proposed that this anticipated growth requirement will be met through a one-off contribution of £800k from Social Services reserves. This is proposed on the basis

that there are a number of initiatives currently underway that will reduce costs in the medium to long-term and therefore mitigate the current cost pressures in the system." So this is not an actual **saving** for the next budget year but a means of using reserves to underpin an overspend that would otherwise be the case.

5. In terms of the catalogued budget reductions, I have many concerns, but to give just two of these I am concerned about night light reduction and about CCTV camera removals/reductions. Both will have huge impact on alleviating the fear of crime and indeed is likely to result in real increased crime. But particularly poses risk of safety for people who work unsocial hours accessing unlit areas, such as bar staff and shift workers going home, G.P.s, district nurses, ambulance staff and fire and rescue staff who have no choice in going into therefore "unprotected areas"; potential increase in undetectable domestic and other violence in unlit areas.. Also, this contradicts the anti-poverty objective by increasing security costs for home owners and tenants or could result in lack of adequate indemnity unless families pay more; it under-minds and contradicts the whole point of the community safety objective wholesale, it transfers budget increases to other agencies including the Police, the NHS and other emergency services because of fall-out from this. It completely contradicts the emergence of improved safety via street lighting within the past six decades and undermines the whole ethos of community partnership with local residents and other agencies within the past number of decades. The public's health and safety should not be compromised by such proposals.

Again thank you for the opportunity to give my comments.

Sorry but there is something additional that I want to say as an extra point to those given in my first e mail sent a little earlier:

I feel that putting a public consultation on something so important that includes proposed cuts to services should be published at a time that has more chance of initiating responses from the public, giving the benefit of any doubt that this is intended by the council. From 18th November to 13th January couldn't be a less opportunistic time to encourage publish interaction with the Christmas and New Year periods in the offing. This exercise should have been sooner or extended later; working people and families and those with other seasonable time demands have very little opportunity to engage in the lead in period to Christmas and people are gearing up for back to work and back to school from 2nd January. I understand that the consultation has to work with the budget setting cycle but this timing is not helpful and is hugely exacerbated by the lack of clarity in a lot of the information given in the spreadsheet and I am absolutely sure that between these two factors many people would feel that they don't have time/opportunity to wade through "the treacle of it."

Thanks and Regards,

From: Caerphilly Town Council

1 CCTV

Gwent Police representatives and Town Councillors raised concerns at the proposals from CCBC to close down a number of CCTV cameras across the County Borough. The Town Council resolved to oppose the shutting down of the cameras in the Crescent Road car park. They felt this would be a retrograde step in respect of the security of the users of the car park, and crime prevention and detection, especially at a time when there has been a reported increase in vehicle crime within Caerphilly town. The Town Council has requested these views be drawn to the attention of CCBC.