Ogmore Valley Community Council

Strategy and Action Plan 2022- 2027

Part2: Final Report

Gareth Kiddie Associates

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Executive summary

This **Strategy and Action Plan** was commissioned by Bridgend Reach in June 2020. The primary purpose of the work was to assist **Ogmore Valley Community Council (OVCC)** in directing both its future work, and the grant funding for local projects flowing in each year form the Pennant Walters, Pant-Y-Wal windfarm Community Benefit Fund.

Community regeneration specialists, Gareth Kiddie Associates, were commissioned to undertake the work which involved: reviewing existing community services and facilities, conducting a Community Survey of residents' views, undertaking consultations with key stakeholders, assessing the relevance of local and regional strategies, taking on board the Council's own position and it's aspirations for the future. The results of each of these pieces of work are described extensively in the separate 'Part 1: Research Results' report, that should be read in conjunction with this document if further context to the development of the strategy is required.

The strategy itself puts the **Health & Well-being** of the residents of the Ogmore Valley community area at its core. This is largely as a result of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, and the fallout that is anticipated in the years to come. The strategy goes on to identify five priority project types that will largely be community-led initiatives funded locally, and four secondary priority project types that are more likely to be externally driven and funded. It is expected that OVCC will use this framework to make decisions on the kind of projects its supports over the next five years, especially those coming forward for support from the windfarm Community Benefit Fund.

Critically, during the course of the commission, it became clear that the Council itself might be more proactive and deliver a series of four projects that it is anticipated will greatly benefit residents. These were identified as follows:

- A **Volunteer Award Scheme** and **Time Credit** project – to recognise the efforts of local volunteers and encourage greater volunteering in the area.
- A **Virtual Noticeboard** – a new website and associated social media channels that provides residents with a 'one stop shop' for information about available community services and facilities.
- The establishment of the **Ogmore Valley Area Providers Forum** – a six-monthly gathering of external providers focussed on sharing information about health & wellbeing initiatives in the area.
- A programme of events leading up to the establishment of a regular **Summer Festival** that helps to bring the community back together in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The strategy would seek to achieve a step-change in the quality and provision of local services and facilities, and evidence of well-being outcomes being achieved across the whole of the Community Council area. However, the strategy will also require the Community Council to increase its capacity to deliver the programme of projects described above.

The proposal is therefore for the Council to establish a new full time **Ogmore Valley Development Officer** role. This person would become responsible for implementing the four Council-led projects, as well as facilitating the process of bringing appropriate local projects forward for windfarm funding. The position itself would need to be funded and it is recommended that an application is made for support via the windfarm Community Benefit Fund matched with both internal and other external funding sources. It would be expected that the successful candidate will carry on applying for external funding to add value to the resources that the windfarm brings.

At the end of this strategy a **SMART Action Plan** has been drawn up. It is hoped and anticipated that all of the identified projects would come to fruition. However, the Plan shows that the five Action Areas are not co-dependent and that they might be delivered separately as resources allow should it not be possible to undertake them all over the five year period as shown.

With the above in mind I commend this Strategy and Action Plan to the Council.

Director and Senior Consultant **12th March 2021**

Gareth Kiddie Associates

Part 2: Strategy and Action Plan

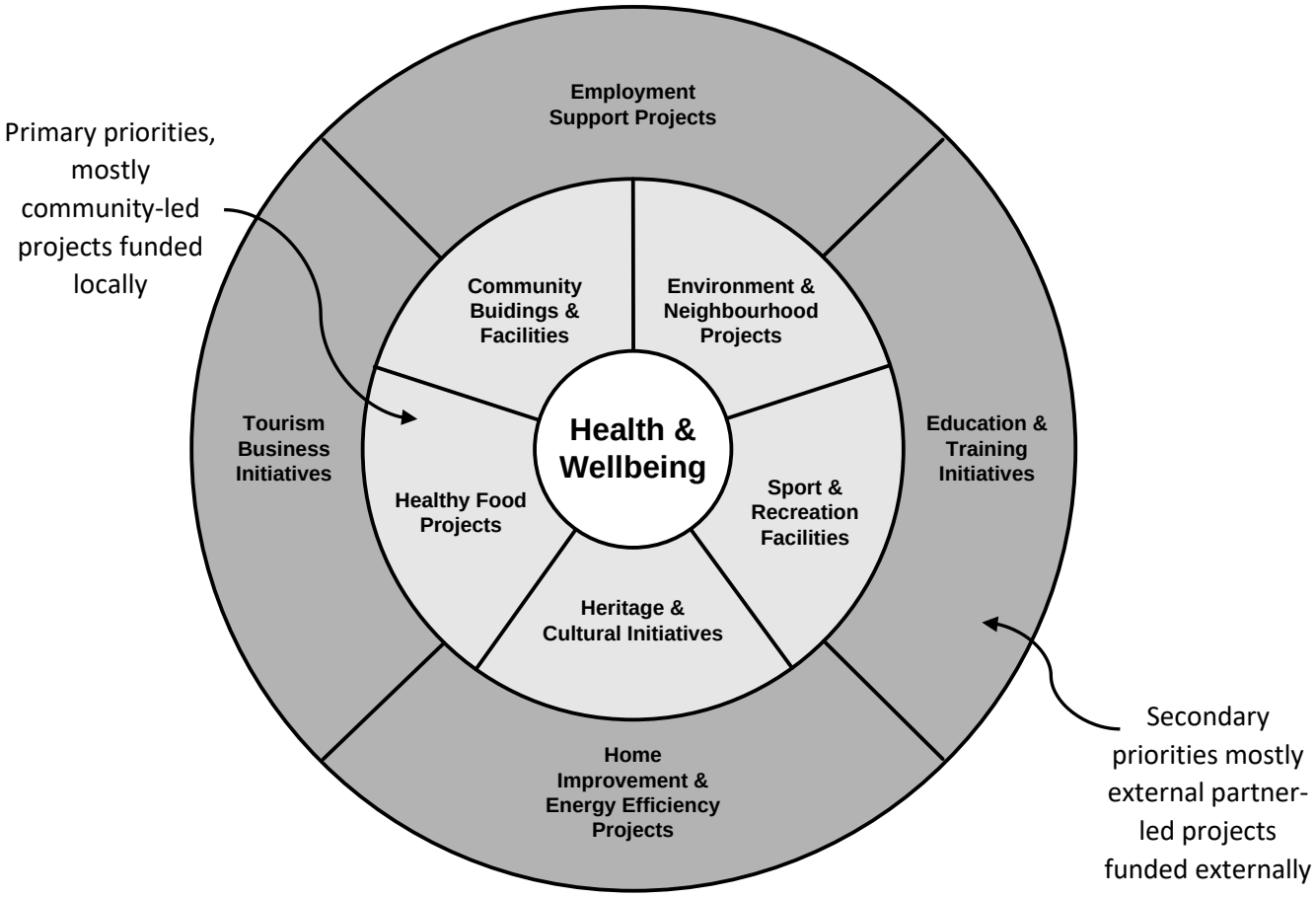
2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Strategy and Action Plan is to help Ogmore Valley Community Council:

- Prioritise and direct its work and inform thinking in spending its precept on community services and facilities;
- Influence decision-making on spending external funding, specifically the monies coming into the area via the windfarm community fund;
- Draw in additional external funding to 'match' local spending;
- Build capacity both within the Council itself and in the wider community;
- Initiate and / or support best practice community-led projects and initiatives;
- Ensure that projects coming forward for Council support meet the identified wants and needs of the local community, and fit with regional and local strategies for the area.

The Council does not have a Strategy in place at the present time. The development and implementation of this Strategy and Action Plan represents a significant opportunity to make a step change in the improvement of local community services and facilities.

2.2 Strategic themes and projects types



The diagram above shows that the Strategy has an over-arching theme that is concerned with **Health & Wellbeing**. By putting health & wellbeing at the heart of the Strategy there is an acknowledgement that the Community Council can and will play a lead role in helping its residents recover from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the main current issue identified in the Community Survey. This theme also links strongly with an important local strategy - the Bridgend Public Services Board Well-being Plan 2018, which is in turn tied into the Welsh Government's flagship legislation the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Central to the delivery of health & wellbeing outcomes will be support for five broad types of projects and initiatives that address primary priorities concerned with:

- **Community buildings & facilities** – the centres and hubs that host a wide range of services for key target groups including most especially: older people, younger people, families with young children, people with disabilities, people mental health problems, carers of all ages.
- **Environmental and neighbourhood projects** – locally organised groups that set out to improve the quality of their neighbourhoods and / or the wider environment of the Ogmore Valley area.
- **Sports and recreation facilities** – clubs and groups that provide opportunities for participation in sport and recreational activities, providing pathways for progression in things like: teamwork, fitness and personal development.
- **Heritage and cultural initiatives** – groups and societies that come together to: sing, make music, perform, interpret and celebrate local heritage and culture.
- **Healthy food projects** – projects and initiatives that enable greater access to affordable, fresh, and ideally locally grown produce.

Critically, these projects will be those that the Community Council will prioritise for support, they are largely community-led, and they provide a good platform for delivering a wide range of health & wellbeing outcomes.

In addition to the above there are a further four types of projects and initiatives that address secondary priorities. These are:

- **Employment support projects** – programmes that help local people find employment, centred on facilitation of BCBC's employability services hosted at local venues in the Ogmore Valley area.
- **Education & training initiatives** – adult and community education opportunities addressing key identified training needs for residents centred on the facilitation of Bridgend College's outreach education and training programmes hosted at local venues in the Ogmore Valley area.
- **Home energy efficiency projects** – support and active facilitation of the roll-out of the SMART Energy Plan in the Ogmore Valley area, helping BCBC to promote the project and engage residents.
- **Tourism business initiatives** – ongoing support for local tourism businesses through the active promotion of what the area has to offer as a tourism destination.

2.3 Target audiences

The Community Council is in existence to address and, as far as it is able, meet the issues and concerns raised by its residents. In this respect the Council is there to be flexible and responsive in the action it takes. This fundamental role will of course remain in place.

This Strategy, however, provides the Council with the opportunity to be more proactive, and to build its capacity to address the needs of its residents in terms of the provision of community services and facilities. In this respect the core theme of **Health & Well-being** helps to identify the some of the primary target audiences, that is, all those people that the Community Council might particularly seek to support. These have been identified as follows:

- **Older people** – most especially those that may be for example: isolated, struggle to get out due to disability, illness or infirmity, and those impacted by dementia.
- **Younger people** – through local projects that actively engage young people in finding out how best to meet their: social, physical, emotional, cultural and learning needs.
- **Families with younger children** – most especially for example: lone parents and those families with low levels of disposable income.
- **People and children with disabilities** – including for example: those with a physical disability, learning disability, autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- **Carers and young carers**.
- **People and young people with mental health issues** – including for example: those suffering with anxiety, depression, and a range of other disorders.
- **People affected by dependency and addiction.**

This list is by no means comprehensive, and is designed as a starting point for a better understanding of the range of health & wellbeing challenges faced by those that are perhaps the most vulnerable of residents living in the Ogmore Valley area.

In addition to the above the Community Council will actively seek to support those community services and facilities that meet diversity and inclusion principles and can demonstrate strong policies and practice in the provision of equal opportunities.

2.4 Action areas

The key recommendations in Part 1 - Section 1.10 of this Report highlight the way forward in terms of the practical actions that the Ogmore Valley Community Council might take going forward. These have been rolled up into five **action areas** identified as follows:

1. **Recognition**
2. **Information**
3. **Communication**
4. **Celebration**
5. **Community Action**

It is worth noting that the first four of these action actions are initiatives in which the Community Council will play lead role, and the fifth action area is one in which the Council will act as a facilitator. The nature of each of these action areas is described below:

Recognition

It was clear from the research and consultation work undertaken that there are a significant number of excellent community / volunteer-led projects doing equally excellent work across the Ogmore Valley community area. Many commentators noted too that these initiatives were playing a vital role in delivering much needed community services and facilities.

However, it became equally clear that this volunteer work was going largely unrecognised and an opportunity therefore existed for the Community Council to step in and establish the **Ogmore Valley Community Council Volunteer Award Scheme** (*The Ogstars*) that could also lead into the development of a local **Time Credit** initiative.

Aside from recognising the efforts of both individuals and organisations, such proposals would help to boost morale and would provide a platform for increasing volunteer engagement and development in the longer term.

Information

The results of the Community Survey indicated that residents generally thought that local community services and facilities were lacking. However, when the consultant undertook an assessment of the local provision of community services and facilities, this highlighted the fact that there's actually a lot going on in the area. Discussions with key stakeholders confirmed the disconnect that exists between what residents perceive and the reality of the situation.

There appears to be a gap in information provision. There is no **information one stop shop** for people in the Ogmore Valley area to go to get an overview of what's available, and what's going on. Traditionally Community and Town Councils have provided 'Community Noticeboards' which still have their place, and need to be maintained. The proposal here, however, is for the Council to establish a **new website and linked social media channels** that act as a *Virtual Noticeboard* for the community.

Communication

A lot of the provision of community services and facilities in the Ogmore Valley area is community led and managed, but there are additional, often specialist, services being delivered by external providers that are vital to community health and well-being.

The consultant's discussions with these external providers almost universally revealed a desire that they had to better connect with residents (and their community leaders), as well as connecting more with each other, so that they might swap notes and look for opportunities to work in partnership.

The proposal in this action area is to re-establish an **Ogmore Valley Area Providers Forum** that would act as the place where organisations providing services in the valley (most especially those that work to improve health & well-being), can meet on a quarterly basis. In the longer-term the intention would be to use this Forum as the way into to better community engagement and ultimately projects that are *Co-produced*.

Celebration

There are two aspects to the development of this action area. The first is to make immediate preparations for the aftermath of the pandemic by providing a range of events and activities that bring the community together (safely) and help local people appropriately celebrate getting back to what might actually be a 'new normal'. The second is to instil a sense of positivity for the future and celebrate everything that is good about living in the Ogmore Valley – most especially its landscape setting and natural environment.

The practical application of this proposal will be in gently bending what the Ogmore Valley Community Council normally does in terms of its regular activities (e.g. Xmas lights, bulb planting, Silver Band performances etc.) into a more coherent **programme of events** including an annual **Summer Festival** of events the theme of which is engaging people in enjoyable health & wellbeing activities.

Community Action

This final action area is one in which the Community Council primarily acts as facilitator, by attracting appropriate **community-led projects** and initiatives to apply for funding from the **windfarm community benefit fund**. The proposal is to ensure that the projects supported fit within the strategic theme and project types identified in Section 2.2 and also demonstrate how they are addressing the needs of the target audiences identified in Section 2.3.

In implementing this action area the Council will be able to apply a more strategic approach to the projects it supports and will have a stronger set of criteria for decision-making. Also, running alongside this will be the intention to provide additional capacity building support to applicant groups, helping them to draw in **additional external funding** that adds value to the windfarm monies.

In the longer-term the Council will be able to monitor and evaluate the success of the investment of windfarm monies (plus other matching external funding) and build its own knowledge of what kinds of projects work best and are most successful in meeting community needs with respect to health & wellbeing.

These five action areas are broken down into a SMART Action Plan in the ages that follow.

2.5 SMART Action Plan

Action Area 1: Recognition

The actions in this area centre on the establishment of the annual **OVCC Volunteer Award Scheme** (*The Ogstars*). The Ogstars will start off small and be built up over time. Critical actions in the development of the scheme include: looking at good practice elsewhere, defining the award categories for individuals and groups (e.g. Long service, outstanding achievement, young volunteer etc.), deciding when, where and how the annual award ceremony will take place – the ceremony might include, for example, short presentations of the work carried out by volunteers in front of an invited audience. Following on from the successful establishment of The Ogstars the Council will fund a volunteer **Time Credit** initiative such as the programme run by Tempo (formerly Spice Time Credits in Wales). This will provide local volunteers with credits for their time spent volunteering that can be spent on a wide range of free activities from national reward partners.

Actions	2022				2023				2024				2025				2026			
• Looking at other award schemes																				
• Designing the scheme / categories																				
• Planning the first award ceremony																				
• Holding the annual award ceremonies							X				X				X				X?	
• Exploring time credit good practice																				
• Linking up with a national partner																				
• Launching time credits locally											X									
• Implementing time credit trial																				
• Review and evaluation																				
• Publishing Evaluation Report																			X	

2.5 SMART Action Plan

Action Area 2: Information

The actions in this area centre on creating a new user-friendly **website and social media channels** that provides residents with information about local services and facilities, as well as upcoming community events and activities. Critical actions will include: undertaking further research building on the consultant's work to identify what's going on locally (included in Appendix 1 of this Report), looking at good practice examples of similar websites elsewhere, drawing up a brief for a web design team, commissioning and managing the successful team, ensuring all of the data is uploaded and that the website / social media all works as expected, securing training in the ongoing management of the website and use of social media channels, launching the website and going live to the community.

Actions	2022				2023				2024				2025				2026			
• Further baseline research																				
• Looking at good practice elsewhere																				
• Drawing up web design team brief																				
• Commissioning & managing team																				
• Uploading data / commissioning site																				
• Training in use																				
• Launch											X									
• Website and social media goes live																				
• Review and evaluation																				
• Publishing Evaluation Report																			X	

2.5 SMART Action Plan

Action Area 3: Communication

The actions in this area are concerned with establishing the **Ogmore Valley Area Providers Forum**. This will involve working closely with BCBC's Ogmore Valley Community Coordinator to establish terms of reference for the Forum and to undertake a pilot initiative to test the viability and attractiveness of the proposal to external providers. Assuming there is sufficient interest to thenceforth hold six-monthly meetings thereafter. Meeting will be kept informal and will mainly be concerned with allowing provides to catch up over a cup of tea and a sandwich*. Running alongside the Forum will be a **meet the provider** initiative that will involve setting up a rolling programme of external providers that are given 10 minutes airtime to introduce themselves and their work at OVCC meetings. This could be scheduled to take place at every other meeting so as not to impinge too much on Councillors' time, and might be achieved remotely (via video-link) or face to face as suits.

*Assumes that face to face meetings will be possible in the timeframe shown.

Actions	2022				2023				2024				2025				2026			
• Work with OV LCC																				
• Establish Forum ToR																				
• Pilot Forum						X														
• Ongoing Forum meetings								X		X		X		X		X		X		X
• Meet the provider initiative																				

2.5 SMART Action Plan

Action Area 4: Celebration

The actions in this area are concerned with developing a very simple / limited **programme of events** that help residents to come safely back together again at the end of the pandemic*. In the period immediately after the pandemic has ended events will have a focus that ensures they reach out and engage with the most isolated and vulnerable within the community, and the events themselves will all be undertaken outdoors at local parks & recreation grounds etc. In the years that follow, and presuming that there is no repeat of the coronavirus (or any other) pandemic, the Council will undertake to host an annual **Summer Festival** of events that continues to bring people together locally. Critically this Festival will seek to support and develop existing events and activities that local community organisations already deliver, as well as linking in with events and activities initiated by BCBC and others. The Council's role in the process will be to provide marketing support and small-scale funding.

*Clearly the timetabling of this can only start to happen when the pandemic is indeed over and government restrictions allow community gatherings once again. It is presumed that the ability for the Council to do anything this year will be limited and that the summer months of 2022 should be targeted as a start date.

Actions	2022				2023				2024				2025				2026			
• Event planning																				
• Spring / Summer Festival Events			X				X				X				X					
• Review and evaluation																				
• Publishing Evaluation Report																			X	

2.5 SMART Action Plan

Action Area 5: Community Action

The actions in this area are concerned with supporting **community-led projects** with funding coming through from the **windfarm community benefit fund**. The Council has already developed an excellent working relationship with the windfarm operators, Pennant Walters, and there are existing procedures in place for local community organisations to apply for grants. There is currently one round of grants disbursed each year. Applications are due in by the end of October, they are assessed by OVCC in November and recommendations go through to Pennant Walters in December for disbursement in the spring of the following year. The primary actions here will be to bring the funding criteria in line with this Strategy and ensure that the application form reflects the change. There will also be actions undertaken to ensure that: the grant scheme is better promoted, applicant organisations are made aware of the Council's desire to make a positive impact on residents' well-being, every effort is made to track the progress of projects and enable grant recipients to report back on their successes.

In addition to the above the Council will seek to build capacity of local groups by providing more hands-on support and drawing in additional external funding for project work.

Actions	2022				2023				2024				2025				2026			
• Revision of application form																				
• Promotion of grant availability																				
• Site meetings at prospective projects																				
• Scanning for additional funding																				
• Reviewing bids				X				X				X				X				X
• Working with grant recipients																				
• Review and evaluation																				
• Publishing Evaluation Report																			X	

2.6 Resourcing strategy

A critical success factor that underpins the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan as described above will be the recruitment of a full time Development Officer for the Ogmore Valley area. The person recruited to this post will be responsible for:

- Developing and managing OVCC's Volunteer Award Scheme.
- Researching local provision of community services and facilities.
- Commissioning and managing the website / social media consultants.
- Keeping the information on the website / social media channels up to date / fresh.
- Working closely with BCBC's Local Community Coordinator to get the Ogmore Valley Providers Forum up and running.
- Feeding a continual stream of providers into 'meet the provider' slots at Council meetings.
- Working closely with Councillors to identify and establish appropriate community events that coalesce into a Summer Festival.
- Bringing the grant application form and process in line with the Strategy.
- Supporting community groups in their applications for windfarm monies as appropriate and ensuring the disbursement of the grants runs smoothly.
- Actively seeking to draw in other external funding to match windfarm grants and add value to the programme as a whole.

In order to resource this post the Council will itself have to apply for a significant grant from the windfarm community benefit fund. A key target for the post-holder will be to secure sufficient additional external funding so as to justify the investment in the role.

Whilst this might normally be perceived as putting too onerous a responsibility on the person concerned, there are good opportunities to access external funding and Bridgend is often an area that is prioritised because of the relatively poor take up funding. With 'match' funding already available from the windfarm monies the task is made that much easier still and it really shouldn't be too difficult to draw in sufficient funding to at least cover the costs of supporting the post.

This project has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.