

Foreword

Welcome to our Annual Self-Assessment and Well-Being report for 2024–2025.

This report is our annual update on the progress we have made in delivering and developing our key services, including details of the work we have carried out to take forward our 9-priority objectives within our County Plan.

Like all authorities, we continue to face many challenges. However, there is cause to feel excitement and a real sense of optimism with what is to follow next. The challenges we face as councils today such as the impact of global events, shrinking budgets, cost of living, escalating demand, and growing inequality across our communities, aren't problems we can solve with yesterday's tools. These are deep, interconnected challenges that demand new approaches, fresh perspectives, bold experimentation and collective creativity.

This time last year we began exploring innovative plans to work more closely with Blaenau Gwent Council, through a shared Chief Executive for an initial 9-month discovery phase. This exploratory phase was designed to assess opportunities for greater efficiency, identify resources that can work at scale across both authorities, and unlock potential for increased innovation and creativity in how we deliver services.

The success of the initial discovery phase led to the establishment of more formal, long-term arrangements with Blaenau Gwent Council under a federated model of service delivery. This pioneering approach, the first of its kind in Wales, represents a bold and innovative response to the sustainability challenges facing the public sector. It reflects our shared commitment to collaboration, resilience, and delivering better outcomes for our communities.

We have made a clear commitment to reducing inequality and improving well-being in Torfaen. This ambition drives everything we do, and it's embedded at the heart of our financial strategy. Our medium-term financial plan prioritises early intervention and prevention, building resilience in individuals and communities, and addressing the wider determinants of health. By adopting the Marmot principles, we are taking a proactive, evidence-based approach to tackling health inequalities and promoting sustainability. Working in partnership with Blaenau Gwent strengthens our ability to deliver meaningful change. This collaborative, preventative approach is not only innovative, it reflects our ethos of thinking differently about how we meet the complex challenges facing our communities.

Moving into 2025/26, we will endeavour to further empower our residents, giving meaningful decision-making power to our communities, giving them a real say on where resources are spent within their locality, encouraging local people to collaborate as equal partners in the design, delivery and evaluation of services.

We'll look to formalise our approach, through a new 'deal' with the residents of Torfaen, setting out what people in Torfaen can expect from the Council and how residents can do their part to help us to achieve our shared missions. We are aiming for a future without inequality, where everyone thrives in a fair, inclusive, and resilient community. To achieve this, we must aim to create a lasting change by building trust, fostering shared responsibility, and driving innovation through strong collaboration between the council, residents, and partners.

We value everyone within our organisation and as we move forward, it is reassuring to know we can rely on the dedication of all our staff working alongside partners, community groups, volunteers and elected members to continue to shape our success story.



**Councillor Anthony Hunt,
Leader of the Council**

**Stephen Vickers,
Joint Chief Executive**

