

Foreword

Welcome to our Annual Self-Assessment and Well-Being report for 2024/2025. The report provides an assessment of service delivery throughout the year, including what we have done well and, more importantly, where further improvements are required. The focus of the self-assessment is how we are delivering against the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, known as Well-being Objectives.

This time last year we were beginning to consider innovative plans to work more closely with Torfaen Council, through a shared Chief Executive, for an initial 9 month 'discovery phase'. This exploratory phase would consider the potential for efficiencies, resources that can work at scale, and the potential for increasing innovation and creativity across both authorities. The success of the 'discovery phase' has resulted in us entering into permanent arrangements with Torfaen Council. Faced with rising demand, particularly in social care, and increasing financial challenges, the decision was made, alongside Torfaen, to enter into a 'federated model' of service delivery. This is a new and exciting response to the sustainability challenges faced by the whole public sector in Wales.

The Council is looking to reduce the inequality experienced within the Borough and to improve overall well-being across Blaenau Gwent. Early intervention and prevention, improving the resilience and well-being of individuals and communities, and tackling the wider determinants of health, are all part of the council's medium term financial strategy and Corporate Plan. Through the implementation of the Marmot Principles and becoming a Marmot Council alongside Torfaen, to focussing on early intervention and prevention, gives us the best to change to tackle the challenges of health inequality, resilience and sustainability. By working together with Torfaen further enhances our chances of succeeding. This approach is innovative and further demonstrates our ethos of thinking about how to tackle our challenges in a different way.

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 council services. We'll look to formalise our approach, through a new 'deal' with residents, setting out what people 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.

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 Stephen
Thomas**
Leader of the Council

Stephen Vickers
**Joint Chief
Executive**

