



Bron Afon



Retirement Living Strategy

2024/2030

Introduction

In 2018, Bron Afon adopted a 10-year Older Persons' Housing Strategy. It included the need for a full refresh in year 7 and so this plan sets out our updated approach to meeting the housing and support needs of older people in Torfaen. It is based on current demand information, the ambitions of our Board (as set out in the Corporate Strategy), as well as the requirements of local strategic partners.

This updated strategy is key to delivering our current corporate vision of 'being trusted to build safe and strong communities, where everyone has a place they are proud to call home' and specifically, it sets out the work we will do to provide great customer services, build new homes, provide high quality homes and work in partnership to meet the needs of communities.

In addition, the Placemaking Framework sets the overarching principles that provision of housing for older people will meet and states that we are committed to the aims of:

- the Placemaking Wales Charter,
- the Marmot principles as set out in Building a Healthier Gwent 2019,
- the Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) Community Wellbeing Strategy,
- the key design principles set out by Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (HAPPI and ReHAPPI), and
- the World Health Organisation Age Friendly Cities & Communities design principles.

Key drivers for the original strategy centred around the performance of the existing 35 retirement housing schemes (820 homes), the need for these to be fit for the future and how we will meet the requirements of older people living in general needs homes who make up 27% of our customer population. Although these drivers, and the principles that guided the original strategy, remain largely unchanged, we have learned much since 2018 including the importance of independence, wellbeing and community cohesion when designing and managing retirement living.




Strategic Ambitions and Principles

The **ambitions** of the strategy are that we will ensure:

- Alignment with the Torfaen partnership agenda on early intervention and prevention to achieve better health outcomes and to better support health and social care to deliver services to customers in their own homes.
- A net increase in suitable homes for older people, through independent living schemes, retirement housing and general needs housing, in line with identified demand.
- Homes are attractive to 'rightsizers' to enable larger homes to be occupied by families.
- Homes remain affordable for customers in terms of running costs and service charges.
- Homes that are no longer fit for retirement living are refurbished or repurposed to better suit local housing need (including conversion to temporary accommodation or general needs homes), improve quality of life and alleviate avoidable pressures on health and social care.
- Homes contribute to the financial stability of the business.
- All actions are based on solid data and evidence and this insight supports key partners (such as health and TCBC) to demonstrate the benefit of 'upstream' investment in prevention to reduce avoidable demand.

Guiding the strategy are three sets of key **principles**:

Choice

- A range of housing options and tenures available which are safe, sustainable, and affordable.
 - Retirement living available for a diverse range of older customers, including people with dementia or from minority groups.
 - A menu of support (both formal and informal) is in place which is needs led, person centred and seeks to build independence and promote health and well-being. This support is not necessarily delivered by Bron Afon.
 - Residents supported to learn and improve digital skills to avoid digital exclusion.
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Quality

- High quality, aspirational homes delivered that contribute to well connected, inclusive communities.
- HAPPI (Housing our Aging Population: Panel for Innovation) and Age Friendly Communities (World Health Organisation) design principles considered for new build homes and Re-HAPPI principles in the re-design of existing retirement living homes.
- TAPPI (Technology for an Aging Population) principles considered from the outset of design.
- Homes meet the requirements of WHQS23 and are net zero where practically possible, complying with all regulatory and Health & Safety standards.

Partnership & Funding

- Financial sustainability applied to rent and charges to maintain provision and ensure our offer remains relevant.
- External funding opportunities maximised.
- Links with health and social care provision clear.
- Sustainable ways created for customers to access community provision rather than duplicating them.
- Explore offering services and/or spaces to others on a commercial basis.



Context

How this strategy links to the Placemaking Wales Charter

Our retirement living projects will be developed in conjunction with local communities with the needs, aspirations, health and wellbeing of people considered from the outset. Any proposals will be shaped to meet these needs and enhance a sense of community.

Schemes will use land efficiently, enhancing existing places and valuing their distinctive qualities

How this strategy links to the Marmot principles

As a Marmot Region, Gwent has stated a collective intent to work to improve equity and the lives of all communities. A number of the Marmot Principles, that aim for fairer and healthier lives and the well-being of future generations, are directly relevant to retirement living:

- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention.
- Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.
- Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.

How this strategy links to the Community Wellbeing Strategy

The TCBC strategy states that by 2027, the authority ‘will have radically changed the way that we operate, putting ‘communities’ and ‘wellbeing & prevention’ as genuine cornerstones in the way we design our services so that we can empower our communities to be healthier, better connected and more equal. Our communities are central to supporting the wellbeing and independence of residents. We will embrace the passion and knowledge that our communities and community organisations have about their local area and will work together to jointly design solutions with each local community at the centre. Together, we will tackle early, and head-on, the issues that make the biggest difference to wellbeing, resilience, and independence’.

The ambitions and principles of our retirement living plan align with this wider vision for Torfaen.



How this plan links to the HAPPI principles

We will incorporate the HAPPI principles when creating new retirement living schemes that enhance the lives of older adults by promoting independence, social connection, and overall well-being. For existing schemes, we will apply the recently published Re-HAPPI principles recommended by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Housing & Care for Older People. From optimising natural light to incorporating sustainable design, these principles will guide us in creating environments that support the diverse needs and aspirations of residents.


How this strategy links to the (WHO) Age Friendly Cities & Communities

Communities have a key role in enabling people to live longer and healthier lives. An age-friendly community is health promoting and designed for diversity, inclusion, and cohesion, enabling people to stay active, keep connected, and contribute to their community's economic, social, and cultural life.

An age-friendly community can promote solidarity amongst generations, facilitating social relationships between residents of all ages and reducing the risk of older people facing social isolation and even falls.

Our retirement living offer will embrace this ethos from design stage through to delivery.

In addition, this strategic plan is also guided by local and national policy and aims to help meet demand as set out by the:

- Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB)'s Population Needs Assessment and associated Area Plans and Torfaen Integrated Services Board Plan (as required by the Social Services & Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014).
 - Gwent Public Services Wellbeing Assessment and Local Area Wellbeing Assessments for Blaenavon, Cwmbran and Pontypool (as required by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015).
 - Torfaen Local Housing Market Assessment.
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Delivering the Strategy

The associated Delivery Plan sets out how we will meet the ambitions of this strategy.

In summary, Bron Afon will:

- meet current and future housing need by building new homes and remodelling existing homes to meet modern living standards.
- provide a range of new retirement living homes from specialist independent living schemes to more general needs bungalows / apartments, to replace those that are no longer fit for purpose and unlikely to ever meet modern standards.
- focus on delivering good quality 1-bedroom homes for the older people within our communities as well as suitably adapted homes so that people can live in their own homes for longer.
- create a retirement living and assistive technology offer that meets local health and wellbeing needs and is affordable for customers.
- create housing and communities that nurture meaningful relationships and a sense of belonging.
- incorporate falls prevention into housing design and improvement, ensuring access to advice and support with a proactive adaptations approach.
- use detailed, community level data to inform individual retirement living projects.

