

WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE 8:

Support our local culture and heritage and make Torfaen a thriving, safe and attractive place to live and visit

Supporting our local culture and heritage....

Supporting culture and heritage is important because it preserves the identity, history, and values of communities, fostering a sense of belonging and pride. It enriches lives through creativity, storytelling, and shared traditions, while also contributing to education, tourism, and the local economy. By investing in cultural and heritage initiatives, we strengthen social cohesion, promote diversity, and ensure that future generations can connect with and learn from the past.

At the end of July 2024, our Cabinet Members approved a decision to appoint a building company to begin work on the £3.7m redevelopment of our Greenmeadow Community Farm.

The contract was awarded to G Oakley and Sons following a competitive tender process and marks the next step in the renovation, regeneration and re-opening of Greenmeadow Community Farm.



Last year, councillors also approved additional investment for the redevelopment of the farm, which will include:

- a revamped Haybarn suitable for community events including weddings and parties
- a new all-weather indoor play barn with play equipment and a replacement outdoor adventure play area
- a new animal barn
- new and extended café
- an improved farm shop to promote local produce and suppliers
- attractive landscaping with woodland, trails and sensory paths
- improvements to the farm's entrance and site accessibility.

An additional £1.647m grant was secured earlier in 2024, to cover the cost of a new energy efficient heating system, alongside £183k match-funding from the council's climate reserve.

At the end of September 2024, construction work started on the redevelopment of Greenmeadow Community Farm, with an opening date of September 2025.

The start of this construction marks a major milestone on the journey to the reopening of the facility.

Investing in our town centres....

Investing in our town centres revitalises local economies, supports small businesses, and creates vibrant, attractive spaces for people to live, work, and socialise. It also helps to preserve local character and heritage, encourages tourism, and strengthens community pride.

Pontypool Town Centre

In December 2024, Cabinet Members approved a plan to utilise UK Government funding, allocated to Pontypool Town Centre to upgrade part of the town's sewer network.

Nearly £1 million has been earmarked for town centre improvements, thanks to the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF).

Up to £528,000 was used to upgrade the sewer network beneath Hanbury Road, which will be essential for any future development in the area.



The detailed design work for the Levelling Up Fund has highlighted an emerging capacity issue relating to the sewerage network in the Hanbury Road area of Pontypool. Without upgrading the sewer network, future regeneration projects in the area would likely be constrained.

The reality was that either we invest in this project, or block future regeneration in that part of town.

In January 2025, we invited our residents to attend a workshop to provide us with their ideas on how Pontypool Town Centre could be transformed.

The aim is to establish a town centre group that can help achieve the ambitions set out in the [Pontypool Placemaking Plan](#), as well as other ideas. We felt that this would be a unique opportunity for everyone to have their voices heard and make a real impact on the future of our town. By coming together and sharing our visions, we can create a vibrant, thriving centre that reflects the needs and aspirations of all who live and work here.

(These events are paid for by the Welsh Government Transforming Towns fund and delivered in partnership with Torfaen Council and Cwmpass).

Over the past two years, Pontypool Town Centre has benefitted from over £400,000 in grant funding which has helped enable the renovation and reuse of two vacant properties.

(Pontypool is one of only 11 projects in Wales to be awarded £7.6M from UK Government's Levelling Up Fund to deliver the £9.3M Pontypool Cultural Hub & Café Quarter project).

Pontypool Indoor Market Streetfood Saturdays, the summer events programme and grants for new high street businesses are also some of the other initiatives supported by the SPF town centre project.

Cwmbran Town Centre

During 2023, the UK Government announced a £20 million allocation for Cwmbran Town Centre, as part of their long-term Plans (LTP) for town centres.

The £20 million long term plan will ensure investment over a 10-year period to drive town centre improvements and unblock barriers to regeneration. The boundary for the investment includes Cwmbran Town Centre and adjacent neighbourhoods.

Our 10-year vision will identify the longer-term priorities for the town and develop a 3-year investment plan which will be submitted to the UK Government, before August 2024. A mix of capital and revenue funding will be used to support projects centred around 3 key investment themes:

- Safety and Security
- High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration
- Transport and Connectivity.

In April 2024, the latest step in developing that plan was the establishment of a Cwmbran Town Investment Board, with the first meeting taking place in May.

The largest proportion of the board is made up of local business and community representatives with representatives from the public sector including local politicians. The Board's primary objective will be to develop the long-term plan and working closely with local people.

At the beginning of November 2024, residents were invited to have their say on an ambitious set of potential projects for Cwmbran town centre.

The Cwmbran Placemaking Plan sets out several proposals for the next 10 years, including better public spaces, walking and cycling routes and more to do in the evenings.

The plan also highlights how a range of public, private and third sector funding could help realise the vision.

The Placemaking Plan for Cwmbran town centre, represents a bold vision for the future. This plan is not just about development; it's about creating a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community space that meets the needs of residents and visitors alike. (Placemaking Plans for Blaenavon and Pontypool were approved by councillors in 2022).

Keeping our public spaces clean....

Keeping our public spaces clean protects the environment, promotes public health, and enhances the appearance and safety of our communities. Clean spaces encourage people to spend time outdoors, support local businesses, and take pride in their surroundings. They also help reduce pollution, discourage littering and vandalism, and create a more welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for everyone.

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's) help local councils tackle anti-social behaviour in public areas like children's play areas and sports fields.

There are currently three PSPOs in place within our borough relating to dogs, which must be reviewed every three years. These are:

- Dog fouling: This is a borough wide PSPO, where it's an offence to fail to remove dog faeces from any land the public has access to.
- Dog Exclusion Areas: There are 140 areas within the borough where dogs are excluded, including school grounds, children's play areas and marked sports pitches. Dogs are also excluded from the Lapwing breeding area near the Garn Lakes Nature Reserve.
- Dogs on Leads Areas: It is also an offence to let a dog off a lead in specified areas, including Garn Lakes, Cwmbran Boating Lake, and all of our Council's cemeteries.



As part of our review, we were also keen to find out whether our residents still supported the current PSPOs in place, or whether they would like to see any changes, or think they should be removed.

Our consultation opened at the end of July 2024 and a high-level summary of the consultation findings, is as follows:

- 80.3% were in favour of retaining the dog exclusion areas
- 83.9% were in favour of retaining the dogs on leads areas
- 68.6% did not feel that the PSPO was appropriately enforced
- 58% did not feel that the PSPO was enough of a deterrent

The overall findings were similar with that, of the previous consultation three years prior, namely that there is a perception that the existing PSPO is not robustly enforced.

Our Civil Enforcement Team are responsible for enforcing the PSPO for dog controls in Torfaen, and the Environment Operations Team respond to requests to remove dog faeces from public land. It is understood that Torfaen is one of only two Councils in Wales whose Civil Enforcement Officers carry out a dual role of parking and environmental enforcement.

In November 2024, our Cabinet Members approved a variation to the existing Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for dog controls in Torfaen, to exclude dogs from any marked sports pitches and children's play areas on public land that have been developed since November 2021. They also agreed that the introduction of additional dog controls, as per feedback received as part of the consultation, be explored and assessed.

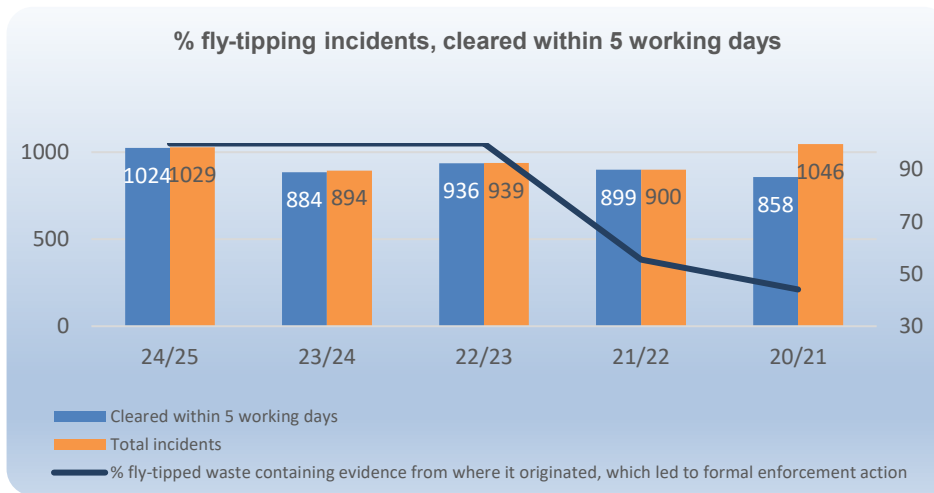
The PSPOs are an important tool in our fight against keeping our public spaces clean and safe for everyone to use. (PSPOs were introduced as part of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. All areas covered by a PSPO have signs explaining the requirements to encourage people to abide by them, and

details of how to report breaches when they happen. Breaching a PSPO is a criminal offence, and possible sanctions include a Fixed Penalty Notice of £100 or a fine up to £1,000 on conviction).

Preventing litter and fly-tipping....

Fly-tipping is a serious environmental crime and costs taxpayers a significant amount to clean up. It not only looks unsightly, but can be potentially dangerous, especially to children and animals, and has a detrimental effect on our environment.

Throughout 2024, we have continued working on joint initiatives with our partner organisations and communities to identify those people involved in fly tipping and to take enforcement action, where appropriate.



In comparison to last year (23/24), despite the increase in the number of **fly-tipping incidents** reported, we have still maintained our performance in clearing fly-tipping within 5 working days. **% of fly-tipped waste containing evidence, where it originated from, which led to informal action** - performance also looks positive in this area, although we must highlight that these figures are on a much smaller scale in comparison to the overall total number of incidents reported, as shown in the table below.

% of fly-tipped waste containing evidence, where it originated from, which led to informal action

	24/23	23/24	22/23	21/22	20/21
% reports of fly-tipped waste, where evidence of the perpetrator is obtained, resulting in enforcement action	100%	100%	100%	55.56%	44.07%
Number of reports of fly-tipped waste, where evidence of the perpetrator is obtained, resulting in enforcement action	21	3	9	10	26
Total number of reports of fly-tipped waste, where evidence of the perpetrator is obtained	21	3	9	18	59

A number of cases publicised throughout 2024, has demonstrated that we and our neighbouring Councils will not tolerate fly-tipping and we will take robust action against those found to be responsible. We hope that by continuing to publicise the various prosecutions that we have pursued that this will continue to send a clear message to those who engage in such irresponsible behaviour, will expect to face serious consequences.

Our Key Challenges...

Town Centre Regeneration:

- **Progressing the Levelling Up Fund projects to delivery stage and ensuring that they deliver the intended benefits for Pontypool** - delivering the Levelling Up Fund projects effectively will be crucial to revitalising Pontypool and ensuring the investment achieves its intended social, economic, and environmental benefits for the community.

The British:

- **Developing a viable scheme to planning stage** - requires balancing heritage preservation, financial feasibility, and community benefit—while navigating planning regulations and stakeholder expectations. This is important because a well-developed scheme can unlock regeneration opportunities, attract investment, and ensure The British becomes a sustainable and valued asset for Pontypool's future.

The Canal:

- **Producing a Masterplan for 5 locks basin alongside implementing the wider volunteer programmes** - producing a Masterplan for the 5 Locks Canal Basin while implementing volunteer programmes will require coordinating long-term strategic planning with community-led activity, ensuring both are aligned and will deliver meaningful impact.
- **Finding suitable grant funding to enable designs to be developed for the 5 locks road crossing** - securing suitable grant funding will be essential to move this scheme from concept to design stage, yet funding sources are often competitive, limited, and require well-developed proposals aligned with strategic priorities. Without this funding, progress on improving connectivity and safety in the area could be delayed or stalled.