

Caerphilly County Borough Council 

PUBLIC SUMMARY

Improvement Plan

2009/12



A greener place to live, work and visit
Man gwyrddach i fyw, gweithio ac ymweld



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.
This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.



● Foreword

Councillor Allan Pritchard Leader of the Council

This document summarises the council's performance over the past year and I am pleased to see overall the council's is moving forward and making real improvements to services for local residents and businesses.

Our auditors confirmed we are leading the way in developing innovative and effective solutions with diminishing financial resources. With the support of dedicated employees in our efficiency programme we have created real opportunities for reshaping the way we deliver services and this is clearly evidenced in the launch of the Gwent Frailty Service, Prosiect Gwyrdd and most recently our agreement to combine our social services with Blaenau Gwent social services. Our number one priority has always been to retain front line services and to protect our services to the public without reducing the quality.

We are the leading authority in Wales for reducing waste going into landfill and this has been achieved by working together with residents in providing a service they feel at ease to use and actively encouraged to recycle more.

Our environment is important to us today but we are also thinking about the inheritance we are leaving for our children's children and our work in reducing carbon emissions by some simple measures to effectively cut our energy waste are progressing well. We have had an aggressive programme of insulating our existing schools, improving our boiler systems and educating everyone about good housekeeping methods to keep heating bills down. We are extremely proud to have just built the most environmentally energy efficient school in the UK; Greenhill Primary has in its design incorporated alternative energy technologies with wind power photovoltaic arrays, (more commonly known as solar panels) and ground source heat all have a direct effect on reducing our carbon emissions.

Our ambitious plans to create 150 new training places for young people across the Caerphilly county borough have come to fruition earlier this year. The project has numerous benefits both in supporting those youngsters currently not taking part in any employment, education or training. You can read more about this in the detailed version of our improvement plan.

We have set out a very important stance on investing in our town centres and this is demonstrated through customer facing services being placed in the heart of our town centres. Maximising our buildings and working with developers, we are bringing forward Abercarn Library, refurbishing Blackwood Library, restoring the old Hanbury Chapel in Bargoed to become a multi purpose building in housing the library, customer services and meeting spaces. This is mirrored in Risca where the magnificent façade of the old Palace cinema is to be restored and brand new state of the art facilities are being provided for customers to use as well as a new library.

This document summarises how we have measured our performance and shows us where we need to make more effort to achieve a high quality service fit for the residents of this county borough. We are not complacent and will strive to listen to and encourage our residents to help us shape the services they need and want.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Allan Pritchard". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive script.



Anthony O'Sullivan

**Chief Executive and
Director of Environment**

Welcome to Caerphilly Councils performance summary for 2011 which summarises how we have performed against our 13 priorities below:

1. Deliver value for money public services **IO**
2. Reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill
3. Improve the provision of housing for our tenants
4. Make Caerphilly a safer place to live and work **IO**
5. Improve the look and feel of our streets
6. Reduce our carbon footprint and improving our sustainability **IO**
7. Increase the range of employment opportunities for local residents **IO**
8. Increase tourists visiting Caerphilly
9. Increase the viability and vitality of our town centres
10. Improve the skills level for children and young people **IO**
11. Raise awareness to the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle **IO**
12. All learning settings meet current and known future requirements to facilitate learning in the 21st century
13. All adults who are in the social care system are able to lead a full, active and independent life **IO**

Within our 13 priorities above we have highlighted **8** improvement objectives (IO's). These are areas that the public tell us is most important to them and are that we cannot afford to lose sight of in the short term. During times of increasing financial difficulty, it is even more important that we focus our resources in those areas of service that we want to improve and that are the most important to our customers.

Our 8 Improvement objectives are:

1. Improve how we engage with our citizens and listen to what our customers tell us about our services
2. Make Caerphilly a safer place to live
3. Sustain the range of employment opportunities for local residents
4. Improve the skills level for children and young people
5. Promote the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle
6. Adults in the social care system are able to lead full, active and independent lives
7. Agencies and partners work together to safeguard children and young people
8. Reduce our carbon footprint and improve our sustainability

These objectives do not deflect us from delivering our core services and there are many other council services important to local people that have not been identified as objectives. These include, street cleansing, refuse collection and recycling; highways maintenance; and leisure centres among others. Whilst we continue to improve these areas we have not chosen them as improvement objectives as you tell us we are doing well in these aspects and Improvement Objectives are where we want to focus our activity specifically in those areas of greatest need and where we want to do better.

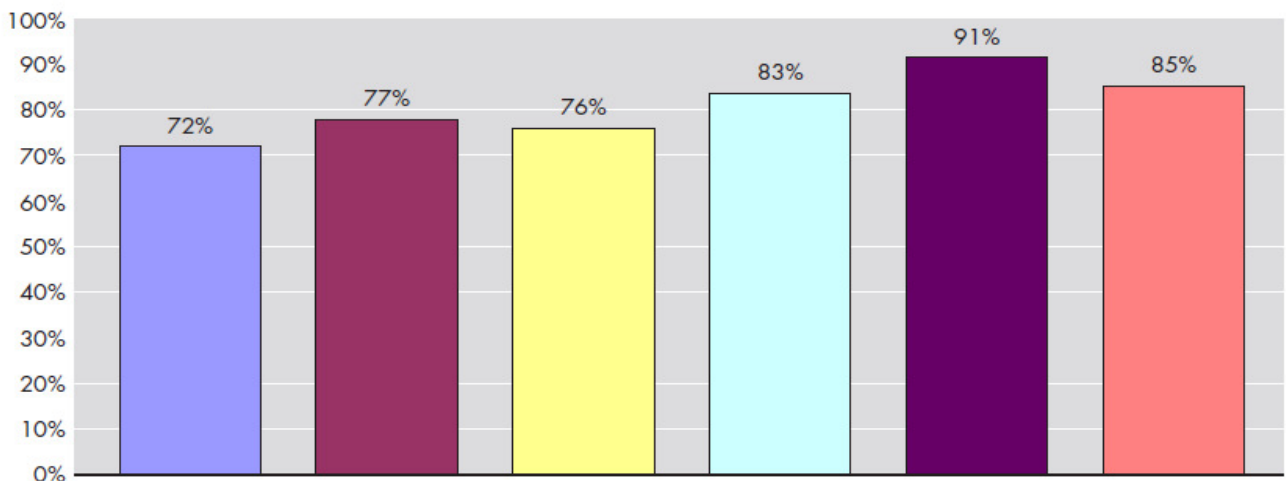
This document is a summary of our performance and the full update is available from all Council Receptions, your local Library, Leisure Centres and online at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Theme: Building Better Public Services

In this theme we are concerned about how to improve the way we deliver our services. We take public consultation and engagement very seriously and we use the results from our Household Survey to find out what you, our citizens, think about us.



How well did we do?



- Keeping residents informed about what we do.
- Efficiency of Council Staff.
- Dealing with your enquiry.
- Contacting the person you need.
- Helpfulness of reception staff.
- Helpfulness of other Council staff.

Source Data: Household Survey 2011



THEME: BUILDING BETTER PUBLIC SERVICES

We want to deliver value for money public services and improve how we deliver those services, included within this is the way we consult and engage with the public and provide evidence of changes that we have made based on what you tell us.

The overall financial picture for the Authority is good and savings made in advance of when they were required have helped create financial stability. We have a programme of library refurbishments, which will contain customer service teams so that the public can access a whole range of services face to face, in addition to our other methods for contact. Collaboration was a strong feature such as:

- Working with Cardiff County Council in a contract to provide Agency staff has made an estimated saving of £185k:
- A partnership agreement with Rhondda Cynon Taff for the maintenance and Installation of Street Lighting has achieved savings of approximately £100k per annum;
- Partnership between 10 local authorities to improve the quality and value for money for out of authority foster placements has saved £59,300.
- Opening of three libraries Bargoed 2011, Risca 2012 and Caerphilly 2013

Never the less

We want to improve the ways people can contact us and make better use of the feedback we provide. Welsh Government are introducing a national complaints policy and we want to use this as the basis to refresh and improve our own. Part of a review of our buildings requires an Asset Management strategy so we can identify savings in the way we use our properties.

For 2011 we will:

- Work in collaboration with Blaenau Gwent to integrate effective social services to citizens of both areas
- Improve our complaints process and how we use the information to improve and make progress with publication and monitoring of contact service standards
- Improve the way we engage with citizens including trying to obtain a more representative mix of people that take part in our consultations.
- Implement an Asset Management strategy

Key Facts
<p>78% of respondents from household survey stated they were satisfied with the overall services we provide, increasing from 2009 when response rate was 60%.</p>
<p>Our 'tell us once' service has gone live, this will allow us to notify a wide range of government departments on behalf of a person registering a bereavement to save them time and repetition.</p>

Theme: Building Better Lifestyles

This theme focuses on how we are improving those things that will help us all to live better, more sustainable lifestyles.



We are making strides in our commitment to sustainability and carbon footprint reduction... thanks to the sun! A series of photovoltaic arrays, more commonly known as solar panels, are set to be installed to four council-owned buildings across the county borough, which in addition to helping reducing our carbon footprint, is also likely to generate revenue and savings of almost £1 million over a twenty-five year period.

"I contacted the Council to ask for health and safety issues regarding shrubs on the banks adjacent to the river bridge at Glan-yr-Affon, Machen to be attended to. The shrubs were cut back and the problem resolved." **John Jarvis, Resident**

"I complained about the amount of dog mess and lack of dog foul litter bins in two streets in Ystrad Mynach. Within a week the Council had inspected the streets and erected additional dog foul bins in the area to help sort out the problem." **Resident of Ystrad Mynach**



THEME: BUILDING BETTER LIFESTYLES

We have been working with our partners to make Caerphilly a safer place to live and work (including safeguarding our children). Under this theme we want to improve the look and feel of our streets and reduce our Carbon Footprint. We also are focusing on Improving the provision of housing for our tenants and prioritised reducing the amount of waste we send to landfill

This year we introduced hand held Personal Digital Assistant (PDA's) to improve housing repair times. By removing waste from the system and reducing amount of times manual repairs data was handled we have made efficiency savings of approx £100k. Our recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime and disorder fell and the Food Hygiene rating system was successfully introduced. This informs the public of hygiene levels at various food establishments. Key achievements this year is:

- We have reduced waste sent to landfill from 52.7 to 46% in 10/11
- Increased the number of appointments made to carry out repairs (totalling 19,546) appointments, with the percentage of appointments being kept at 94.7%,
- The average number of days it takes to complete emergency repairs to our homes dropped from 0.55 days in 2009/10 to 0.3 days in 2010/11.
- Our Tidy Towns initiative helped over 200 areas that are not part of a regular Council maintenance regime, cleaning up derelict and over grown sites which helps improve the look of our borough and helps attract visitors.
- Greenhill Primary School became the first A+ Energy Performance Certificate rated school in the county and the first climate change woodland was planted in the borough

Never the less

The recession has impacted on the homeless with the time taken to find potential homes longer than usual (33 days) and the average number of days that people who are homeless spent in temporary accommodation moved from 75 days to 114 days. Although we performed well in dealing with housing appointments, urgent repairs took longer at 10 days from 5.84 days in 09/10. Enforcement activity has reduced from 50.6 to 36% and of the % of residents who replied to the household survey only 59% were satisfied with the appearance of their neighbourhood and town centers.

For 2011 we will

- Continue our work in partnership with other Authorities to deal with our waste
- Meet the diverse range of housing needs in the borough and increase availability for young people (16-25)
- Carry out a range of partnership initiatives to increase public confidence in the community safety and reduce incidence of environmental crime
- Carry out works that try to reduce the impact of fuel poverty and raise awareness of climate change issues

Key Facts
94% of household survey respondents satisfied with recycling service
Improved our housing re-let times from 55 days to 39 days
There are currently 217 volunteer network members across the county borough
94.25% of Highways were of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness and 98.94% of Reported fly tipping incidents were cleared in 5 working days

Theme: Building A Vibrant Economy

Under this theme we show how we are working hard to improve the job prospects and employability of our citizens.



"I was working on the checkout at Morrisons when I joined the Working Skills for Adults programme. I was keen to progress my job opportunities and gain more skills. After some advice and guidance provided by the programme, I joined Crumlin Adult Education Centre in September 2010, for an advanced IT class which would give me a recognised IT qualification. I also attended an employability workshop where I had help with application writing and CV writing.

In the Autumn of 2010, Tesco began a recruitment drive to staff their new store in Risca. With the skills that I had gained from the employability workshop and help with my application form, I was invited for an interview. Prior to the interview, I had a meeting with my Working Skills for Adults Advisor to discuss some interview techniques. I sailed through her interview and was offered a post in their Personnel Department using the IT skills that I had gained on the Adult Education Course. I am continuing to progress my IT skills and I plan to enrol on a Management Training course at Bedwas Community Education Centre" **Laura Cole**



"I signed up with Bridges into Work in August 2009 when my job at a local care home came under threat and redundancy loomed in mid October. I was encouraged to join the project by my Learning Support Advisor, who had previously taught me in writing and IT class. I received support to attend a Sign Language course, something I had always wanted to do. I also took the opportunity to complete an Internet and Email course so that I could improve my IT and job searching skills. My Learning Support Advisor helped me to construct an impressive CV and apply for jobs over the phone and by email.

After completing just two application forms, I was invited to interview for both posts. Bridges into Work helped me prepare for my interviews with hints, tips and informal role-play, which really improved my confidence. I was offered both posts. I accepted a position as a Community Care Support Worker and started my new job just two weeks after being made redundant." **Sarah Penticost**



THEME: BUILDING A VIBRANT

Under this theme we are working with our partners to sustain and where possible increase employment opportunities by carrying out a range of activities through work clubs and employment intervention schemes. We are working to increase tourist-visiting numbers and improve the viability and vitality of our town centres, to make them places people will want to visit

Caerphilly led the way in safeguarding and job creation. We have also been awarded the largest numbers of grants under the 6 counties collaborative Local Investment Fund in 2010/2011. We launched the 6 counties collaborative Community Economic Development Programme and secured £1.6m to support existing and prospective new social enterprises for five years and started up an apprenticeship programme for young people. In 2010 it was estimated that tourism generated some £85.8m in the local economy in direct expenditure on accommodation, food and recreation. In 2010/11 seven of Caerphilly's tourism facilities were voted in the Valleys Top 50 attractions.

- Employment support programmes, e.g. Lone Parents project etc made significant progress with 791 jobs safeguarded and 1760 people took part in the 'bridges into work' programme
- Cwmcarn Forest Drive campsite achieved 4 star grading due to upgrades. Visitor numbers improved 183,234 people visited Cwmcarn in 2010/11, compared to 174,483 in 2009/10.
- Spend on tourism in Caerphilly rose from -4% to +2% 2010/11 and we ran a strong events programme with the development of the Caerphilly Medieval Fair, Blackwood Dickensian Fair and Bargoed Ice Rink, on top of the established events such as the Big Cheese and Kite Night
- The 'High street' Online' campaign was launched in 2010/11, encouraging businesses to retail online and £8.3 million of funding was secured for Bargoed with a further £11 million secured for Newbridge helped by our 'Retail Survey', which provides vital information when bidding for grants.

Never the less

Some existing government job programmes will come to an end, which will put strain on remaining programmes and we will need to keep an eye on this. Despite our extensive marketing and promotional work our visitor numbers to the town centres of Caerphilly and Blackwood decreased in 10/11.

For 2011 we will

- Continue refurbishment with our new Bargoed library opening November 2011.
- Invest, improve and promote in a range of our public places and events programme
- Develop bespoke solutions to worklessness, providing a comprehensive service to local people seeking work

Key Facts
The time we took to pay our invoices was down to 13.9 days from 17 days in 09/10, this means small medium businesses receive their cash quicker, helping their cash flow.
Both Cwmcarn Scenic Drive and the New Tredegar Winding House were listed in the Top 10 Valleys attractions.

Theme: Building Futures, Changing Lives

As part of this theme we are aiming to improve those things, which can really make a difference to a person's life, such as the fabric of school buildings and the services we provide to enable people to live independently.



"We are very proud that our school is the first in the country to be awarded an A+ Energy Performance Certificate for zero – low carbon emissions. The Eco friendly features are outstanding; we have four wind turbines, an array of solar panels and a rain water harvesting system, making it the most energy efficient school in the country."



Gaynor Anstice, Headteacher Greenhill Primary School, Gelligaer

Our service users (93.4%) told us that social services had helped them to lead a more independent life and 92.6% said that we had helped them to stay in their own home.

"The reablement team were very helpful, they made me feel confident about my abilities and taught me I can do things for myself." **Adult Services – Service User**

"Health and social care have amalgamated into one team to make the Caerphilly Resource Team. Since we have been one big team having health, social care, physiotherapists and occupational therapists all working together from the word go helps better as we are intervening a lot quicker and the response times to provide that patient with any type of service is a lot quicker than it used to be."

Seran Saber, Emergency Care co-ordinator, Gwent Frailty Programme



THEME: BUILDING FUTURES, CHANGING LIVES

This theme is concerned with improving our learning settings to help facilitate learning as part of improving the skills level for children and young people. We also want to raise awareness of the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle and the impact this has on quality of life. In addition we want to focus on adults who are in the social care system to help them to lead a full, active and independent life.

This year 80 building capital schemes were completed which improved our school buildings, we trained 121 learning coaches to give more one to one and personalised support to learners and we have 30 different types of courses available to young people.

To improve literacy and number skills we introduced a skills strategy with focus on language, number and ICT. We continue to raise awareness of healthy lifestyles with a range of initiatives and our health training mapping exercise grew to the extent that we are now advising the Welsh government on development of an All Wales Scheme. Participation levels in sport and exercise have increased, particularly in Schools. We reduced our waiting times for adults waiting for assessments and continued to promote the way people access social services information.

- Of those people who used Social Services 84.9% said they found it easy to get information about the services they may need.
- Waiting times for assessment reduced with 62 adults waiting for an assessment outside of the timescale, compared to 277 adults in 2009-10.
- 99.9% first preferences of school places were met.
- All schools are engaged in the Healthy Schools Programme and 75% of those have achieved phase 3 or higher in the scheme
- The number of people attending Referral to Exercise programme increased from 647 to 1015

Never the less

The number of young people not in employment, education or training increased from 5% to 6% this year in part due to the recession and the % of school days lost to fixed term exclusions in primary schools increased. We want to focus on increasing the overall up take up of school meals in primary schools. We will develop measures of quality within services for Adults by piloting a survey to gauge the quality of service from the customer point of view.

For 2011 we will

- Improve the skills levels of our learners in a range of ways including, standardise reading assessments, helping under attaining boys and providing a programme of support in the early identification of social, emotional and behavioural needs of children and young people
- Publish our 'Creating an Active' Caerphilly Plan and introduce a revised Welsh Government Free swim initiative for older people.
- Reduce inequities in mental health and continue to improve timeliness of assessments.

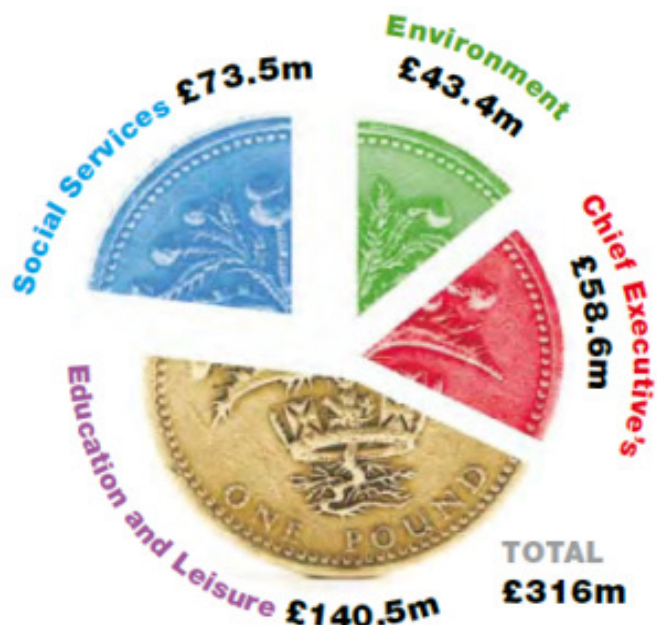
Key Facts
% Of pupils leaving full-time education without an approved qualification dropped below 1% which equates to 20 pupils out of 2231
Trained and mentored 38 coaches of the future this year (15-16 year olds) harnessing their talent to provide quality coaching to others
The rate of older people (aged 65 or over) helped to live at home per 1000 population aged 65 or over, best in Wales with a figure of 144.58 .

○ Finance Review 2010/11

During the last financial year the council spent over £316 million providing a range of key services. This page explains where this money came from and how it was spent.

Where your money was spent?

Most of the council's money in 2010/11 was spent on our two major service areas – Education and Social Services. The pie chart shows exactly how the council spends your money across its service areas. The table below breaks down the major service area budgets to show in more detail where the money goes.



<i>Education and Leisure</i>	<i>Spend</i>
Individual Schools Budgets	£97.7m
Schools Transport	£6.6m
Leisure Centres	£3.7m
Libraries	£3.1m

<i>Social Services</i>	<i>Spend</i>
Children's Services	£19.9m
Adult Services	£45.9m

<i>Other areas</i>	<i>Spend</i>
Roads Maintenance	£7.2m
Street Lighting	£2.7m
Waste Management	£9.6m
Street Sweeping & Cleansing	£3.8m
Fire Service Levy	£8.7m
Loan Charges	£16.9m

Capital expenditure

As well as the spending on services outlined above the council has also invested resources in some major capital schemes.

These include £7.4 million renovating council houses and £15.3 million on school buildings.

School Buildings	£15.3m
Highways Improvements	£9.9m
Renovation of Council Houses	£7.4m
Private Housing Grants	£5.0m

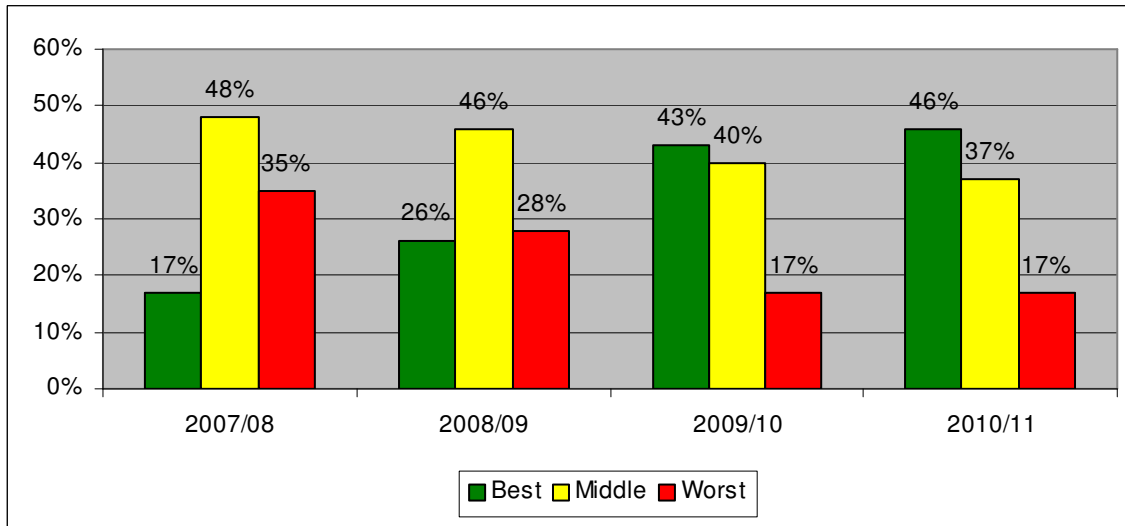
Where does the money come from?

The central government Inland Revenue tax system funded most of the money used to provide your services in 2010/11. It came to us in the form of the revenue support grant (65.4%) and from business rates (15.1%). The remainder of the money needed to run services came directly through your local council tax (16.5%) and other grants (3.0%).

<i>Source</i>	<i>Spend</i>
Revenue Support Grant	£206.6m
Share of business Rates	£47.6m
Council Tax	£52.0m
Other Grants	£9.8m
Total	£316.0m

Further details of the Financial Plan 2010-2011 and the Council Budget 2011-2012 are available on our webpage <http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/site.aspx?s=qb29+uFQcBPQLO2sM5/LABAEg3prVya8>

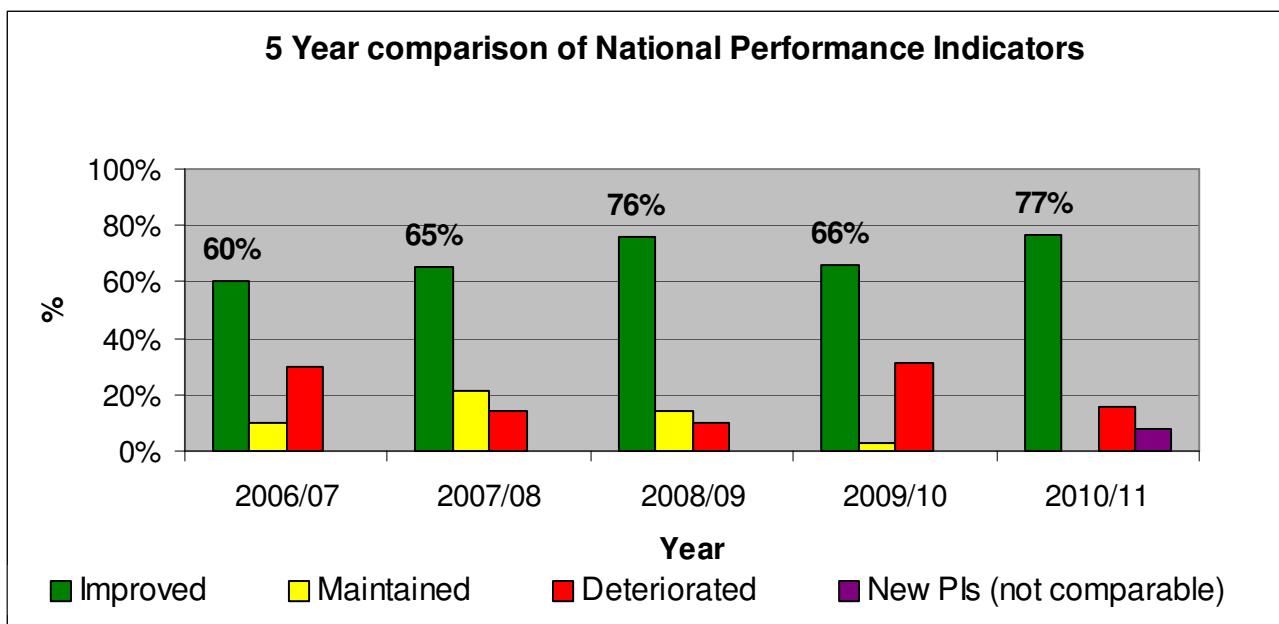
Summary of Caerphilly's National Performance 2010/11



We use a range of performance information to monitor our progress and in addition to this there are statutory pieces of data we collect on behalf of the Welsh Government (WG). These performance measures (called indicators) monitor our performance as well as the performance of other authorities.

The chart above shows how we compare collectively to other authorities against the WG indicators with more indicators moving steadily towards the best in Wales with the worst remaining the same over the last two years.

For 2010/11 there were 24 indicators set by WG. Each year we compare our performance in this set of indicators to see where our services are improving. The chart below shows our overall performance for past 5 years as to where we have improved and where we need to improve on performance from 2006/07 onwards.





Cllr Colin Hobbs – Cabinet Member for Performance Management, Property and Asset Management

“2010/11 saw another good year in how we performed against our national indicators. This is particularly heartening for us given the financial climate we find ourselves part of. In terms of our national data (which all Authorities collect for the Welsh Government), we have performed at our highest levels to date, with more than 77% of our national measures improving during 2010/11 compared to 2009/10. More than two-thirds of our national indicators are meeting or bettering the All Wales Average, with 46% amongst the best in Wales we are not complacent and believe what is more important than comparing averages is to use our information to identify what is working and where there is more work to do. We hoped you enjoyed reading about work and successes to date throughout our 2011 update on performance and fuller version is available on the website”

Contact Details

We welcome your views on what information you would like to see and how you would like to see it. Please contact me on the details below if you would like to give feedback on the document itself or if there is any information you think could be included for the future, particularly in relation to what you believe the Councils future priorities should be:

Ros Roberts – Performance Manager
Performance Management Unit
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Penallta House
Ystrad Mynach
Hengoed
CF82 7PG
Tel: 01443 864238
E-mail: roberr@Caerphilly.gov.uk

This document is also available in different languages and formats upon request. Further information can also be found on our website: www.Caerphilly.gov.uk/

Our Regulators Contact Details

All Council Services are regulated through a series of inspections. The Wales Audit Office write a report at the end of the year on each Authority and this is called the Annual Letter. The Annual Letter and the results of our other inspections can be found at the following web addresses of the different regulators.

All Services	Wales Audit Office (WAO)	WAO.gov.uk
	PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC)	pwc.co.uk/
Social Services	Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSIW)	CSIW.Wales.gov.uk
Education	Estyn	Estyn.gov.uk