

The Year Ahead and Beyond

Our report highlights not only the key developments we are planning to deliver, but also the significant challenges we are actively addressing as an organisation.

At the heart of our approach are a small number of core principles that guide everything we do - principles that are fundamental to ensuring future generations can thrive. These concepts reflect our long-term vision and our commitment to sustainable, inclusive progress across our communities.

Our Community Well-Being Strategy provides a focus on delivering greater resilience to our communities and residents, resulting in much greater independence and less chance of individuals relying on costly council interventions in their lives.

We are committed to our aim of radically change the way we operate, making 'communities' and 'wellbeing & prevention' genuine cornerstones in the way we design our services so that we can empower our communities to be healthier, better connected and more equal.

We recognise that our success depends on shifting power and placing trust in our communities. By empowering residents with meaningful decision-making authority over how and where resources are allocated locally, we are giving people a real voice in shaping the services that matter most to them. This approach encourages collaboration between our residents, partners and the council, working together as equal partners to design, deliver, and evaluate services. It's a powerful step toward building stronger, more resilient communities and ensuring that public services truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the people they serve.

Our approach is rooted in giving communities greater autonomy over the resources that shape their lives. By transferring control of budgets and assets previously held by the council, we are enabling local people to take the lead in shaping their futures. But we're going further than simply allowing communities to decide how public funds are allocated, we're involving them directly in the design and delivery of public services. This marks a shift toward a culture of collaboration between the council and the communities of Torfaen, replacing traditional top-down models with meaningful partnerships. It's about unlocking the strengths within our communities, fostering trust, and empowering both public servants and residents to work together with shared purpose and mutual respect.

We've already taken important steps toward achieving our goals. Over the past year, the council has remodelled services to place greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention. However, we recognise that prevention is not the responsibility of the council alone. It requires a collective effort across our organisation and with our partners and communities. That's why we're embedding a prevention-first mindset into all our services and every aspect of our work, taking proactive measures to address the root causes of inequality. This means designing services that intervene early, invest in community strengths, and align resources to reduce future demand.

By working together, we can build a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable future for everyone in Torfaen.

Over the coming period, every directorate and service area will identify opportunities to prevent demand growing, promote wellbeing, and close gaps in outcomes. We will measure success not just by what we fix, but by what we prevent, ensuring that our actions today build a fairer, healthier, and more resilient communities for tomorrow.

The next phase of our approach is the development of a new relationship between the council and our communities. We will be introducing our 'Deal', a social contract built on trust, shared responsibility, and collective action. Our 'Deal' is not a project. It's a movement. A mindset. A commitment to doing things differently, by working together.

At its heart, our Deal is about sharing power, through devolved budgets, local decision-making, and a belief that communities know best what works for them. It's about working in partnership to reduce health inequalities, improve wellbeing, and build resilient, empowered, strong communities. It's about building something better together. Loving our borough, taking pride in our communities, and unlocking the potential that already exists in every street, every neighbourhood, and every person.

Our 'Deal' will be delivered through 5 shared missions:

- **Mission One: Early Years - Building Bright Futures**
Support every child to thrive by laying strong foundations for lifelong learning and development - addressing cognitive, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing
- **Mission Two: Inspiring Lifelong Learning, Ambition and Resilience**
Empower people of all ages to lead informed, independent, and healthy lives, fostering ambition and resilience throughout life
- **Mission Three: Wellbeing Through Community Leadership**
Partner with communities to harness local strengths and improve wellbeing, reducing reliance on statutory services through proactive, community-led solutions
- **Mission Four: Thriving Economy, Vibrant Places**
Drive sustainable economic growth and create well-connected, vibrant communities where people and businesses can flourish
- **Mission Five: Empowered Communities, Shared Power and Success**
Work alongside communities to capture their energy and ambition, co-designing services and creating conditions for resilience, self-reliance, and shared success

A year ago, the Council gave a commitment to becoming a Marmot Council and in doing so to sustainably reduce in inequality and inequity in Torfaen. Our approach recognises that well-being is not just about individual choices or biology. The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age have a profound impact on their well-being. We must therefore go beyond healthcare to improve health in developing whole-system approaches that tackle the root causes of our problems, developing tailored, inclusive, and long-term solutions.

The Deal is our mechanism for bringing this aspiration to life. We are committed to be a learning authority, acting upon the feedback we receive through close working with the public, partners and our regulators as well as our recent Council wide peer review (panel performance assessment). It is therefore important to continually test whether our actions are delivering the intended benefits

Alongside the new 'Deal' we will implement a new evaluation framework for our work, further strengthening our ongoing and continuous self-assessment and review processes in order to have the greatest impact on improving the well-being of our residents.

Our vision is for a future without inequality, where everyone thrives in a fair, inclusive, and resilient community achieved through create lasting change by building trust, fostering shared responsibility, and driving innovation through strong collaboration between the council, residents, and partners. These plans are ambitious and our approach alongside our partners in Blaenau Gwent Council continue to set us aside to other Councils