

Gwent Public Services Board

# Ebbw Fawr well-being assessment

A Blaenau Gwent local area well-being assessment

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## Ebbw Fawr Well-being Assessment

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### Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Description of the area.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>About Ebbw Fawr .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Social Well-being .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>About the community .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Getting around .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Access to services .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Housing, households and health .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Economy .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Education, skills and work.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Environment.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Culture .....</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>Data and Sources.....</b>	<b>20</b>

### 1 Description of the area

The Ebbw Fawr valley contains the area's largest town Ebbw Vale, its neighbourhoods and surrounding villages such as Waunlwyd and Cwm. There are currently six local electoral wards these are: Rassau, Beaufort, Badminton, Ebbw Vale North, Ebbw Vale South and Cwm. These areas are by thirteen ward councillors. Ebbw Vale does not have any town or community councillors.

For well over 100 years, the area was home to Ebbw Vale Steelworks which dominated a large part of the valley, giving the area a strong industrial heritage. Following the closure of the steelworks in 2002, the site was regenerated substantially and now includes the Council's General Offices, the Gwent Archives, a Learning Zone including schools and college, modern leisure facilities, industrial opportunities and train station. Furthermore, in 2010 the new Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Hospital was opened becoming the new local hospital for all those living in Blaenau Gwent.

The areas geography is typical with the urban settlements mainly clustered in the base of the valley and surrounding hillsides. The north of the valley opens to the Llangynidr moorland of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The area has a number of natural landscapes and greenspace that benefit the communities including local nature reserves such as Beaufort Hill Ponds and Woodland, Silent Valley and Garden City. As well as these there are plentiful open natural landscapes and other natural opportunities such as the Garden Festival Site, and Aberbeeg and Cwm Big woodlands.

The town centre of Ebbw Vale supports the neighbourhood area and offers a broad range of shopping and retail facilities.





*Figure 1: Ebbw Vale Learning Zone – Coleg Gwent*



*Figure 2: 'Echoes' clock where Market, Bethcar and James Street meet*

## 2 About Ebbw Fawr

<b>Area</b>	<b>30 Km<sup>2</sup></b> – approximately <b>27%</b> of the total area of Blaenau Gwent at <b>109 km<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Population</b> 	The estimated population is <b>23,408</b> – approximately <b>33%</b> of the total population for Blaenau Gwent at <b>70,020</b> .
<b>Population density</b>	The population density is <b>785</b> persons per square kilometre, with <b>30%</b> of people living in North Ebbw Vale, <b>33%</b> living in Central Ebbw Vale and <b>36%</b> in South Ebbw Vale. There are <b>644</b> people per square kilometre in Blaenau Gwent.
<b>Dwellings</b> 	The dwelling count is <b>6,731</b> – approximately <b>30%</b> of the total number of dwellings in Blaenau Gwent at <b>30,416</b> .
<b>General</b>	Ebbw Fawr consists of 3 Middle Super Output Area (MSOA), containing 16 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). By looking at smaller geographical areas, we can see any differences that can impact on well-being.

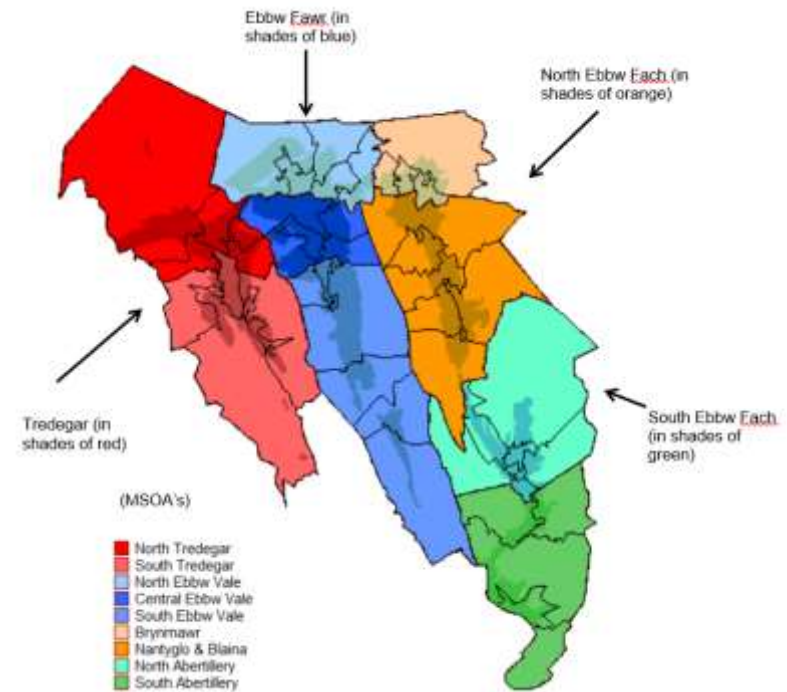


Figure 4: Map of Blaenau Gwent showing MSOA's and LSOA's within the 4 neighbourhood areas.

MSOA Name	LSOA Name
North Ebbw Vale	Beaufort 1
	Beaufort 2
	Beaufort 3
	Rossau 1
	Rossau 2
Central Ebbw Vale	Radnor 1
	Radnor 2
	Ebbw Vale North 1
	Ebbw Vale North 2
	Ebbw Vale North 3
South Ebbw Vale	Cwm 1
	Cwm 2
	Cwm 3
	Ebbw Vale South 1
	Ebbw Vale South 2
	Ebbw Vale South 3

Figure 4: Ebbw Fawr's 3 MSOA's and 16 LSOA's.

### 3 Social Well-being

#### 3.1 About the community

The overall estimated population of Ebbw Fawr has increased very little, by **43** residents from **23,365** in 2001 to **23,408** in 2020 (+0.2%), compared to Wales (+3.5%). North and South Ebbw Fawr have seen a negligible decrease in population (-0.1% and -0.9%) over this period but Central Ebbw Fawr have seen a net in-flow of residents (+129 or +1.7%).

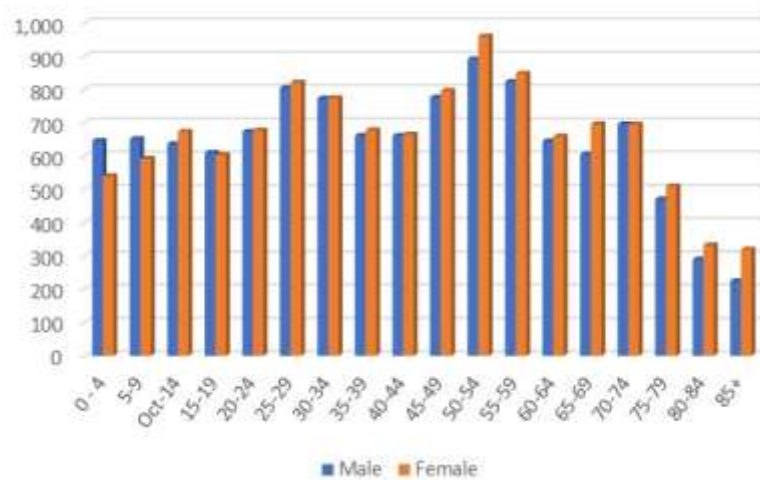


Figure 5: Mid-2020 population estimates by age and gender for Ebbw Fawr.

Understanding how the population might change in the future can help us think about key well-being challenges and opportunities.

The overall population in Blaenau Gwent is projected to decrease by 0.5% between 2021 and 2043 however the Ebbw Fawr region of the area could buck this trend and help sustain local services.

The number of people aged 0-15 or over living in Blaenau Gwent is projected to decrease by 9% between 2021 and 2043, a notably decline compared to the Wales as a whole (- 4%). For Ebbw Fawr this could mean 383 fewer people in this age range.

The number of people aged 16-64 (or working age) living in Blaenau Gwent is projected to fall 6% by 2043.

The number of people aged 65 or over living in Blaenau Gwent is projected to increase by 23% between 2021 and 2043, less than Wales as a whole (+27%). For Ebbw Fawr this could mean an extra 1,068 people in this age range.

There are many potential benefits to family and community well-being from people living longer. However, there could be higher demand for social care and health services in the future, and challenges in meeting the living requirements for an ageing community.

Enabling all parts of the community to get involved with the areas where they live and local decisions will help support cohesive communities.

In 2021 Partner organisations in Blaenau Gwent implemented a community participatory budget with a focus on supporting well-being for communities, which can be seen as a good way to catalyse community led solutions that leave a positive legacy for future generations.

### 3.2 Getting around



People travel for a range of reasons both within the town and beyond; for recreation or to meet with friends and family, to attend education or work, for the movement of goods or the delivery of services, or to access services themselves. There are also travellers to the town including for tourism or those enjoying the greenspace.

Ebbw Fawr is relatively well situated geographically for a Welsh valleys community. The main transport route for goods, services and people between Ebbw Fawr and the surrounding area is the A465 and A4046, giving access to other valley towns and beyond, leading to the M4.

There is a regular bus service, the X4 Stagecoach, between Ebbw Vale and Abergavenny (via Brynmawr) and also between Ebbw Vale and Cardiff via neighbouring Tredegar, and onto Merthyr Tydfil. This service acts as the public transport hub for the north. In 2021, a Fflecsi Bus service has been introduced by Transport for Wales supporting movement in and around the area, and onwards to other parts of the Blaenau Gwent borough.

The nearest railway stations are in Ebbw Vale Town and Ebbw Vale Parkway.

Transport and its accessibility can have a significant impact on households with low or limited incomes, current prices can make public transport an expensive option for those dependent upon it.

In 2021, the Ebbw Fawr area had its first public electric vehicle charging points installed. Much of the housing stock in the area is terraced and does not have access to off-road parking. This could limit future take up of electric vehicles as charging could be problematic.

Walking, cycling and public transport can make an important contribution to local transport needs, whilst also helping to address issues of congestion, pollution and climate change associated with car dependency.

Safe active travel routes particularly those which provide commuting potential can help support health lifestyles, however parts of the town and surrounding area are very steep which can present mobility challenges for some.

In the future more people might choose to travel actively so that they can keep healthier into old age. Future generations might use electric bikes to navigate the steep gradient of the town and beyond, connecting with public transport links.



Before the pandemic, just over **30%** of people living in Ebbw Fawr also worked in the town, but the majority of people travel to access employment.

Covid-19 has seen many more walking and cycling appreciating the value of our local green spaces. Ebbw Fawr is well connected into the national cycle route and has an abundance of public rights of way and open access land.

Covid-19 has seen more of us working from home and accessing services on-line, but there are certain types of work that can't be done remotely or digitally.

Being able to access broadband isn't the same as having it. Affordability and/or digital literacy can be a barrier to parts of the community.

Communities of the future may be less reliant of fixed telecommunication systems and more people might use 5G etc.

We don't know if homeworking will be a permanent arrangement or if people will begin to return to their places of work or choose to access services face-to-face. It's probable that we will have a blend of on-line, remote and in person interactions.

### Broadband access



Most households in Ebbw Fawr are able to access broadband with a minimum speed of 30Mb/s, with less than 1% of households unable to do so compared to 2.6% overall in Blaenau Gwent. For Wales as a whole this is 6.9%.

### 3.3 Access to services



Although there are visitors to the town, it mainly serves the local population. A core number of services and facilities are available, for others, residents need to travel to Tredegar, Brynmawr, Merthyr Tydfil, Blackwood or elsewhere.

There are two banks and one building society in Ebbw Fawr, all located at Ebbw Vale town centre, and the three Post Offices in the area also provides some banking services. The nearest hospitals are the new Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan hospital in Ebbw Vale and Nevill Hall in Abergavenny, neither of which have an accident and emergency department. Accident and Emergency is provided at The Grange University Hospital in Torfaen, or at Prince Charles Hospital in neighbouring Merthyr Tydfil.

In terms of education the area is served by Ebbw Vale Learning Community which is a new purpose built 3 to 16 years school maintained by the local authority on The Works site. There are also six primary schools around the area.

The area also hosts the Pen-y-Cwm Special School where all pupils' have statements of special educational needs for severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. Pupils attend from across Blaenau Gwent as well as from the neighbouring local authorities of Merthyr Tydfil, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Newport.

The Ebbw Fawr area is served by four GP practices and three dental practices. There are nine community pharmacies located across the area, and three optometry practices. These services all fall under the Blaenau Gwent West Neighbourhood Care Network operated by Anuerin Bevan University Health Board.

Type of Asset	Theme
2 x libraries (Ebbw Vale and Cwm)	Local Service
3 x post offices	Local Service
6 x primary Schools and 1 secondary school	Local Service
Electric vehicle charging points	Infrastructure
3 x Local Nature Reserves (Garden City, Silent Valley and Beaufort Hill)	Greenspace

**Figure 6: Key assets in Ebbw Fawr**

### 3.4 Housing, households and health

<b>Housing stock</b>	The majority of housing is older 19th and 20th Century stock with poor energy efficiency and is lacking range and variation.
<b>Council tax band</b>	Well over half of the housing in Blaenau Gwent, <b>58.3%</b> , is rated as council tax band A and <b>24.7%</b> is rated band B, the lowest valued housing categories.
<b>Tenure</b>	A third of housing in Ebbw Fawr is owned outright ( <b>33.2%</b> ) and <b>31.2%</b> is owned with a mortgage or loan. A further <b>36.6%</b> is social or privately rented.

**A key consideration for the future of the Ebbw Fawr is ensuring there is the right sort of housing to support the needs of the community.**

Defining housing need is complex and several factors will have an influence on the overall levels of demand. WIMD data indicates that the likelihood of people in overcrowded households and housing being in a disrepair are not issues in Ebbw Fawr. However, there is 13.3% of poor quality housing in North Ebbw Vale, 18.2% in Central Ebbw Vale and 25.8% in South Ebbw Vale (1 in 4 households).

There is reasonable supply of 2 bed properties in Ebbw Fawr, almost 25% of housing, but there is still likely to be an issue of affordable for



## Ebbw Fawr Well-being Assessment

single person applicants in receipt of benefits, who cannot access them due to welfare benefit reforms.



The average cost of a property in North Ebbw Vale was **£130,000**, Central Ebbw Vale was **£110,000** and **£81,750** in South Ebbw Vale during 2020.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the Welsh Government's official measure of relative poverty. It identifies those communities, at LSOA geography, with the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation. WIMD ranks all LSOAs in Wales from most to least deprived.

Figure 8 gives an overview of the degree of relative deprivation across Ebbw Fawr (comprised of 16 LSOAs). Based on data from the Welsh Index of National Deprivation (WIMD).

MSOA Name	LSOA	WIMD	Income	Employment	Health	Education	Access to Services	Community Safety	Physical Environment	Housing
North Ebbw Vale	Beaufort 1	30%-40%	20%-30%	20%-30%	40%-50%	20%-30%	50%-60%	40%-50%	60%-70%	50%-60%
	Beaufort 2	10%-20%	10%-20%	10%-20%	10%	10%-20%	10%-20%	10%-20%	70%-80%	50%-60%
	Beaufort 3	70%-80%	70%-80%	60%-70%	60%-70%	70%-80%	90%-100%	20%-30%	30%-40%	50%-60%
	Rassau 1	50%-60%	60%-70%	50%-60%	60%-70%	40%-50%	40%-50%	20%-30%	20%-30%	80%-90%
	Rassau 2	10%-20%	10%-20%	10%-20%	10%-20%	10%	30%-40%	30%-40%	30%-40%	50%-60%
Central Ebbw Vale	Badminton 1	30%-40%	30%-40%	20%-30%	20%-30%	20%-30%	40%-50%	20%-30%	50%-60%	80%-90%
	Badminton 2	60%-70%	60%-70%	50%-60%	30%-40%	40%-50%	60%-70%	50%-60%	40%-50%	60%-70%
	Ebbw Vale North 1	10%-20%	10%-20%	10%-20%	20%-30%	20%-30%	50%-60%	10%	50%-60%	10%-20%
	Ebbw Vale North 2	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%-20%	10%	70%-80%	60%-70%
	Ebbw Vale North 3	40%-50%	40%-50%	40%-50%	40%-50%	40%-50%	70%-80%	20%-30%	50%-60%	20%-30%
South Ebbw Vale	Cwm 1	30%-40%	30%-40%	20%-30%	30%-40%	40%-50%	50%-60%	30%-40%	40%-50%	30%-40%
	Cwm 2	10%-20%	10%-20%	10%-20%	10%-20%	10%-20%	70%-80%	10%-20%	20%-30%	20%-30%
	Cwm 3	60%-70%	70%-80%	60%-70%	60%-70%	40%-50%	10%-20%	30%-40%	80%-90%	30%-40%
	Ebbw Vale South 1	10%	10%	10%	10%-20%	10%	10%-20%	10%-20%	30%-40%	10%
	Ebbw Vale South 2	20%-30%	30%-40%	20%-30%	40%-50%	50%-60%	20%-30%	10%	50%-60%	10%-20%
	Ebbw Vale South 3	20%-30%	20%-30%	20%-30%	20%-30%	20%-30%	40%-50%	10%	20%-30%	30%-40%
	Ebbw Vale South 4	20%-30%	20%-30%	20%-30%	20%-30%	20%-30%	40%-50%	10%	20%-30%	30%-40%

Figure 8: WIMD 2019 and WIMD domain ranks for LSOAs in Tredegar within deciles.

## 14% of working age people in Ebbw Fawr are in receipt of employment related benefits


Having work is generally considered the best route out of poverty, but where pay is low, working hours limited or both, then this is not always the case. The data suggests that some people living in Blaenau Gwent as a whole are experiencing in-work poverty.

<b>Foodbank parcels</b>	3,945 food parcels were distributed to Blaenau Gwent residents by The Trussel Trust alone between April 2020 and March 2021. As well as this there were donations elsewhere from independent food bank services such as Cymru Creations, TK's Community Centre and the Brynmawr Rotary Club.
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Foodbanks are an important indication of the economic inequality that exists in our communities.

Not every resident has a suitable garden or space to grow fruit and vegetables. An allotment can provide an affordable source of good quality food, essential for a healthy diet. The physical activity involved in keeping an allotment can also have wider health benefits.

Food co-operatives are a good way of making good quality, affordable food available.

	28.4% (2,693 out of 9,499) of children resident in Blaenau Gwent are eligible for free school meals.
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Ebbw Fawr LSOA's in top 10% most deprived in Wales	
<b>Overall deprivation</b>	2 LSOA's – Ebbw Vale North 2 and Ebbw Vale South 1
<b>Income deprivation</b>	2 LSOA's - Ebbw Vale North 2 and Ebbw Vale South 1 with 20% of people living in Ebbw Fawr are in income deprivation.
<b>Employment deprivation</b>	2 LSOA's – Ebbw Vale North 2 and Ebbw Vale South 1
<b>Health deprivation</b>	3 LSOA's – Beaufort 2 and Ebbw Vale North 2
<b>Education</b>	3 LSOA's – Rassau 2, Ebbw Vale North 2 and Ebbw Vale South 1
<b>Community safety</b>	4 LSOA's - Ebbw Vale North 1, Ebbw Vale North 2, Ebbw Vale South 2 and Ebbw Vale South 3
<b>Housing</b>	1 LSOA - Ebbw Vale South 1

Free school meals indicate that economic inequality that exists in our communities. Providing healthy school meals can help improve overall health, support a child's ability to learn, and can influence food choices away from school.

## **Taking action to reduce inequalities will reduce the impact of poor health on particular communities.**

The WIMD data shows that rate of premature deaths and limiting long term illness in Ebbw Fawr is significantly higher than the rate for Wales as a whole.

## **4 Economy**

### **4.1 Education, skills and work**

The WIMD data tells us that Ebbw Fawr has 3 LSOA's in the top **10%** and 3 LSOAs on the top 20% of most deprived areas in Wales in terms of education. It also has a high concentration of several different types of deprivation. The data tells us the social-economic factors could be contributing to attainment gaps between communities.



The data shows that less pupils are entering higher education in North, Central and South Ebbw Vale (23.5%, 23.4% and 26.3% respectively) than Wales (29.6%). However, it also shows that 26.0% 27.4% and 26.9% of adults aged 25 – 64 in North, Central and South Ebbw Vale have no qualifications, this is significantly higher than the figure for Wales (19.4%).

For some young people, their financial circumstances and the cost and availability of transport can be barriers to entering higher education.

<b>Repeat school absenteeism</b>	Repeat absenteeism of school pupils in North Ebbw Vale (5.6%), Central Ebbw Vale (5.4%) and South Ebbw Vale (4.8%) is lower than Blaenau Gwent (5.7%) and for South Ebbw Vale, also lower than the all Wales level (5.4%).
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<b>Limiting long-term illnesses</b>	Limiting long-term illness in North Ebbw Vale, Central Ebbw Vale and South Ebbw Vale are experienced at a rate of 25.5 and 27.1 and 25.8 per 100 population respectively. This is similar to the overall rate in Blaenau Gwent (27.7), but notably higher than Wales overall (22.7).
<b>All cause death rate</b>	The all-cause death rate in North Ebbw Vale, Central Ebbw Vale and South Ebbw Vale is 1,095, 1,300 and 1,104 per 100,000 population respectively, this compares with the Blaenau Gwent rate of 1,156 and Wales rate of 1,000.
<b>Premature death</b>	The rate of premature death (under 75) in North Ebbw Vale, Central Ebbw Vale and South Ebbw Vale is 448, 477 and 458 per 100,000 respectively. The rate for Blaenau Gwent is 467.1 and Wales is 382.4 per 100,000.

## Ebbw Fawr Well-being Assessment

<b>Employment</b> 	There are approximately <b>11,065</b> economically active residents in Ebbw Fawr, of these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>9,525</b> are employees</li> <li>• <b>853</b> are self-employed</li> <li>• <b>1,166</b> are unemployed.</li> </ul>		
<b>Skills</b> 		<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
	No Qualifications	6,394	33.4
	Level 2	3,108	16.2
	Level 3	1,938	10.1
	Level 4 and above	3,119	16.3
<b>Industry of employment</b>	The largest industry of employment in Ebbw Fawr is manufacturing – <b>18.7%</b> of all jobs. This is considerably more than the overall rate in Wales (10.9%). There are approximate 1,807 jobs in manufacturing in Ebbw Fawr.		
<b>Main employment sites</b>	2 major industrial estates – Rassau and Waun Y Pound.		

Delivering employability support to help those furthest from the job market can enabling them to fulfil their potential and will help support a prosperous economy.

Blaenau Gwent along with 9 other local authority areas is part of the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) which over a 10 year period seeks to deliver a set of targets in the region including 25,000 new jobs by

2036, the leveraging of £4bn of private sector investment and securing economic growth. 8 priority sectors have been identified as important for the region going forward:

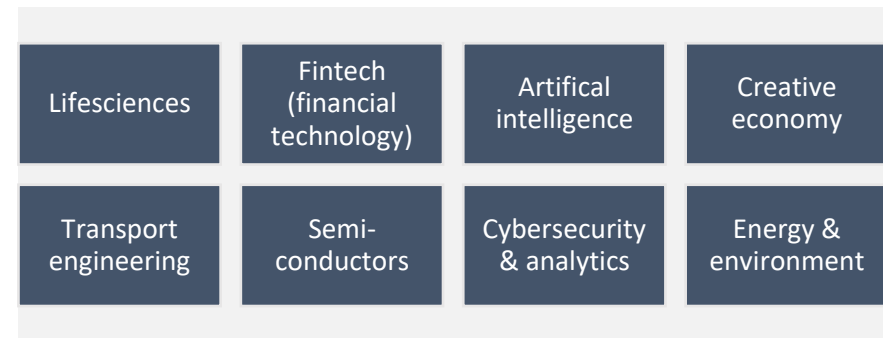


Figure 9: Cardiff City Region priority sectors

With its main employment base of manufacturing, the Ebbw Fawr areas is well-placed to link to the transport engineering priority sector, but there may also be other opportunities for both new and existing businesses.



A fifth of working residents (1,912) are employed in manufacturing.

We don't have any information about the number of people in Ebbw Fawr that were furloughed, had their working hours reduced or lost or changed employment as a result of Covid-19. We also don't know what the longer-term impact of the pandemic will be on employment.

## 5 Environment



Our air, land, water, wildlife, plants, and soils provide our most basic needs, including food, timber, fuel and recreation, they also provide less visible services including water management, supporting pollinating insects, and carbon storage.

<b>Notable features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beaufort Woodlands</li> <li>- Garden Festival</li> <li>- Eugene Cross Park</li> <li>- Beaufort Welfare Ground</li> </ul>
<b>Key nature conservation designations</b>	<p>Silent Valley Local Nature Reserve</p> <p>Beaufort Hills Local Nature Reserve</p> <p>Garden City Local Nature Reserve</p>

### Urban Green Spaces

The distribution of Urban Green Spaces in the Ebbw Fawr area is shown on figure 10 with the quantities and key examples of each assets outlined in figure 11.

#### Urban Green Spaces<sup>1</sup>:

<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:red; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Public Parks & Gardens (including Play Spaces)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:darkred; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Outdoor Sports Facilities (including Playing Fields)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:green; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Amenity Greenspaces
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Amenity Greenspaces (Domestic Gardens)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Allotments
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:purple; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Cemeteries & Churchyards

- Key Accessible Green Infrastructure Sites:**
1. Ebbw Vale Cemetery
  2. Beaufort Welfare Ground
  3. Queensway Playing Field
  4. Eugene Cross Park
  5. Hilltop Stadium
  6. Silent Valley Nature Reserve
  7. Cwm Cemetery
  8. Beaufort Woodlands
  9. Garden Festival Site

Figure 7 Urban Green Spaces Key



## Ebbw Fawr Well-being Assessment



Figure 9 Urban Green Spaces Ebbw Fawr

Urban Green Space	No.	Area	Key examples
Public Parks & Gardens	2	0.7ha	Coronation Park
Play Spaces	11	0.7ha	Letchworth Road Play Area, York Avenue Play Area
Outdoor Sports Facilities (including Playing Fields)	19	34ha	Ebbw Vale Sports Centre, Eugene Cross Park
Amenity Greenspaces	n/a	418ha	n/a
Amenity Greenspaces (Domestic Gardens)	n/a	161ha	n/a
Allotments	7	1.9ha	Briery Hill Allotments
Cemeteries & Churchyards	11	14ha	Ebbw Vale Cemetery, Cwm Cemetery

Figure 8 Urban green space Ebbw Fawr, some key assets.

Total tree cover for the urban area of Ebbw Vale and Cwm was 20.3% in 2013. Urban woodlands represent as much as 50% of Blaenau Gwent's urban canopy cover. The rest of the tree canopy in urban areas is made up of individual and groups of 'amenity trees' rowing along streets, gardens, car parks and other urban public and private open spaces.

Outside the urban areas are some significant blocks of woodland, particularly on the lower valley slopes, including accessible woodland at Craig y Deri to the south east of Cwm.

### Green Infrastructure Functions

The green infrastructure functions provided by the Urban Green Space in the Ebbw Valley are outlined in figure 11.

### Needs and Opportunities

The needs and opportunities for improving the quality and connectivity of Urban Green Spaces in the Ebbw Valley are outlined below. Where places specific opportunities are identified by numbers in brackets, these are shown in figure 12.

- Enhance green spaces including parks and woodlands to provide safe and attractive destinations that maximise benefits to the community and encourage people to return
- Improve maintenance of woodlands by supporting 'Friends of' community groups for Beaufort Woodlands and other local accessible green spaces (1).
- Improve quality of habitat for pollinators by implementing alternative pollinator grassland management regimes for parks (e.g. Coronation Park), amenity greenspaces and along road verges to promote resilient ecological networks.
- Promote opportunities for incorporating GI into the master planning and design of new developments.
- Embed and retrofit green infrastructure into built development within urban areas such as biodiverse green spaces between buildings, green roofs, walls and facades, sustainable drainage schemes and other green design measures.
- Ensure ongoing management and maintenance of church yards and cemeteries, taking opportunities where possible to improve biodiversity and habitat quality (2).
- Enhance the quality of school grounds, taking opportunities where possible to improve biodiversity and their use as multifunctional places where young people can gain health and wellbeing benefits and develop a connection with the environment.
- Enhance disused playing pitches, taking opportunities to improve access, biodiversity and habitat quality (3).
- Improve connectivity of woodlands and trees by seeking opportunities to increase urban tree planting and replacing aging trees as necessary.
- Ensure new development is encouraged to provide for a net improvement in terms of biodiversity by taking account of it as part of the design, and supports the creation of healthy communities through appropriate provision of greenspace. Key opportunities exist at the strategic sites at The Works (7) and Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor (8).
- Improve connectivity between gardens by enhancing the profile of wildlife gardening through communications and education in line with the Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales' Guidance on Wildlife Gardening

Additional opportunities are identified by Natural Resources Wales' WINS - Welsh Information for Nature-based Solutions database, including Accessible Urban Greenspace - Supply and Demand. This analysis highlights greenspaces that are likely to have a more 'natural' feel. It also shows urban areas that do not currently have

access to greenspace, and these have been prioritised according to the number of people and the overall deprivation in the area.

### Green Corridors

The distribution of Green Corridors in the Ebbw Valley is shown on figure 13, with the quantities and each asset outlined below:

Countryside Access Networks	Total Length (km)
NCN Routes	14.6km
Footpaths	55.2km
Bridleways	0.7km
Restricted Byways	17.2km
Byways Open to all Traffic	0.7km
<b>Total PRoW (Footpaths, Bridleways, Byways &amp; BOAT)</b>	<b>73.7km</b>

Figure 10 Green corridor assets Ebbw valley.

### Green Infrastructure Functions

The green infrastructure functions provided by the Green Corridors in the Ebbw Valley are outlined in figure 13.

### Needs and Opportunities

The needs and opportunities for improving the quality and connectivity of green corridors in the Ebbw Valley are outlined below. Where place-specific opportunities are identified by numbers in brackets, these are shown in figure 13.

- Ensure ongoing management and maintenance of existing rights of way, through seeking opportunities to develop the volunteer network in Blaenau Gwent to assist with public rights of way maintenance.
- Enhance quality of habitat for bats along the Heads of the Valley Road corridor to promote resilient ecological networks (4).
- Improve connectivity of the Ebbw Valley River network by opening up culverts and re-naturalising rivers where appropriate, enhancing bankside land and the wider floodplain, buffering and extending existing habitats and linkages and improving access both to and alongside rivers for both people and wildlife.
- Improve connectivity between Ebbw Valley and the Brecon Beacons by extending the Ebbw Vale Walk along the old tram route (5).
- Improve connectivity between communities and National Cycle Network Route 46 to encourage active travel (6)
- Ensure new development is encouraged to provide new connections to and/or improvements to the existing network of green corridors, incorporating these into the site design. Key opportunities exist at the strategic sites at The Works (7) and Ebbw Vale Northern Corridor (8).



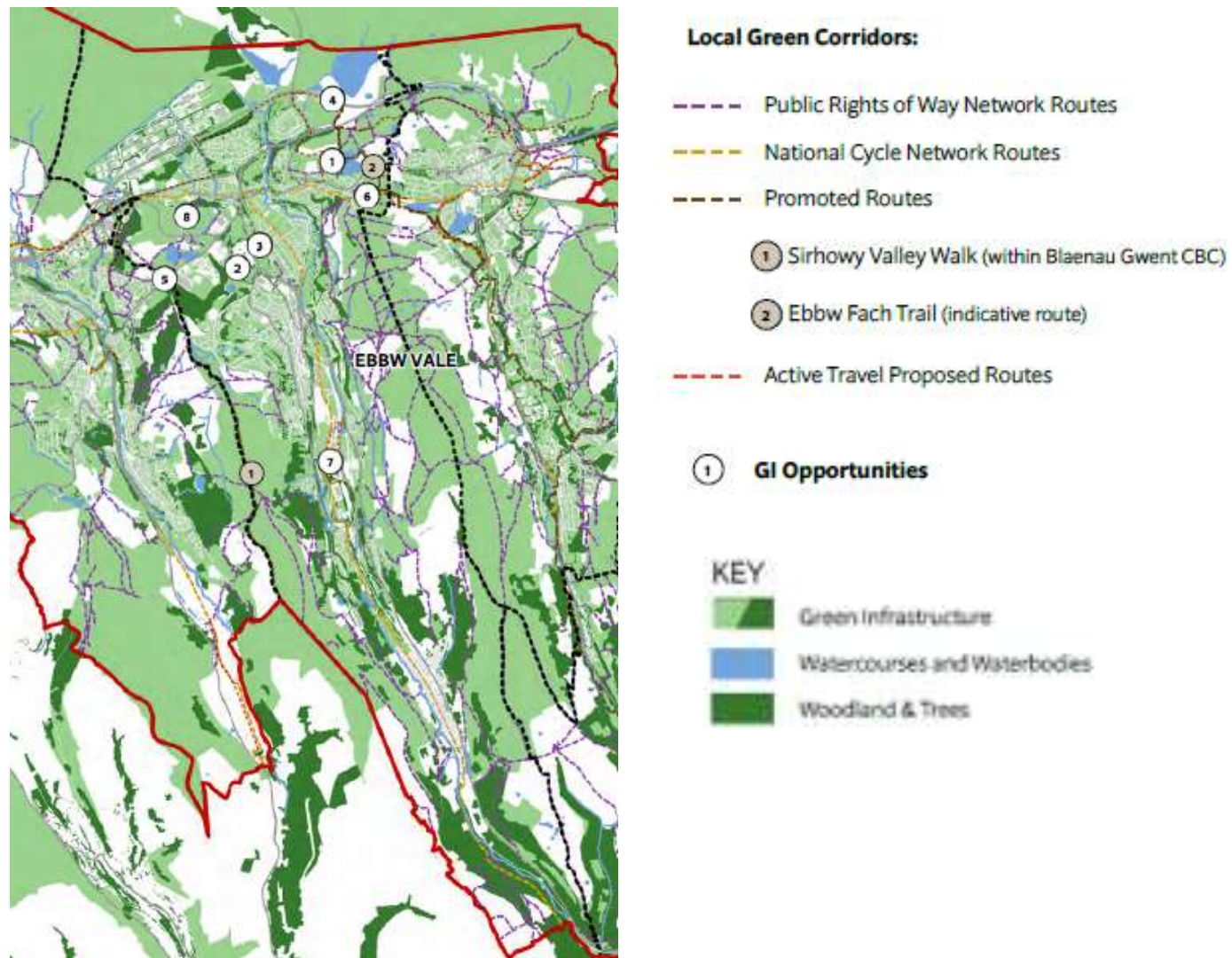


Figure 11 Needs and opportunities for improving the quality and connectivity of green corridors in the Ebbw Fawr Valley

## 6 Culture

The latest data from the 2021 census is not available to use yet but from the previous census we know that:

<b>Welsh speakers</b>	7% of residents in Ebbw Fawr can speak Welsh which is less than the Welsh average (19%). A marginally higher percentage speak Welsh in South Ebbw Vale (8.0%) compared to North Ebbw Vale (7.4%) and Central Ebbw Vale (6.8%).
<b>Country of birth</b>	90% of residents in Ebbw Fawr were born in Wales.
<b>Ethnicity</b>	98% of residents are of a White ethnicity. There are less than 360 people who are of non-White ethnicity.
<b>Religion</b>	50.6% of residents have a Christian based religious faith. Only 197 people have a non-Christian faith. 40.5% of residents have no religious faith.

Taking action to help support and grow the Welsh language will help preserve Welsh culture and identity for future generations.

Enabling all parts of the community to get involved with the areas where they live and local decisions will help support cohesive communities. Taking part in cultural activities can be a good way of bringing all parts of the community together and building community cohesion.

<b>Key attractions</b>	Ebbw Vale Sports Centre, Beaufort Theatre, Ebbw Vale Works Museum, Festival Park, Marine Colliery
<b>Key heritage designations</b>	Silent Valley LNR, Garden City LNR, Beaufort Hills LNR

The Ebbw Fawr Valley is rich in cultural history and community spirit that remains today. Its surviving streets of miners' housing, churches, schools, collieries and steelwork sites powerfully reflect the distinctive culture that developed in coal mining, iron and steel making communities during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Engaging the local community in the significance of their mining, iron and steelworks heritage is important in ensuring a sense of place and increasing community pride and well-being.

The many churches and chapels, like the Turzah Baptist Church in Cwm, are also home to volunteering efforts, providing lunch clubs and food distribution to those in need.

Ebbw Fawr is a popular tourist spot in Blaenau Gwent with its mainline train link to Cardiff Central from Ebbw Vale Town or Parkway stations, as well as its direct road access to the Brecon Beacons National Park via Garnlydan.

Ebbw Fawr is home to a range of clubs and societies, including Choirs, arts & crafts and music & drama groups, as well as rugby, cricket and football clubs for people of all ages.



*Figure 12 General Offices on The Works site in Ebbw Vale*

**The Ebbw Vale Works Museum** is based in the General Offices, the former Headquarters for the Ebbw Vale Steelworks. They have a unique collection of artefacts and documents telling the story of iron and steel making in Ebbw Vale.



*Figure 13 Ebbw Vale Works Museum*

Visitors to the museum are able to experience an eclectic collection of artefacts and archived material covering the evolution and development of coal, iron and steelmaking in the area from 1790 to the Works closure in 2002 and its subsequent transformation into the existing Works Site. The museum also provides access to a considerable amount of material relating to the social aspect of local community life.

### **Festival Park**

Festival Park comprises of over 70 acres of parkland remaining from Garden Festival Wales. The park contains many of the original features and sculptures from the 1992 event.



*Figure 14 The Lake at Festival Park*

Festival Park's leisure attractions include a large retail park as well as the UK's longest Super-tubing run, the region's largest adventure



play castle and an Owl Sanctuary. The park also boasts a woodland and 2 lakes, popular with local anglers, cyclists and walkers.

### **Beaufort Theatre & Ballroom**

Beaufort Theatre hosts a wide range of performances and events throughout the year as well as arts activities and workshops. It is the number one venue in Ebbw Vale for drama, dance, live music and children's events.



*Figure 15 Beaufort Theatre*

It is a volunteer-led community arts centre that provides opportunities for performance, participation and coming together through an expanding programme of events and activities for people of all ages. The Theatre has stood on the site since 1910 and then in the 1960s it was converted from its previous life as a cinema. The ballroom still boasts its original sprung wooden ballroom floor which

is now used as a dance rehearsal studio and social space for bands and conferences.

### **Ebbw Vale Sports Centre**

The mental and physical benefits that exercise can provide are well documented. Ebbw Vale Sports Centre is run by the Aneurin Leisure Trust, a charitable organisation that reinvests back into the community through its facilities, with its mission of 'improving community life' through health and well-being provision.



*Figure 16 Ebbw Vale Sports Centre*

The facility is home to a 25m swimming pool, fun pool and slides; full Technogym fitness suite; indoor sports hall with 8 badminton courts; 50 exercises classes; a 3G full sized Astro-Turf and 4 training pitches; community toilets and changing facilities.

Supporting people to live healthy lives, where they can achieve their potential and become part of a healthy workforce will contribute to wider economic well-being.

## Data and Sources

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