

Meeting of:	SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	6 NOVEMBER 2025
Report Title:	COMMUNITY HUBS STRATEGY
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CLAIRE MARCHANT CORPORATE DIRECTOR – SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING COUNCILOR JANE GEBBIE DEPUTY LEADER / CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	SOPHIE MOORE GROUP MANAGER PREVENTION AND WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>This report presents the recommendation of a strategic transformation programme to develop multi-agency community hubs across Bridgend County Borough. The proposed model aims to modernise community facilities, improve accessibility to services, and promote wellbeing through collaboration between the Council, health partners, leisure and cultural organisations, registered social landlord's and the voluntary sector.</p> <p>Public engagement undertaken in 2025 showed strong community support, with nearly 70% of respondents finding the concept of multi-agency community hubs appealing. Residents valued modern, flexible, and locally tailored services that combine traditional library functions with wider wellbeing, advice, and support provision.</p> <p>The strategy builds on successful models elsewhere in Wales and aligns with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership's Integrated Health and Care Hub programme. It promotes a "No Wrong Door" approach—ensuring that residents can access the right support through co-located or outreach services.</p> <p>A phased implementation is proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1: Needs assessment and engagement with communities and partners.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2: Pilot hubs established in priority areas—particularly the Garw Valley, where there is significant unmet need. • Phase 3: Evaluation and scaling to other localities. • Phase 4: Development of a sustainability plan and long-term partnership arrangements. <p>The programme supports the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, embedding long-term, preventative, and collaborative approaches. By integrating services, maximising existing assets, and aligning with regional health and care developments, this transformational strategy offers a sustainable and equitable model for community support, strengthening resilience, reducing inequalities, and improving wellbeing across Bridgend County Borough.</p>
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present the recommendation of a strategic transformation programme to develop multi-agency community hubs across Bridgend County Borough.

2. Background

- 2.1 In May 2024, Cabinet considered a report on the future of the Council's partnership with Awen Cultural Trust. At that meeting Cabinet determined that public engagement should be undertaken to inform the development of a strategy for community hubs, library and cultural services. A further report on the strategy will be presented to the Committee at a later date.
- 2.2 The model of integrated community hubs is well-established across Welsh local authorities. These hubs bring together services such as libraries, housing and tenancy support, healthcare, early years provision, social support and employment assistance under one roof. Through inter-agency collaboration, hubs provide holistic, efficient and accessible support to communities in addition to fostering and promoting community involvement in order to achieve better outcomes for residents with particular emphasis on the vulnerable.
- 2.3 Cardiff City Council's community hub network demonstrates the positive impact that well-designed hubs can have on community life. Their latest Hubs and Libraries Strategy sets out ambitious plans for further development. A key lesson from Cardiff and elsewhere is that no two hubs are identical; each is tailored to the needs and demographics of its community. Some hubs have libraries as an anchor service, while others integrate leisure, youth or older people's services.
- 2.4 Several community facilities currently sit within the Social Services and Wellbeing portfolio. Many of these are valued, community-based assets but are ageing and operating without any strategic investment or development programme. A long-term, coordinated approach is now needed to modernise facilities and maximise their contribution to community wellbeing.

2.5 Between June – August 2025, Bridgend County Borough Council undertook public engagement on the future of libraries, community hubs and cultural services. Respondents were asked, *“A community hub model would bring together library services with additional community support services (e.g. council services, social events, workshops). How appealing do you find this concept?”*

- 69.3% of respondents found the concept appealing
- 20% were neutral
- 10% did not find it appealing

When asked, *“How would you feel about expanding the Books on Wheels outreach service to maintain access in communities without a nearby community hub?”*

- 65.4% supported the idea
- 27.9% were neutral
- 6.7% opposed

These results demonstrate broad support for the development of community hubs and outreach services within the County Borough.

Survey findings from Stage 1 of the consultation provide a strong evidence base for moving towards a multi-agency community hub model. Almost seven in ten respondents (69.3%) found the idea appealing, while Welsh-language respondents indicated even stronger support at 80.8%. This suggests that residents value the concept of centralised, multi-service spaces provided they are responsive to specific local needs.

The data also highlights service priorities. Alongside traditional library functions, residents placed emphasis on modern, flexible provision. For example, 75.1% supported extending opening hours over lunchtime and evenings, making services more accessible for working people, families, and young adults. Overall, the consultation results paint a clear picture: residents are open to, and in many cases enthusiastic about, a multi-agency community hub model. However, success will depend on implementation that is sensitive to accessibility, equity, and community identity. A well-designed model should therefore combine the co-location of public services (e.g. health, social care, housing support, advice and information) with outreach and digital access, ensuring efficiency, inclusivity, and improved outcomes for residents — particularly those within vulnerable groups.

2.6 The engagement complements work undertaken by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership in August 2024 to develop a regional strategy for integrated community hubs. That strategy emphasises:

- Co-location of services wherever possible
- Using existing assets in preference to new build where appropriate

- Expanding digital and remote access for those who prefer it
- Hub-and-spoke models to concentrate core services while running peripatetic and outreach services elsewhere
- Local service networks linking integrated hubs with other provision
- A “No Wrong Door” approach ensuring people are signposted to appropriate support
- Locating specialist services within hubs where specific needs are identified
- A graduated response to reflect differing community needs, from general information to specialist services
- Aligning hub locations with town centre and regeneration plans
- Proportionate investment for refurbishment and repurposing as well as new build
- A commitment to decarbonisation and Net Zero Wales

2.7 Based on LSOA (a measurement of social or economic conditions and requirements at the Lower-layer Super Output Area) - level need and current service provision, the regional strategy identified the following priorities for Bridgend County Borough:

- Bryngarw: Integrated hub supporting employment, training and education, including for people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions and care leavers.
- Caerau: Consideration of a specific integrated hub as a spoke to Maesteg facilities which are not accessible to all.
- Cornelly / Pyle: Significant need suggesting a dedicated hub or improved coordination.
- Maesteg East: Redevelopment of the community hospital and other facilities to support a hub-and-spoke model.
- Nant-y-Moel, Ogmere Vale and Blackmill: Dedicated hub facilities, possibly on a hub-and-spoke model serving the Valleys.
- Porthcawl: Dedicated hub facilities serving communities in West Bridgend.

These priorities are not exhaustive and reflect the work undertaken by the Regional Partnership at that time.

2.7.1 Garw Valley service need

The Garw Valley currently represents a significant gap in community-based service infrastructure within the County Borough. While local facilities in Sarn, Bettws, Llangeinor, Pontycymmer and Blaengarw provide important community spaces, these operate in isolation and lack the co-location of health, social care, and wellbeing services seen elsewhere.

Socio-economic indicators for the Upper and Lower Garw communities show higher levels of deprivation, poorer health outcomes, and reduced access to services compared to the county average. There are also limited transport links to Maesteg and Bridgend town, which restricts access to centralised provision.

Establishing a dedicated multi-agency hub within the Garw Valley would help address these inequalities by bringing services closer to residents, supporting early intervention, improving community wellbeing, and strengthening local resilience.

Such a hub could integrate:

- Primary and community health services (GP outreach, community nursing, mental health and wellbeing support)
- Social care access and advice
- Family and youth services
- Digital access and employability support
- Voluntary and community sector activity coordinated through BAVO

In addition to direct service delivery, a Garw Valley hub would support preventative health programmes and serve as a local base for multi-disciplinary teams under the Integrated Health and Care Hub model. This approach would ensure access across valleys communities and contribute to the Council's wider aims of reducing inequalities and strengthening community cohesion.

- 2.8 Business cases for capital funding for integrated community hub development can be submitted to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership. Section 106 funding may also be appropriate where community hub development forms an essential placemaking element of new housing developments. Revenue funding for hub operations would be drawn from existing service budgets. Successful implementation will require Council services and partners to change existing operating models, redirect resources, increase community presence and work more seamlessly across services.

2.9 Integration with Health and Care Hubs

The proposed multi-agency community hub model is closely aligned with the emerging regional programme for Integrated Health and Care Hubs being developed through the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB). These hubs are a cornerstone of the Health and Social Care Regional Integration Fund (RIF), which seeks to transform community-based services through co-location and collaboration across health, social care, and third sector partners.

Bridgend County Borough has been actively engaged in the regional workstream led by Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, which is developing a network of Integrated Health and Care Hubs across the region. These hubs will act as multi-disciplinary bases where health and social care teams can jointly deliver preventative, community-focused, and intermediate care services.

The proposed community hub model complements this agenda by:

- Embedding health and wellbeing functions within broader community spaces rather than restricting them to clinical settings.

- Supporting the shift from hospital to community care, consistent with the ambitions of A Healthier Wales and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- Enabling joint working between Council teams and health professionals through shared spaces, integrated referral pathways, and aligned community engagement frameworks.
- Providing access points for early intervention and preventative services, including wellbeing checks, social prescribing, community nursing, and public health programmes.
- Offering a foundation for the 'One Workforce' approach, fostering joint training, cross-sector collaboration, and streamlined service delivery.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed that a strategic transformation programme be established to lead the development of multi-agency community hubs across the County Borough. This programme would build on existing assets and develop new assets in a small number of cases with a key focus on fostering local partnerships, enable preventative services, address local needs, and increase the accessibility of support networks. The programme will particularly address geographic inequalities in access to services, prioritising areas such as the Garw Valley, where there is clear unmet need and an absence of integrated community infrastructure.
- 3.2 The programme would:
- Build on existing assets while developing new facilities where necessary
 - Foster partnerships with key agencies (e.g. Health Board, Awen Cultural Trust, Halo Leisure, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO)).
 - Enable preventative services and address local needs
 - Increase accessibility of public services and community support
 - Strengthen alignment with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Integrated Health and Care Hub programme, ensuring consistent principles of co-location, multidisciplinary working, and community-based prevention.
 - Alignment with the Integrated Health and Care Hub strategy provides access to potential Regional Integration Fund (RIF) and Health Board capital investment streams, maximising opportunities for joint funding and reducing duplication of estate expenditure across partners. Collaborative capital planning will be essential to ensure value for money and avoid parallel developments.
 - Prioritise development of a pilot hub proposal within the Garw Valley to address long-standing service gaps and test the effectiveness of the integrated model in a rural/valley context.

- 3.3 The development of multi-agency community hubs would follow a phased approach:

Phase 1 – Needs Assessment (0–6 months)

- Community-level partner engagement to assess potential for remodelling use of existing facilities
- Community consultation and data analysis to identify local needs and service gaps
- Feasibility studies on current and potential developments
- Development of quality and performance frameworks to evaluate impact using metrics such as service uptake, user satisfaction, and community outcomes (e.g. reduced demand on statutory services, improved employment rates)

Phase 2 – Pilot Phase (6–18 months)

- Establish 2–3 pilot hubs
- Develop business justification cases addressing capital and revenue implications
- Ongoing citizen and partner engagement

Phase 3 – Evaluation and Scaling (18–36 months)

- Evaluate pilot hubs
- Refine the model based on feedback and scale to additional locations

Phase 4 – Sustainability Plan

- Establish long-term partnership arrangements to ensure the sustainability of operating models
- Foster community ownership of hub services so they continuously evolve to meet the needs of local communities

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations act implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The proposals directly contribute to the five ways of working under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- **Long-term:** Establishing sustainable, co-located community hubs supports long-term community resilience and the shift from reactive to preventative services.
- **Prevention:** Early intervention and multi-agency access points will help prevent escalation of need, reduce reliance on statutory services, and promote wellbeing at an earlier stage.
- **Integration:** The model integrates health, social care, housing, and cultural services, aligning with regional priorities and BCBC's corporate plan objectives.
- **Collaboration:** Developed jointly with the Health Board, Awen Cultural Trust, Halo Leisure, Registered Social Landlords, and the voluntary sector, reflecting a strong partnership approach.
- **Involvement:** Residents and stakeholders have and will continue to co-designed the model through engagement and consultation, ensuring that community needs and identities remain central to hub development.

The programme aligns with Bridgend County Borough Council's well-being objectives, particularly:

- Supporting communities to be more healthy, resilient, and connected
- Reducing inequalities and improving wellbeing
- Delivering efficient and sustainable services
- Contributing to decarbonisation and the green agenda through modernised, energy-efficient facilities

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 The development and refurbishment of community hub facilities will be undertaken in line with the Council's Climate Change and Nature Emergency Action Plan, supporting the goal to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Projects will:

- Prioritise the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings to minimise embodied carbon.
- Incorporate energy-efficient design and renewable energy technologies in new or refurbished sites.
- Encourage sustainable transport access (active travel, EV charging, public transport).

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 The programme will fully comply with Bridgend County Borough Council's Safeguarding Policy and the Council's duties as a corporate parent. All hub developments will:

- Ensure environments are safe, accessible, and inclusive for children, young people, and adults at risk.

- Embed safeguarding awareness and reporting mechanisms across all partner organisations.
- Support the wellbeing of children in care and care leavers through access to co-located services and opportunities within the community hub network.
- Require all staff and volunteers operating within hubs to be trained in safeguarding and information-sharing protocols.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The Social Service and Wellbeing Directorate currently operates a number of valued community-based assets; however, many of these facilities are ageing, under-utilised, and lack a strategic investment or development programme. At present, there is no long-term budget in place to support the sustainability of community provision. Without coordinated planning and investment, the Council risks being left with empty or deteriorating community buildings, duplication of services across localities, and missed opportunities to maximise efficiency and partnership working. Establishing a strategic transformation programme and moving towards a multi-agency community hub model provides an opportunity to develop a sustainable, long-term financial and operational framework for community facilities, ensuring they continue to deliver value to residents and contribute to wider preventative and wellbeing objectives.

Alignment with the Integrated Health and Care Hub strategy provides access to potential Regional Integration Fund (RIF) and Health Board capital investment streams.

- 8.2 Business cases for capital funding for integrated community hub development can be submitted to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership. Section 106 funding may also be appropriate where community hub development forms an essential placemaking element of new housing developments. Revenue funding for hub operations would be drawn from existing service budgets. Successful implementation will require Council services and partners to change existing operating models, redirect resources, increase community presence and work more seamlessly across services.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee consider the content of the report and provide feedback to be considered in preparation for the establishment of a Strategic Transformation Programme for the development of multi-agency community hubs in Bridgend County Borough.

Background Documents

None