MERTHYR TYDFIL LOCAL SERVICE BOARD
28th March 2013

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Report on the Consultation for the Single Integrated Plan

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

Provide the Local Service Board with a reflection of the consultation exercise completed for the development of Merthyr Tydfil's Single Integrated Plan carried out during January to March 2013.

1.0   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1   "Shared Purpose Shared Delivery" (including shared ownership) is the statutory requirement of integrating local service planning, streamlining partnership working, and strengthening the strategic role and accountability of the Local Service Board.

1.2   The Single Integrated Plan should be: "A well evidenced, single integrated plan for the area that reflects the needs of the local population"

1.3   The LSB must focus resources on prevention rather than cure, changing outcomes rather than fixing problems, creating sustainable services.

1.4   Must pay attention to the needs of the whole population in the local area but with a specific focus on groups who are disadvantaged, vulnerable or at risk of becoming vulnerable.

1.5   The Guidance is intended to replace existing statutory guidance from a number of pieces of legislation:
   - Community Strategies (Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009)
   - Children and Young Peoples Plan (Children Act 2004, Children and Families Measure 2010)

- Health Social Care and Well-being Strategies (NHS Wales Act 2006)
- Community Safety planning is non-devolved (Crime and Disorder Act 1998), and so the guidance is advisory for Community Safety planning in Wales.

1.6   The SIP should: "replace the four existing statutory plans – not an amalgamation of existing plans / strategies."

1.7   The central tenet of the guidance is the role of the LSB as the 'heart of multi agency working' to help drive the public service reform agenda in order to achieve the priorities set out in the Programme for Government.

1.8   The aim of the consultation was to speak to a variety of citizens across the county borough by undertaking a series of road shows as well as having an online survey housed on the corporate website.

2.0   SIP CONSULTATION AND SURVEY

2.1   The methodology used for consultation took a two pronged approach, coordinated by the ESF Consultation Coordinator role in partnership with Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil's Making the Connections Officer and Merthyr Tydfil CBC Partnership Team, whilst also supported by the Corporate Communications department.

2.2   Online Survey
An online survey was designed using the SNAP Survey Software package and housed on the corporate website for 9 weeks (15th January 2012 - 20th March 2013).
Updates were sent periodically via the corporate social networking accounts (namely Facebook and Twitter) to followers during the consultation process, reminding citizens of the online survey and other ways in which to engage.
Results were analysed using the SNAP software in order to determine citizen's opinions and preferences.

2.3   Workshops
Various events were attended across the County Borough throughout January, February and March 2013. Attendees were asked to engage in a variety of discussions as well as working in small groups.
Events attended include:
- 15th January - 50+ Forum, staff and public
- 25th January - VAMT Carers Network, staff and carers
- 30th January - Flying Start, staff and service users
- 4th February - Merthyr College Learners, staff and students
- 4th February - MTBYF (Youth Forum), young people
- 4th February - Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association, Pendarren
- 6th February - VAMT Health Social Care Forum, staff

- 6th February - Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association, Troedyrhiw
- 7th February - Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association, Treharris
- 13th February - Leisure Managers Meeting, staff
- 5th March - Communities First, staff
- 8th March - MTCBC, staff
- 8th March - MTCBC, staff
- 19th March – Sustainable Development Training, MTCBC staff.
- 20th March - Adult Safeguarding Board, staff
- 27th March - Merthyr Tydfil Elected Members

2.4   As part of the Council Priority and Budget Consultation 2013-14 completed in January 2013, a survey was completed that asked people about the council priorities (priority outcomes) contained within the SIP. 177 surveys were completed in total (83 online, 91 at road shows and 3 were completed by the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF) members at an external event). Results are in Appendix 1.

2.5   Results of the consultation are listed in Appendix 2. During the consultation phase, a total of 17 events were attended with approximately 250 citizens or staff attending the engaged events. On top of this, the survey was available online for feedback and was completed by 11 residents. Several email responses were also received.

2.6   In preparation for developing the SIP, a series of engagement / consultation events were held in order to ensure the plan was developed correctly. These included:
- Engagement and consultation on the Needs Assessment undertaken in July and August 2012 through a number of stakeholder events.
- Two work shops held with representatives of the LSB to develop priority outcomes and priority areas for the Single Integrated Plan.
- Workshop held with key stakeholders to develop the "Learning for Life" underpinning priority
- Draft vision and priority outcomes agreed at the Local Service Board on 27 September 2012 along with draft framework.
- Engagement undertaken with the Third Sector at VAMT's AGM in November 2012.
- Draft Single Integrated Plan approved for public consultation by the Local Service Board on 6 December 2012.

2.7   Following analysis of the results, finer details have been passed to the partnership team in order to feed into the SIP. This will allow the opinions of the staff and citizens to be incorporated into the changes.

2.8   Once completed, feedback will be provided to those who engaged in events by attending a follow up feedback meeting in April / May 2013. The public will also receive feedback via a report placed on the Council

and Partners websites with notices provided on social networking sites. The report will also be placed in the next issue of the CONTACT magazine. This will allow members of the public to be fully aware of the LSB's commitment to feedback and thank the public for their engagement in line with Participation Cymru's "Principles of Engagement".

3.0   RECOMMENDATION

3.1   The results of the SIP Consultation exercise be received and considered by the LSB.

Idris Evans
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Cwm Taf ESF LSB Consultation Project

25th March 2013

Outcomes of Council Priorities and Budget Consultation Exercises

1. Draft Council Priorities (Priority Outcomes):

The citizens of Merthyr Tydfil were shown the draft council priorities for 2013-14 and were asked if they agreed with each priority individually. The results are displayed in *Table 1* below and show considerable favour for the priorities.

	Agree	*Disagree*	*Unsure*
People in Merthyr Tydfil have the opportunity and aspiration to learn and develop their skills to maximise their potential	145 (83.3%)	13 (7.5%)	16 (9.2%)
People in Merthyr Tydfil benefit from a strong, sustainable and diverse economy	129 (74.1%)	26 (14.9%)	19 (10.9%)
People, who live and work in Merthyr Tydfil, are supported to enjoy a healthier and better quality of life.	142 (81.6%)	20 (11.5%)	12 (6.9%)
People enjoy a vibrant, attractive, safe and sustainable environment in which to live, work, play and visit.	141 (82.0%)	17 (9.9%)	14 (8.1%)

Table 1: Agreement with draft Council Priorities 2013-14

All priorities were in the majority agreed, with at least **74.1%** in agreement. The priority with the most agreement was "*learn and develop skills to maximise potential*" with **83.3%** of respondents in agreement.

2. Additional Priorities:

When asked if citizens thought if there was anything missing from the draft council priorities, responses were collated and a selection of additional; priorities are below.

"Although it is nice that people enjoy a vibrant and sustainable environment then they need to know more often about what's going on where. We get the magazine through which is good but more promotion needs to be done because many people who have left school and have been to university are unaware of what's going on".

"I think that a priority needs to be included that considers the emotional and mental well being of people in Merthyr Tydfil".

"The Lower Valleys area is not such a vibrant attractive environment to live in and we always seem to be the last to benefit from improvements".

"No heritage! Need to spend more money on promoting heritage. Need to send leaflets informing people what is on in Merthyr".

"Education in the community for families on healthy eating, cooking for families on a budget especially those with young children. Currently there is no provision to PROPERLY educate people about cooking healthy food from scratch".

Outcomes of Single Integrated Plan
Consultation Exercise

1. Understanding the need for a SIP

Participants at each work shop or event were given an outline of the agenda provided by the Welsh Government as to why each LSB had to produce a SIP. Participants were then asked if they understood this and how it would work in Merthyr Tydfil.

- Reponses were very supportive with key messages being received that it would help save money, reduce duplication and pool resources.

"It has to be a good idea as it is going to cut costs and make sure people work together"

"Yes, too many different plans can cause too many different problems and may not fit in with one another and therefore makes it difficult to work cohesively and the plan outcome therefore not being achieved"

"Great idea, working together will benefit everyone involved and people will have a sense of what's going on in each sector"

"Will make things more cohesive and streamlined"

"Fewer resources will be required to manage one plan than four I suppose"

2. A Vision for the SIP

The vision was placed on the screen / in front of the participants and the question was asked, "Do you agree with this vision?"

- Comments received were all in favour, with the majority in support of the vision.

"It's great to be inspirational"

All agreed that we should be making more of the fact that Merthyr has such good road links.

- Comments that were not as much in favour included those such as:

"More of an emphasis on people and not economy"

"Include the environment as part of the vision somehow"

"It's such a huge task – it would be amazing if it worked, but it's just a massive thing to do"

"Heads of the Valley means different things to different people depending on where you are from"

"The Vision talks about Merthyr being a regional centre for a number of different strands. Previously in economic development terms when people usually talk about being a Regional Centre, it's usually for Business Growth or Retail, or Culture or Leisure. It seems we've taken it to mean everything and whilst I'm really up for ambitious visions but one this one is a bit too all embracing for me. My question is why do we need Regional Centre in the Vision statement?"

3. Priority Outcomes

Priority Outcome 1:

People in Merthyr Tydfil have the opportunity and aspiration to learn and develop their skills to maximise their potential.

- Many comments from this priority surrounded that the focus seemed to be primarily around young people and not inclusive to all.

"Does attainment and skills priority area cover the whole age range of young people? Is there a lower or upper age range?"

"It focuses on children and a young person there doesn't seem to be much focus around adults in this priority (there are lots of adults on JSA)"

"Very focused on young age/ youth or working age, what about the older generation? They still want to and have the opportunity to learn. There is no mention about 50+, why is this?"

*"Chronological developmental milestones – to **education speak**"*

- There were many comments that were supportive also:

"Need to spend money on participation, not enough opportunities to participate as a whole, we need to increase participation"

- Suggestions over some elements that were missing included:

"There's mentions of employment, but people can also benefit from volunteering or attending different courses or training exercises where they can also gain skills- not only work/ job basedF can this be changed to promote other avenues which are available to people?"

"Need to attract professional jobs into Merthyr – not just unskilled manual jobs"

"I believe that people in the town need to be aware of what's going on and where, people need to be educated of the town in which they live in so they can produce good tourist information. People need to be aware of how far our vision of Merthyr has come already so they can also help build the future and develop the SIP priorities"

Priority Outcome 2:

People in Merthyr Tydfil benefit from a strong, sustainable and diverse economy.

All participants were in support of outcome 2; however, there were specific issues people had that may raise barriers to complete this.

- These included:

"Business' come here, but will we have the skilled staff or will they be on the sick all the time?"

"Need to ensure we don't ignore local employers that are already here and help them develop"

"Public sector contacts should include social clauses around employment and apprenticeships"

- Positive support included:

"As skills increase, better reputation will bring employers here"

"Need to attract people to come to Merthyr to work – we have good road links, we need to make use of these"

- Other suggestions were:

Removing the word FAST from the actions, this was seen in nearly all work shops or meetings.

"Need to ensure jobs in Merthyr are offered to local people and not given to people outside of the area. E.g. when the Sainsbury's in Pontypridd was developed, it was agreed that a certain percentage of the jobs created there would be given to people living within a certain radius of the store"

Priority Outcome 3:

People, who live and work in Merthyr Tydfil, are supported to enjoy a healthier and better quality of life.

Again, with this priority, all groups were in support that this was a key priority for Merthyr Tydfil to develop.

- Key points picked up from this outcome were:

"Should eating disorders be a priority too – if obesity is a priority, why haven't we included the other end of the spectrum?"

"Not going to eradicate tobacco control – should be 'reduce".

*"Replace tobacco control with **smoking**".*

"Healthy Weight – Shouldn't be 'healthy weight', should be a healthy lifestyle"

"Need to educate people about health – e.g. need to inform them of when they actually need to get medical treatment and when they can just call NHS direct – this would cut waiting times at hospitals and surgeries"

"The word obesity should be addressed separately to physical activity. Could be physically active and still obese, but could also be not physical and not obese- vice versa. Take the word ALL out and just leave it with PEOPLE".

"Different people have written the different priority areas there needs to be more consistency in the wording"

"Obesity targets are they achievable? Sounds like they are describing a utopia, wording should be changed from ALL to MORE"

"Why focus on the sexual health of young people?"

"Very positive that smoking, obesity, physical activity, alcohol and mental and sexual health are identified as key priorities"

Priority Outcome 4:

People enjoy a vibrant, attractive, safe and sustainable environment in which to live, work, play and visit.

This was also very well received as a priority outcome. Many supporting statements were received with some suggestions also.

- Supporting statements:

"Top one is key – the town centre in the evening is a no go area"

"Drugs should be a high priority"

"Early prevention as outlined is critical"

   "For people who are affected by all the negative issues at present, the SIP will be very positive to them if we address these issues"

"Can understand the rationale totally for placing alcohol in the 'safe' category, but need to ensure that the health component of alcohol misuse isn't lost. No education or prevention component in the 'what we will do' section"

- Areas for improvement:

"Maybe the action points should be more positive - they're all negative and doom and gloom, alternatively, just highlight the positive points within the priority action"

"Should be a distinctive difference when referencing the tobacco/substance misuse control as it is a harm to a person health wise and also a harm to community as they see if for themselves and often makes them feel unsafe"

"Play is missing – Local authority has a statutory duty to provide play opportunities for children".

"Environment has a big role to play in the SIP but seems to be missing from the actions"

"Vibrant and attractive not really obvious from the actions featured"

"What about open spaces"

"Substance Misuse should sit under priority outcome 2 - health",

"Move meeting the needs of vulnerable people into Priority Outcome 3 and separate safeguarding into Priority Outcome 4".

4. Can we make a real difference to the lives of local people?

This question was very much only answered with positive responses, with many people seeing the benefits to having a SIP.

- Messages of support included:

"It will change people's lives who want to change, but some people don't want to change – and you won't be able to change these people no matter what you do"

Around half the group agreed (32 young people) - Some had concerns over whether the plan is achievable

"Group agreed yes, definitely, as long as we can do it"

"Ambitious, but good to keep raising the bar for Merthyr Tydfil"

- Suggestions included:

"There has already been progress, so instead of saying 'we can', we should say 'continue to make a difference".
"Some of the outcomes will be generational and will take time to change people lives"

"It's about culture change over a generation, it won't happen over night"

5. "Learning for Life" underpinning priority

There was quite a bit of confusion surrounding the Learning for Life golden thread, it was regularly being mistaken for Lifelong Learning (adult education in a formal situation).

- In light of this many groups suggested a change of name, for example:

*"Could change the name to **Achieving for Life** as this would appeal to more people"*

*"Learning for life could be changed to **Skills for Life** not learning, because people would base that upon education only and not include health, housing, community safety etcF"*

*"Word **learning** creates a formal environment, wording like **Skills for Life** would incorporate the parent, learning makes it sounds like it is for children"*
- Positive / supporting comments:

"It can't make anything worse – even if it helps a little bit – it's something"

"Think it is a good point, as it implies that you can learn outside of school, and that you don't have to be brilliant in school to succeed – you can keep learning through life"

"Key to everything – no matter how old they are"

"Positive feedback regarding Learning for Life as an underpinning priority"

In contrast, there were no negative comments received about the actual ethos of learning throughout all the priority outcomes, just the wording.

6. Do you think this Plan will affect you?

At every work shop or meeting the participants all agreed that this plan would have an impact on Merthyr Tydfil should we complete the actions contained.

There was some questions surrounding the ability to complete the actions, however, no statements were received that stated the plan would have no impact upon the residents / visitors of Merthyr Tydfil.

"Yes, it should effect everyone, if it doesn't it isn't working properly"

"Also, we will have an effect on the plan by the way we work"

"It should have a positive effect on us in work, as everyone is on board – so should be easier to work throughout different departments and organisations"

"Think it will affect younger people as they grow up, as I am used to the area as it is now, e.g. I am used to anti social behaviour"

"It will affect everybody at some point in their life"

"It's bound to affect us eventually"

"It may have a positive effect on the way other people perceive Merthyr"

Online Consultation Results

An online survey was produced via the SNAP Software package and housed on the corporate website.

Only 11 responses were received in total.

1. Do you understand why Merthyr Tydfil has developed a SIP?

11 responses were received for this question with 10 **(90.9%)** people in agreement and 1 unsure **(9.1%)**. There were 0 responses to 'no'.

2. Do you agree with the priority outcomes listed?

People in Merthyr Tydfil have the opportunity and aspiration to learn and develop their skills to maximise their potential.	9 (81.8%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)
People in Merthyr Tydfil benefit from a strong, sustainable and diverse economy.	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)
People, who live and work in Merthyr Tydfil are supported to enjoy a healthier and better quality of life.	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)
People enjoy a vibrant, attractive, safe and sustainable environment in which to live, work, play and visit.	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)

Comments received include:

"Some of these are not full outcomes. Having the opportunity or being supported is the work done to achieve the outcome."

"Both men and Women in Merthyr have a far lower life expectancy than the rest of the country."

"Most of the work is low paid and part time and there are far too many agency workers."

3. Do you agree with the vision for the SIP?

Of the 11 responses received, 7 were in agreement **(63.6%)**, 2 people did not agree **(18.2%)** and 2 were unsure **(18.2%)**.

Comments included:

"It sounds like we are trying to compete with neighbouring authorities around status rather than doing this for the right reasons which are for the people of Merthyr. It's more than being proud as well. Merthyr's people have always felt proud of where they are from. It doesn't mean that we will be coming out of poverty any time soon though!"

*"Does not make reference to people/communities, is nebulous and subjective ... **to be proud of**"*

"Unsure if we should be looking at Heads of the Valleys as a region. Would we be better looking at links to Cardiff and Newport or creating an overall Valleys Region? Heads of the Valleys seems too small to be of any significance"

4. For each of our priority outcomes, do you think that the actions identified will have a positive impact on local people?

	Yes	No	Unsure
Attainment and Skills	9 (81.8%)	2 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Employability	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Participation	9 (81.8%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)
Economic / Business Development	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Tobacco Control	8 (72.7%)	3 (27.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Obesity/Physical Activity	8 (72.7%)	2 (18.2%)	1 (9.1%)
Sexual Health	9 (81.8%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)
Mental Health and Emotional Well Being	7 (77.8%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Promoting Independence	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Anti Social Behaviour and Crime and Disorder	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Substance Misuse	9 (90.0%)	1 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Community Cohesion	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Offender Management	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)

Housing	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Safeguarding and meeting the needs of vulnerable people	10 (90.9%)	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)

People were asked if they felt there were any priority actions missing, below are the responses:

"You state these are actions but they are not. These are more focused outcomes and there are probably too many to prioritise. Actions should be the doing. These are not they just further aspirations"

"There are lots of things missing from the broader document that could be included but little opportunity to comment on specifics other than yes, no, unsure"

"Environment"

"Working to eradicate Bullying in all aspects of life including the workplace."

"Working to create a society without an under class of people who have been left behind from no fault of their own."

5. **In general terms, do you feel that if we deliver the actions contained in the Plan we can make a real difference to the lives of local people?**

7 People replied yes **(63.6%),** 3 people replied no **(27.3%)** and 1 person was unsure **(9.1%)**.

Comments:

"They are not actions listed so no"

"Where and how does the JAFF and TAF fit? The plan seems to focus of Communities First what about the other grant funded programmes?"

If the actions contained in the plan are achieved it will have a major, positive impact upon the lives of people living within the county borough. However without a robust delivery plan this remains very aspirational for an area with a long history of unemployment and deprivation, and suffering from a benefits culture."

"There are lots of things missing from the broader document that could be included but little opportunity to comment on specifics other than yes, no, unsure"

"I feel it's unlikely that all objectives will be met but even one is achieved it will improve the quality of life in Merthyr Tydfil"

6. **Do you agree that the "Learning for Life" underpinning priority that we have identified in the Plan addresses the needs of Merthyr Tydfil?**

4 people just stated yes

"What is learning for life? Surely this should be titled something different"

"I did not pick up on this being the underpinning priority when I read it. It's more than learning. It's about learning and using what we have learnt in everyday life. If something is not applied it means nothing"

"Yes, however engagement with those who have little or no qualifications will very likely prove difficult as aspirations are not there. It is also difficult to change these aspirations where there is a lack of employment opportunity within the county - the plan states there is 1 job for every 17 people who are looking for work in Merthyr, compared to 1 job for every 6 people nationally. If the aspirations for those who are NOT currently looking for work change, there will be even greater competition for the limited jobs on offer."

"There are lots of things missing from the broader document that could be included but little opportunity to comment on specifics other than yes, no, unsure"

"Somewhat"

"Not entirely"

7. **Do you think this Plan will affect you?**

Again, 11 responses were received. Of these 6 stated yes **(54.5%)**, 4 stated no **(36.4%)** and 1 person was unsure **(9.1%)**.

Additional Comments:

"As a resident of Merthyr Tydfil with a wife, 3 children and a house, and being currently employed within the county, the plan affects every aspect of my life."

"There are lots of things missing from the broader document that could be included but little opportunity to comment on specifics other than yes, no, unsure"

"Better quality of life."

E-mails Received in Support

During the consultation process, several emails were received in support of the Single Integrated Plan.

Below are a variety of quotes taken from these emails that were received.

1. *"Apologies for the directness but I can't help it...agree about "reaching chronological development milestones" being too technical but prefer something, almost equally boring, like "maximising development potential" as it aspires to go further than merely reaching what is expected of the age (which would then be a clear measure...reaching, exceeding or not reaching chronological development milestones)."*

2. *"The Vision talks about Merthyr being a regional centre for a number of different strands. Previously in economic development terms when people usually talk about being a Regional Centre, it's usually for Business Growth or Retail, or Culture or Leisure. It seems we've taken it to mean everything and whilst I'm really up for ambitious visions but one this one is a bit too all embracing for me. My question is why do we need Regional Centre in the Vision statement?"*

3. *"The vision should be people focussed rather than place focussed in order to clearly show the purpose of targeting resources and to complement rather than overlap existing and future strategic spatial plans such as the Local Development Plan (LDP). It is considered that the strengthening of MT as the regional HoV Centre will support this rather than be a goal more akin to that of an LDP. It is recommended to simplify the vision to:*

   Merthyr Tydfil County Borough*; will be a place where:*
   • People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions
   • People live, work, have a safe, healthy and fulfilled life
   • People visit, enjoy and return"

4. *"At Merthyr Tydfil Environment Conference on 21st February 2013 Dr Rhodri Martin of Cwm Taf Local Health Board clearly and concisely provided a raft of evidence demonstrating the primary importance that physical exercise plays in limiting the effects of obesity, substance misuse and the risks of stroke, heart disease and other significant illness/morbidity prevalent in this County Borough. It is considered omitting use of the environment, and planning for spaces for this to occur in proximity to vulnerable residents, for health benefits via provision of a range of options is currently avoidable and can play a large role in delivering priority outcomes in the Single Integrated Plan."*

5. *"The current draft SIP is not considered to adequately/explicitly demonstrate links with Planning, a matter considered to be of significant weakness. Local health professionals have indicated the need for more engagement with Local Planning Authorities as this has/will have significant effects (recent Merthyr Tydfil Obesity Strategy Consultation). Whilst it is accepted that the full extent of this is not currently possible to include it is suggested that the most appropriate link would be via reference to the Open Spaces Scoping Report and/or Open Spaces Strategy (identified need via survey existing provision, deficit via demographic research and guidance, need via consultation). The charge that some strategies are purely the domain of the Local Authority and thus not relevant (as they will continue in any course) does not apply to the Open Spaces Strategy as the development, protection, planning and use of (public) Open Spaces MUST BE a collaborative partnership effort for maximum benefit and involvement from health and community safety sectors is essential at all levels and stages rather than merely as consultees."*

6. ***"I would propose the addition of the following under 'What We Will Do?"*** *(favoured sections are Obesity/Mental Health but others detailed in the below e-mail are possible). Protect, improve, promote and provide sufficient use of safe and accessible Open and Green Spaces to meet the socio-economic and health needs of residents and communities of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough. Specific and detailed measures of quality and quantity are available for this if required."*

7. ***"I would propose that the Local Development Plan falls within "Our Enabling Strategies to support the Single Integrated Plan"*** *as both monitoring/measures and delivery other factors including spatial, housing, business, environment protection are critical supporting functions of the SIP. If you are minded to include this then we (Justin Waite) is able to provide a broad paragraph to explain the LDP overview and supporting links."*

8. *"I have requested additional opportunity to feedback on the draft Single Integrated Plan, on behalf of the Merthyr Tydfil Environment Partnership and Merthyr Tydfil Biodiversity Partnership, as the standard format is too basic to allow for what is required."*

   Whilst the priorities are supported the consideration of the role that the environment does and will play is inadequate.
   Throughout the document there is no mention of the environment other than the most obvious scientific fact, under Sustainable Development section, that we must live within and respect environmental limits.
   It is not considered to reasonably reflect the Wales Environment Strategy - "Our environment is a key asset. It underpins our health, our economy and our quality of life"- or the locally focussed Merthyr Tydfil Environment Partnership Strategic Plan. There has been an additional and significant weakening of all environmental considerations from both overarching and preceeding Community Plan/Strategy.

There is significant and increasing evidence available on the impact of the environment and use of environment on a range of factors including economy, physical and mental health, education and behaviour. As such there are deemed to be measures and indicators that could contribute the focus, depth and extent of outcomes and measuring success.

Just one example is with Healthy Lifestyles & Obesity and the focus on exercise; it is accepted that there needs to be a range of options but a critical factor across all ages is access to Open Spaces in proximity to residential properties. The Local Authority is developing an Open Spaces Strategy to address this issue, a matter which is strongly supported by a range of organisations including the health services, social housing sector and voluntary/community sector organisations. Additionally over £10million pounds of external investment was received for environmental improvements in Merthyr Tydfil last year by the Economic Regeneration Department (predominantly accepting that the landscape of Merthyr Tydfil is a key Tourism feature) in addition to private inward investment in a tourism biker park benefitting both economy and health.

Furthermore it is considered vital that this main overarching document is fit for purpose for the future, particularly in supporting and evidencing the need for future large-scale structural funds, much of which has and may involve investment in the environment for health, economic and education benefits.

I would like to suggest the following:

- *Inclusion of 'environmental' actions and/or measures in some of the priority areas known to have greatest impact; including Participation, Attainment and Skills, Economic Development, Healthy Lifestyles, Mental Health and Emotional Well-being and Community Cohesion*
- *Inclusion of a separate 'Environment' Supporting Principle*
- *Consideration of Tourism numbers (Economy), Open Spaces Strategy (Health, Community Cohesion), Access/Rights of Way/Cycle Routes (Tourism, Health), Environmental/Outdoor Training & Volunteering (Participation, Community Cohesion, Attainment & Skills, Healthy Lifestyles)"*

9. *"I would not be so impertinent , as a Rhondda 'foreigner', to comment on the detail of the draft but I would like to compliment the authors on the way in which they have supported their conclusions and plans with what is very aptly called 'a detailed needs assessment'. It is indeed a very comprehensive, detailed and well-presented needs assessment which lends authority to the draft SIP. Well done to all concerned."*

10. *"We welcome the emphasis on early intervention and prevention within the Plan, along with a clear focus on engaging communities and*

individuals across the County, specific priorities regarding mental health and wellbeing and promoting independence and an emphasis on tackling poverty and disadvantage.

However there are several areas within the Plan, where we feel improvements could be made with regard to meeting the needs of people from protected characteristic groups within the County. These areas are outlined below, with recommendations for future actions.

These improvements focus around tackling barriers to employment, careers, learning and earnings potential for protected characteristic groups; identifying and addressing specific needs; limited opportunities for engagement in the community for people from protected characteristic groups; addressing health inequities on the grounds of protected characteristics; equalities training; and ensuring that active and meaningful engagement takes account of the varying needs, views and priorities of people from protected characteristic groups."

11. *"We welcome the underpinning priority of Learning for Life within the Plan, as this emphasises improvements and breaking cycles of deprivation for all citizens. However we are concerned that the barriers to obtaining qualifications and to progression into further learning and employment for many protected characteristic groups are not identified here. For example there are both lower educational attainment and lower employment and earnings rates for some BME groups and disabled people; and many LGBT people and women find themselves facing barriers to entering certain professions and progressing within the workplace. There are many proposed actions within the Plan which require a differential approach to address the different needs and barriers for people from protected characteristic groups in order to meet the priority of Learning for Life. These are outlined below in relation to each outcome and area for action within the Plan."*

12. *"Generally welcome a single plan approach – need to ensure a life course approach is adopted so no groups are lost when streamlining from previous plans"*

13. *"Could the different sections benefit from elaborating on whom the 'we' are mentioning i.e. different partners who can contribute to these various agendas"*

14. *"Need to promote the need for all partners to support the accompanying strategies/plans to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the healthy lifestyle agenda to avoid duplication and promote optimum use of resources and appropriate targeting-*

- *Healthy Weights, Healthy Valleys*
- *Smoke Free Cwm Taf*
- *Cwm Taf Sexual Health and Teenage Pregnancy Strategy"*