

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	29 JUNE 2026
Report Title:	AGE FRIENDLY BASELINE
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	SOPHIE MOORE GROUP MANAGER PREVENTION & WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>This report presents the Bridgend Age Friendly Baseline Assessment (Appendix 1) and seeks Scrutiny consideration of the proposed application for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to join the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.</p> <p>The baseline assessment has been developed through extensive engagement with over 200 older residents, alongside partners and stakeholders across the public, third and community sectors. The assessment identifies both the strengths and challenges currently experienced by older people across the county borough and establishes priorities for future development.</p> <p>The report highlights strong partnership working, community engagement, preventative approaches and existing support services across Bridgend. It also identifies key challenges relating to transport, digital exclusion, communication, access to health services, social isolation and accessibility.</p> <p>The proposed application to join the WHO Global Network would formalise BCBC's commitment to becoming an age-friendly county borough and support the future development of a long-term Age Friendly Action Plan aligned to the WHO framework and local priorities identified through engagement.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the Bridgend Age Friendly Baseline Assessment (**Appendix 1**) and outline the proposed application for Bridgend County Borough Council to join the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. The report also seeks Scrutiny comments and recommendations prior to Cabinet approval and formal submission.

2. Background

- 2.1 To support the development of Age-Friendly Communities as part of the *Age Friendly Wales: Strategy for an Ageing Society*, Welsh Government has provided funding to all local authorities in Wales. Bridgend County Borough Council has used this funding to maintain a dedicated Age Friendly Co-ordinator post, strengthen partnership working, undertake extensive engagement with older residents and stakeholders, and complete a local baseline assessment aligned to the WHO Age-Friendly Framework.
- 2.2 The WHO framework is structured around eight domains covering transport, housing, outdoor spaces, social participation, inclusion, civic participation, communication, and community support and health services. The baseline assessment has been informed through engagement with over 200 older residents alongside community groups, partners and stakeholders.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 Bridgend County Borough Council has completed a comprehensive baseline assessment to support its ambition of becoming part of the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (**Appendix 1**). The assessment establishes a detailed overview of the county borough's current position across the eight WHO Age-Friendly domains and identifies future priorities based on engagement with older residents and stakeholders.
- 3.2 The assessment identified a number of existing strengths across Bridgend, including strong partnership working, established community networks, preventative approaches, and a range of existing services and initiatives supporting older residents. These include the SHOUT Older Persons Forum, Community Navigators, Local Community Co-ordinators, Bridgelink Telecare, dementia support services and a wide range of community-based social participation opportunities.
- 3.3 Engagement also identified several key challenges affecting older residents. These include transport limitations in rural and valley communities, digital exclusion, barriers to accessing information and services, social isolation, accessibility concerns, and increasing pressure on health and care services.
- 3.4 The proposal within this report is for Bridgend County Borough Council to formally progress its application to join the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Membership of the network would provide:

- International recognition of Bridgend's commitment to becoming age-friendly
- Access to international learning and best practice
- Opportunities for collaboration through the WHO network
- A framework for continuous improvement and long-term planning

3.5 Following acceptance into the network, the Council will develop a detailed Age Friendly Action Plan aligned to the priorities identified within the baseline assessment and future engagement activity.

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 implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 This project aligns strongly with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, embedding the five ways of working throughout the development of Age Friendly Bridgend. The approach is underpinned by co-production, partnership working and a long-term commitment to improving quality of life for older residents.

Long Term

The Age Friendly Bridgend initiative is explicitly focused on responding to long-term demographic change, including the growth in the older population and associated pressures on health and social care services.

The project balances short-term improvements (such as enhancements to transport access, community activities and communication) with longer-term strategic planning, including:

- Development of an Age-Friendly Action Plan with clear priorities and phased implementation
- Investment in preventative services such as telecare, falls prevention and housing adaptations
- Planning for future service demand linked to an ageing population and increasing complexity of need

This ensures that immediate needs are addressed whilst building sustainable, age-friendly communities for the future.

Prevention

Prevention is a core principle of the project, with significant focus on early intervention and reducing escalation of need.

The project directs resources toward:

- Falls prevention programmes and active ageing initiatives (e.g. National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS), community-based activities)
- Housing adaptations and telecare services that reduce hospital admissions and support independence
- Social participation, befriending and community navigation to reduce loneliness and isolation
- Improved access to information and early support through Community Navigators and Local Community Coordinators

By addressing determinants of poor health and wellbeing early, the project reduces demand on acute services and supports residents to live independently for longer.

Integration

The project adopts a holistic, whole-system approach, integrating economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing outcomes.

This is demonstrated through:

- Alignment with the WHO eight domains, covering transport, housing, health, social participation, inclusion and more
- Linking improvements across services (e.g. transport enabling access to health services, social activities and employment opportunities)
- Promoting cultural engagement through libraries, arts programmes and heritage assets
- Supporting economic contribution through volunteering, employment pathways and active ageing

The approach ensures that improvements in one area reinforce outcomes across all wellbeing goals.

Collaboration

Collaboration is central to delivery, with strong partnership working across public, private and third sectors.

Key examples include:

- Joint working with organisations such as Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), Awen Cultural Trust, Halo Leisure, Age Cymru, South Wales Police and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
- Integration through the Public Service Board and Regional Partnership Board structures including a section 33 agreement for person centred community health and social care services
- Multi-agency service delivery in areas such as transport, social care and health, housing and community support

This collaborative model maximises resources, reduces duplication and strengthens collective impact in achieving shared wellbeing objectives.

Involvement

The project demonstrates a strong commitment to involvement, with extensive engagement shaping both the baseline assessment and future priorities.

This includes:

- Direct engagement with over 200 residents aged 50+
- Ongoing involvement through the SHOUT Older Persons Forum and planned Age-Friendly Working Group
- Inclusive engagement with diverse groups including LGBTQ+ communities, Welsh speakers and those experiencing disadvantage
- Use of co-production principles to ensure residents are actively involved in design, delivery and review

This ensures that the voices of local people reflect the diversity of the area and directly influence decision-making.

5.2 Contribution to Corporate Well-being Objectives

The project contributes clearly and directly to the Council's four Wellbeing Objectives:

Wellbeing Objective One – A prosperous place with thriving communities

- Strengthens community cohesion through social participation, volunteering and intergenerational activity
- Supports local economies by enabling older people to remain active contributors
- Enhances local environments, public spaces and community infrastructure

Wellbeing Objective Two – Creating modern, seamless public services

- Promotes integrated, person-centred services across council departments, health and third sector partners
- Improves access to services through better communication, navigation and coordinated delivery
- Utilises digital innovation (e.g. telecare) alongside accessible non-digital options

Wellbeing Objective Three – Enabling people to meet their potential

- Supports lifelong learning, employability and volunteering opportunities for older people
- Encourages active ageing, social participation and skills development
- Empowers residents through co-production and civic engagement

Wellbeing Objective Four – Supporting our most vulnerable

- Targets inequalities linked to deprivation, rurality and health outcomes
- Provides tailored support through community navigation, health services and housing adaptations
- Focuses on prevention, early intervention and inclusive access to services

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct climate change and nature implications arising from this report. However, future Age Friendly priorities relating to transport, accessible communities and local service provision may contribute positively towards sustainable and connected communities.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct safeguarding or corporate parenting implications arising from this report. However, the programme of work supports the wellbeing, independence and inclusion of older residents across the county borough through improved community support and partnership working.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Welsh Government Age Friendly funding currently supports the dedicated Age Friendly Co-ordinator role alongside engagement, partnership activity and development of the baseline assessment and future action planning.
- 8.2 Future delivery of the Age Friendly Action Plan will continue to require partnership working and identification of sustainable funding opportunities to support longer-term implementation.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
- a) Considers the findings of the Bridgend Age Friendly Baseline Assessment as set out in **Appendix 1** and the priorities identified through engagement with older residents and stakeholders;
 - b) Notes the proposed application for Bridgend County Borough Council to join the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities;
 - c) Provides comments and recommendations to inform the development of the future Age Friendly Action Plan and associated delivery priorities prior to Cabinet approval and formal submission.

Background documents

None