

Dear Colleagues,

As we approach the Easter weekend, as promised I would like to provide you with some further details about our exciting plans to create an agile working environment within Penallta House, as well as offering a few other important updates.

Many thanks to those of you who were able to join me on Tuesday afternoon for our regular 'Cwtch' session. As always it was a really good catch-up and I would urge those of you who were unable to join me, to tune in to watch the recording by clicking on the link below:

<https://youtu.be/sUx98inCVbc>

You will recall I mentioned in my update to you last week the need to consider our physical buildings to ensure they are fit for purpose and are equipped to reflect our agile working aspirations for the future. Initially it is intended to focus on Penallta House as it is our main corporate hub.

We have developed some exciting proposals for the ground floor of Penallta House that could set the blueprint for how our overall workspaces could look and feel in the future, and I would really welcome your views.

### **Café style coffee bar**

We are proposing the introduction of a new café style coffee bar into the Glass Restaurant area, which will help create a more modern, agile-friendly working environment.

This proposal would see the introduction of a coffee bar style offering, including café barista style coffees, teas and smoothies, savoury pastries and patisserie products including panini's and jacket potatoes, and even local produce such as fresh bread and vegetable boxes that can be purchased to take away.

It is proposed that the hours of operation would be extended in order to cater for a more agile friendly working environment, and while the traditional 'hot meal' may not be available in future, the catering team inform me that the much-loved breakfast roll will certainly still form part of the breakfast offer!

Our catering team have provided a few images below, which offer a flavour for the type of offering that this café style facility could provide:





I would like to hear what you think of this proposal in principle, and if you like it, there will be many more opportunities for you to really shape the future offering over the coming weeks, so stay tuned!

## Introduction of hybrid workspace

To complement the café style coffee bar, we are proposing the transformation of a section of the ground floor dining space into a quality, modern, hybrid working area, that will offer colleagues flexibility and will encourage more agile, flexible ways of working.

The space would see a combination of soft furnishing meeting booths and existing furniture repurposed, including lockers and tables remanufactured from existing equipment that we have. The proposal would also see us making more use of the outdoor space available.

I have included some images below so you can get a feel for the type of environment being considered:



It is intended that this area will form a prototype for how we could reshape and repurpose our workspaces as part of our wider long term agile working aspirations, so again, I would really welcome your views on this new offer.

What is especially pleasing about this proposal is that it brings with it, the opportunity to bring about some real community benefits. The local company that will deliver these works have proposed a 'give-back' community scheme, which is certainly in-keeping with our 'social heart' value as a council. Much more on this, including seeking your views on what this could look like, will follow over the coming weeks!

## Co-working partner hub

Our public sector partners will also be able to make use of this flexible approach to modern working within Penallta House and using Welsh Government funding, we will be establishing a 'co-

working hub' on the ground floor. This will see partners from across the public sector making greater use of our building - strengthening and sustaining our partnership working well into the future.

As you will appreciate, these are initial concept proposals and it will take some time to embed our agile working aspirations across the organisation completely, but I hope you will agree that this is the beginning of an exciting new chapter for us and I look forward to shaping it with you together. Please look out for further opportunities to have your say on these proposals over the next couple of weeks.

### **Staff survey**

The staff survey is being finalised and will be circulated after Easter to capture your views and feedback about these proposals and a range of other key issues. Please keep an eye out for it and please take some time to complete the survey as it will provide me with important staff feedback that will help inform the future shape of the Council.

### **Caerphilly Cares**

You'll be aware how successful our 'buddy scheme' was in supporting some of our most vulnerable residents during the pandemic. We didn't want to lose the benefits of this scheme, so we have developed a sustainable model that looks to build upon the initial successes even further.

During the early days of the pandemic, we saw many residents getting in touch with us for support, sometimes for the first time – and they often needed multiple interventions. The idea behind Caerphilly Cares is to provide a single gateway into the council for these residents, where a 'triage' team assess their full range of support needs (it could be financial support, support for isolation or loneliness, food poverty etc.) and signpost them to the relevant departments/partners as needed. It certainly won't replace any existing service the council offers; rather more, it aims to enhance our current offer, to provide individual support to our residents through the difficult times they may be facing.

The Caerphilly Cares model allows the team to support our residents and drill down to the root cause of their issue. They will no longer need to tell their story multiple times as the team will act as that single point of contact, helping them through their journey of support from beginning to end.

The 'triage' support will assist individuals in becoming more resilient and independent over the longer term, whilst helping build upon the true community spirit we saw shining through the pandemic.

This really brings the council, voluntary sector and communities together, working at its best. A real Team Caerphilly effort! Tina McMahon and her colleagues from the Community Regeneration team have recently transferred over to the Social Services and Housing directorate in order to manage this very important part of our strategic recovery framework.

Tina and the team will be offering a series of online information sessions over the coming weeks – so please do keep a look out for these!

So, in closing, there is a lot going on (as usual!), so please enjoy the Easter break and use the time to relax, unwind and recharge the batteries!

Take care  
Christina