

Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations

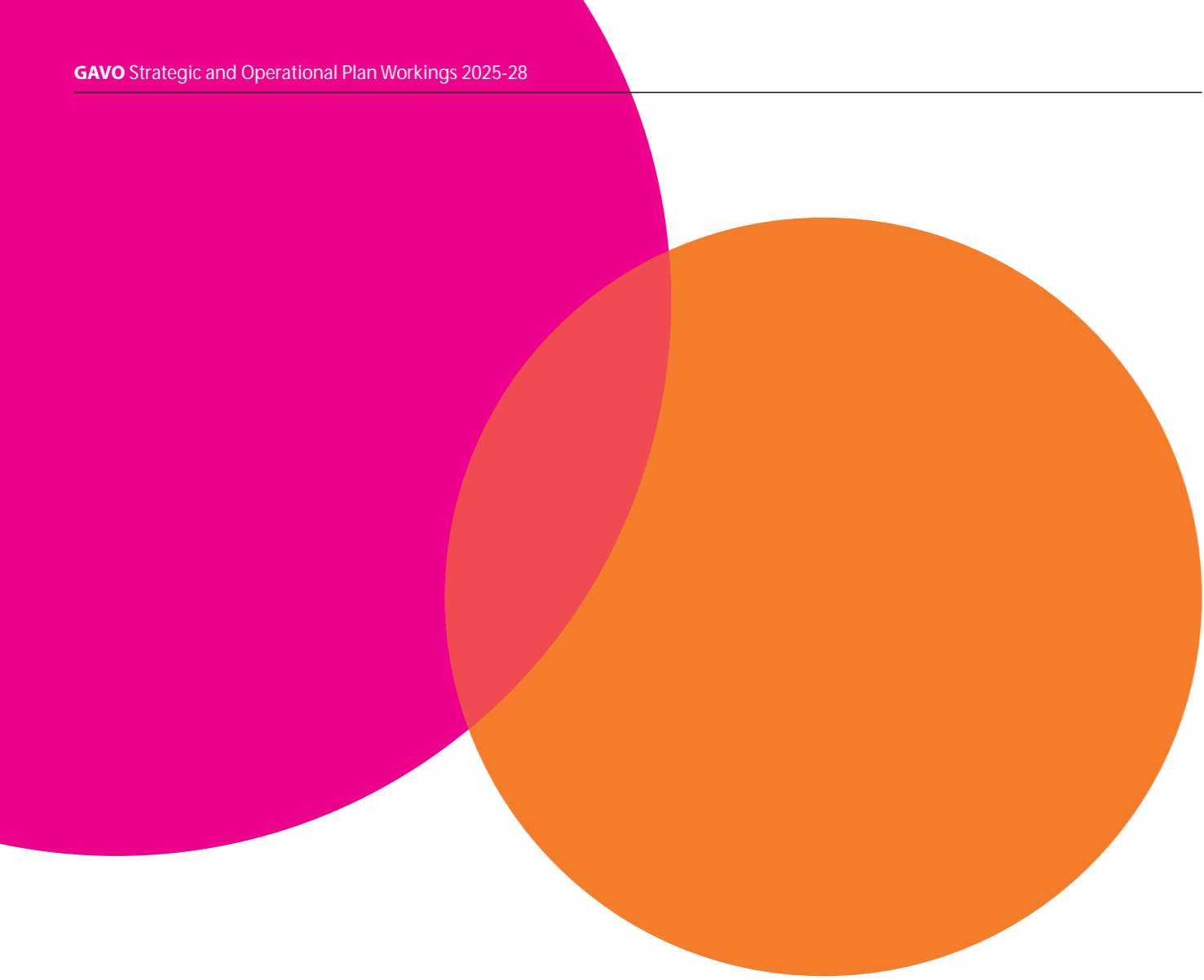
Strategic and Operational Plan

2025-28



Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations
Cymdeithas Mudiadau Gwirfoddol Gwent

I Gymunedau, gyda Chymunedau | For Communities, With Communities



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1. Executive Summary

The Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO) stands as the largest County Voluntary Council (CVC) in Wales. With a team exceeding 50 staff members and the guidance of a Board of Trustees, GAVO plays a pivotal role in supporting the community and voluntary sector in the region.

Operating across four Local Authority areas in Gwent, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, and Newport. GAVO collaborates on a national scale with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and the Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) network. The partnership ensures that resources are strategically allocated within Gwent to maximise community opportunities. GAVO is a Registered Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee and as a membership-led organisation, offers support and guidance to a vibrant Third Sector in Gwent.

The core role of GAVO is to provide support to people in communities to undertake community action through the four pillars of TSSW:

- Influencing and Engagement
- Volunteering
- Good Governance
- Financial Sustainability

Beyond this core framework, GAVO excels in developing and implementing projects and programmes through collaborative efforts, to address unmet community needs.

As we navigate an uncertain future, it is crucial to embrace change to fulfil our core responsibilities and realise our new strapline, vision and mission, to the fullest extent of our considerable capabilities.

Our new strapline is:

“Working with Communities since 1927”

2. Vision & Mission Statement

GAVO's vision:

“To see a thriving, collaborative and sustainable third sector across Gwent, supported by GAVO, recognised for its expertise and professionalism.”

GAVO's mission:

“GAVO commits to delivering its strategic aims for the benefit and support of our communities.”

3. Values and Unique Selling Point (USP)

Our values statement is:

“GAVO supports people and communities to achieve their aims and aspirations through inclusive approaches that are defined by Respect, Integrity and Transparency.”

GAVO's Core Values:

- **Respect** - GAVO should promote a culture of respect through open communication, recognising and valuing diverse perspectives, and consistently demonstrating empathy and fairness towards staff, partners, and those we support.
- **Integrity** - GAVO should work with a culture of integrity by embedding ethical standards and transparency into every aspect of its operations, encouraging staff and stakeholders to act consistently with these values through clear policies, ongoing training, and leading by example within the sector.
- **Transparency** - GAVO should foster a culture of transparency by openly sharing information, decisions, and policies with staff and stakeholders, encouraging honest communication and feedback to build trust and accountability.

Our unique selling point can be defined as:

“GAVO has had a fundamental role in working with individuals and communities throughout Gwent since its inception in 1927. With a legacy spanning nearly 100 years, GAVO has cultivated extensive expertise, skills, and networks. This rich background guides strategy to ensure GAVO remains adaptable and attuned to the evolving needs of both established and emerging demographics within the community and public services across Gwent and wider.”

4. Current activity

GAVO is associated with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and is an active participant in Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW), the partnership between WCVA and the 19 County Voluntary Councils across Wales.

GAVO collaborates closely with the Welsh Government, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council, the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Police, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in Gwent.

GAVO's activities are influenced by the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. These initiatives align with the Government's programme outlined in "Prosperity for All: The National Strategy, Taking Wales Forward."

GAVO is a member of the Gwent Public Service Board (PSB) framework, aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. As part of this commitment, GAVO will continue to support the development and execution of the new Gwent Well-being Plan from a third sector perspective, championing the voice of the sector and supporting locality focused plans.

The CEO represents GAVO on the Gwent PSB, the Deputy CEO represents the organisation on the Gwent Strategic Wellbeing Assessment Group (GSWAG), and GAVO's Strategic Leads represent each region's Local Delivery Groups.

In addition, GAVO plays a crucial role in the Regional Partnership Board (RPB), which oversees the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act across Gwent. GAVO ensures ongoing engagement from its organisation, membership, and the wider Third Sector around this important requirement. The RPB manages the Regional Integration Fund (RIF), and GAVO advocates for the sector's access to this essential funding.

The CEO and Chair of GAVO attend the RPB, while the Deputy CEO participates in the Regional Leadership Group, with various GAVO staff representing the sector on supporting boards within this structure.



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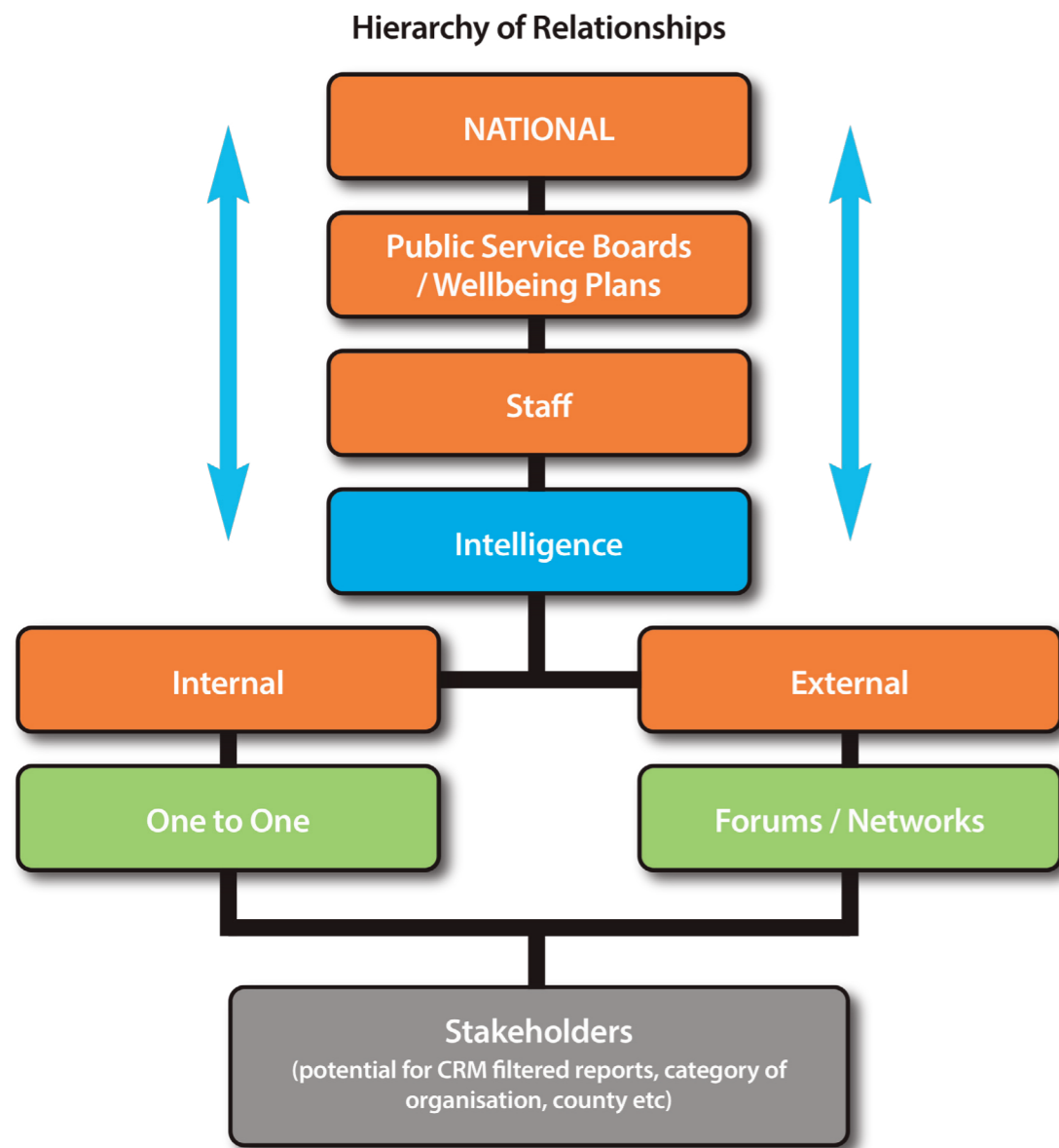
5. Marketing and Communications

The organisation's communications and marketing strategy enables us to proactively highlight the sector's positive contributions and showcase GAVO's strategic role in supporting the sector throughout Gwent.

For GAVO, marketing is crucial as it generates essential revenue for the organisation. This function not only ensures the promotion of our brand but also helps promote the wider sector within Gwent. These two functions are deeply interconnected, and GAVO recognises their significance.

GAVO utilises a variety of communication tools to promote the organisation, its services, and its success stories. This approach supports funders by addressing service gaps in our communities and aids third-sector members in finding opportunities for collaboration and income generation.

Our communication streams and their progression within the organisation are as follows:



GAVO produces a communications plan and marketing strategy to aid this key outcome for the organisation.

6. IT Strategy

The IT Strategy for GAVO is an appendix to this document. This strategy will be a dynamic document, regularly updated by the IT Officer to reflect the decisions made by the Trustees. Its execution will be handled by the Senior Management Team in collaboration with the Corporate Management Team and staff.

7. Strategic Aims

GAVO has dedicated substantial time to aligning its work with the organisation's strategic direction, ensuring the fulfilment of its Vision statement.

To achieve these objectives, GAVO will collaborate with all staff members through essential operational tasks led by the Senior Management Team, Corporate Management Team, and Line Managers. This approach ensures that employees are well informed about their roles and are integral to meeting the Organisation's goals.

Our aims must remain a central focus, with progress reported quarterly to Trustees, Senior Management Teams, Corporate Management Team, Line Managers, and staff.

These aims adhere to the SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. We will continuously review our goals to ensure the Organisation has adequate resources - people, finances, and technology. If any deviations are identified, GAVO will implement corrective actions to realign activities with our planned objectives.

The Strategic Aims and corresponding Key Tasks are the following:

<p>Strategic Aim: Promoting Inclusive Volunteering Opportunities for All Ages.</p> <p>Objective: To foster a diverse and inclusive volunteering culture within Gwent, ensuring equitable access and engagement for both adults and youth from all backgrounds.</p>	<p>Strategic Aim: To influence and engage public services, stakeholders, and policymakers, fostering collaborative partnerships and advocating for the interests and needs of GAVO and the wider diverse third sector within Gwent and beyond.</p> <p>Objective: Continue to support collaborative working groups with key stakeholders from public services, government agencies, and the Third Sector to identify common goals and priorities with a focus on enhancing service provision, promoting community well-being, and ensuring equitable access to resources and support.</p>
<p>Strategic Aim: Enhancing Good Governance Across Gwent's third sector.</p> <p>Objective: To ensure that GAVO and its affiliated organisations consistently demonstrate best practices in governance, fostering transparency, accountability, and adaptability in accordance with evolving legislative requirements.</p>	<p>Strategic Aim: To enhance the financial sustainability of GAVO and the wider sector by working towards innovative fundraising strategies, fostering strategic partnerships, and advocating for supportive policies in response to the challenging public landscape.</p> <p>Objective: Increase diversified funding sources for GAVO and its member organisations through the development of targeted opportunities, grant applications, partnerships, and community engagement initiatives.</p>

8. Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) serve as a vital tool for tracking organisational performance throughout the lifespan of the Strategic Plan. The KPIs, agreed collaboratively by TSSW and the Welsh Government, are outlined in the table below, providing a Wales-wide perspective on performance metrics.

	Good Governance	Effective Influence & Strategic Engagement	Volunteering	Resourcing a Sustainable Sector
Pillar Specific KPI's	N/A	N/A	Number of volunteers who have signed up to a volunteering opportunity Target - 1,000	Amount of funding awarded to organisations following support Target - £5m
	N/A	N/A	Number of volunteers supported to enter into a volunteering opportunity Target - 2,000	Amount of funding awarded and distributed to organisations by TSSW Target - £10m
Cross Cutting KPI's	Number of organisations supported to access specialist advice and guidance - Target 600			
	Number of organisations supported with direct advice and information - Target 3,000			
	Number of digital resources accessed - Target 500,000			
	Number of participants on face-to-face training courses - Target 3,000			
	Number of participants on digital training courses - Target 500			
Number of attendees at partnerships/forums/networks/events facilitated - Target 8,000				

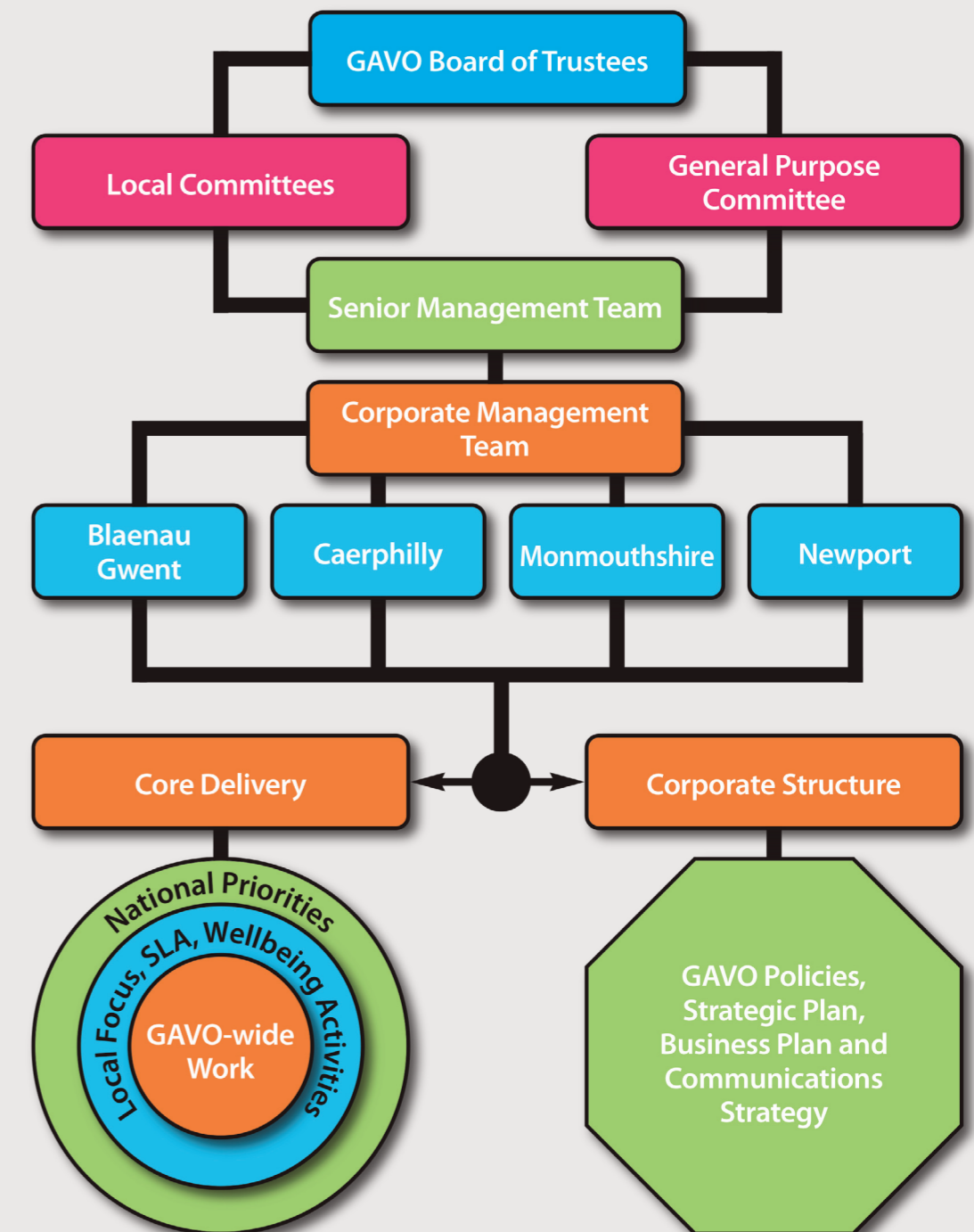
TSSW has agreed to target specific percentages of the population, leading to the following targets for GAVO: (Note: The targets for funding, digital resources, training, and networks also encompass the amounts associated with WCVA in the locality based KPIs). These objectives will serve as the cornerstone for GAVO's reporting throughout the upcoming Strategic Plan period. We are committed to not only tracking numerical targets but also prioritising the monitoring of person-centric and organisational case studies. This approach ensures that our data reflects the tangible real-world impact of our efforts.

	Good Governance	Effective Influence & Strategic Engagement	Volunteering	Resourcing a Sustainable Sector
Pillar Specific KPI's	N/A	N/A	Number of volunteers who have signed up to a volunteering opportunity Target - 161	Amount of funding awarded to organisations following support Target - £793,620
	N/A	N/A	Number of volunteers supported to enter into a volunteering opportunity Target - 321	Amount of funding awarded and distributed to organisations by TSSW Target - £1,587,240
Cross Cutting KPI's	Number of organisations supported to access specialist advice and guidance - Target 159			
	Number of organisations supported with direct advice and information - Target 483			
	Number of digital resources accessed - Target 132,500			
	Number of participants on face-to-face training courses - Target 795			
	Number of participants on digital training courses - Target 133			
Number of attendees at partnerships/forums/networks/events facilitated - Target 2,120				

9. Human Resources

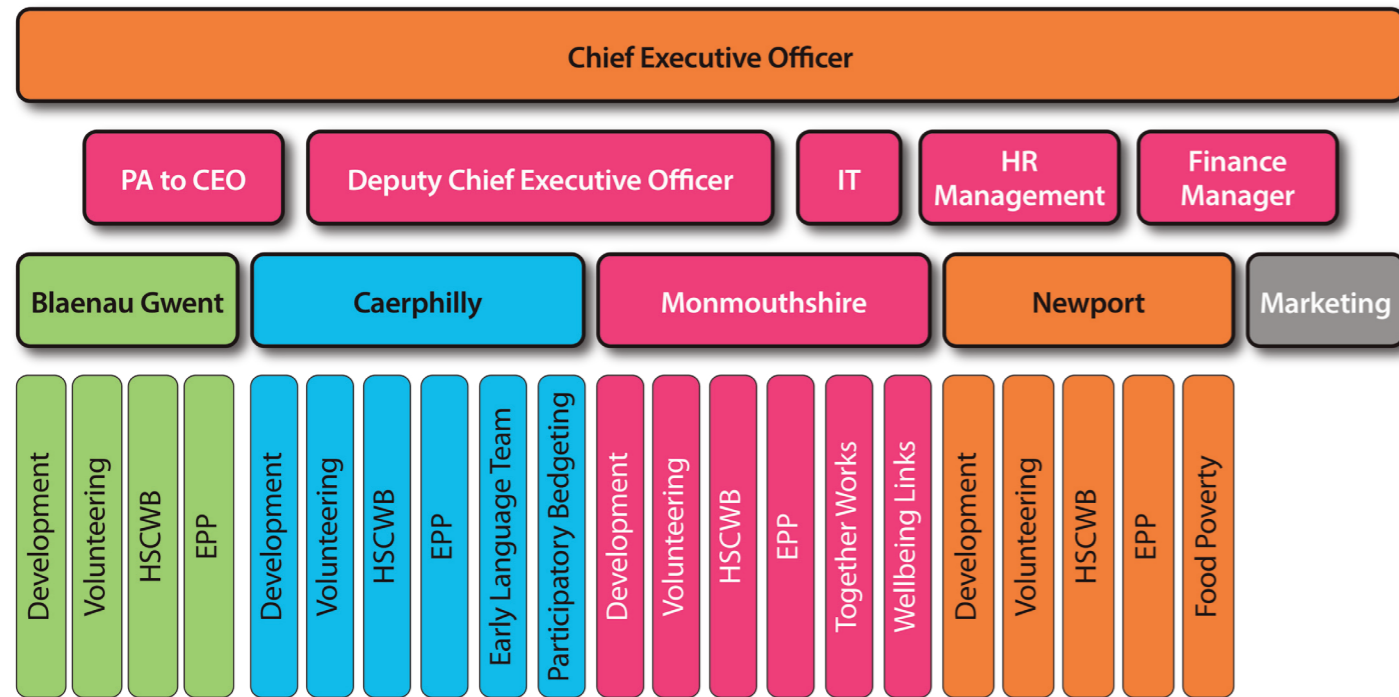
As a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, the Trustees, who are elected from the membership, are ultimately responsible for the organisation and its Strategic Plan is their, high level plan for the success of the organisation. The Strategic Plan must prioritise the allocation of appropriate resources to meet the organisation's strategic objectives. Human resources play a pivotal role in GAVO's future success, necessitating their full engagement in the journey through to 2028.

Our structure of operations is highlighted in the flow chart outlined below.



GAVO will maintain vigilant oversight of its needs, outputs, and sector support, ensuring that available resources enable the achievement of set targets. The training needs of staff are monitored so that when required, staff have the relevant authority and accountability to perform various tasks and have the empowerment to aid decision-making.

The staffing structures and organisational hierarchy of GAVO is detailed below, with comprehensive appendices outlining the full staffing structure included in the updated Operational Plan.



10. SWOT & PESTLE Analysis

GAVO must remain vigilant to both internal and external forces that can either enhance or impede progress towards the organisation's mission and vision. These factors are systematically analysed through SWOT and PESTLE assessments.

SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis delves into an organisation's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. These aspects can originate from inside or outside the organisation and may not always be within GAVO's direct control. However, GAVO is committed to a proactive approach, aiming to:

- Foster and amplify Strengths.
- Address Weaknesses with a focus on improvement and transformation into strengths whenever feasible.
- Seize Opportunities for the benefit of GAVO, its sector, and communities, in a timely and advantageous manner.
- Manage Threats effectively, potentially turning them into collaborative opportunities.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ability to work and influence across the whole of Gwent. ■ Experience within the sector and our communities. ■ The history and track record of GAVO. ■ Knowledge of the sector and our communities. ■ Our ability to provide a diverse product. ■ Ability to change and adapt to meet needs and requirements. ■ Our staff (Knowledge & Experience). ■ Ability to collaborate with Public Service partners as there is trust here to carry out good pieces of work. ■ Strong partnerships across Gwent. ■ Influencing policy on behalf of the Third Sector. ■ Ability to spot gaps in services and help the sector fill those gaps for the benefit of the community. ■ Resource hub for information and resources for volunteers and organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Over reliance on annual funding and constraints on resources. ■ Marketing in the right way in the right place. ■ Capacity to improve collaboration with the Sector. ■ Perseverance and willingness to change linked to capacity. ■ Barriers to partnership working, not always the fault of GAVO but a hinder to collaboration. ■ Wider representation. ■ Being reactive and not proactive. ■ Limited digital presence, not fully utilising platforms, limiting reach to younger or tech-savvy demographics. ■ Ability to gauge trust. ■ Weakness of the sector as it is not always seen as a key contributor. ■ Understanding of the sector by partners due to its diversity and scope. ■ Misunderstanding of the role of the CVC.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Opportunities for further and continued partner engagement. ■ Opportunities as an umbrella organisation. ■ Wider representation of the Sector through TSSW. ■ Increasing role in advocacy can garner more support for the voluntary sector around policy. ■ Opportunities to seek/identify new funding streams and partnership opportunities. ■ Identify gaps in service delivery. ■ The GAVO Board and Local Committees. ■ Change of Government and the structural changes that arise from the change. ■ Staff structure for support in communities. ■ Gwent PSB opportunities. ■ Respect from partners to conduct positive work. ■ Rising community need provide opportunities to expand services and impact. ■ Collaboration with the Sector. ■ EU funding void - potential alternative funding opportunities ■ Expanding digital engagement and services for broader audiences and improved service delivery. ■ Gwent becoming a Marmot region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possible loss of funding (cost-of-living crisis). ■ Economic uncertainty and continued austerity. ■ EU Funding void - UK Funding and where control lies including the Sector. ■ Local Authority Co-operation. ■ Funding restrictions due to turnover. ■ GAVO can be reactive and not proactive. ■ Mission drift of Statutory partners. ■ Key staff moving on. ■ Political changes at all levels. ■ Funding diverted to partners results in grant decisions without GAVO /sector knowledge. ■ Inability to retain volunteers affects the continuity and quality of services offered across the sector and in GAVO. ■ Competition for our resources and services from others who wish to duplicate work. ■ The employment market (right people, right roles). ■ Changes in regulations and compliance. ■ High demand and workload on volunteers can lead to burnout and decrease in volunteer numbers.

PESTLE Analysis

The PESTLE analysis scrutinises internal and external influences shaping GAVO's operational landscape. These factors are pivotal for understanding and navigating the organisational environment, encompassing:

- Political dynamics
- Environmental considerations
- Social trends
- Technological advancements
- Legal frameworks
- Economic conditions

Political	Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of understanding of the role of GAVO and the sector leading to views that money could be better used for Public Service. ■ Politicians not aware of what we do. ■ Susceptible to behavioural changes? ■ Differing cultures that can influence mindset. ■ Reiteration that GAVO is non-political but can assist political regimes. ■ Programme for Government. ■ Local Government relationships. ■ Social Service and Well-Being Act. ■ Well-Being of Future Generations Act. ■ Government Policy can cause issues for GAVO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Social dynamic changes and use of the environment. ■ Cardiff and wider City Deals. ■ Gwent PSB and the Environmental changes affecting Gwent. ■ Area specific Environmental issues – flooding issues and other impacts. ■ Increasing emphasis on environmental sustainability can influence operations. ■ Climate Change Impact. ■ Compliance with environmental regulations such as waste management and energy use.
Social	Technological
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The changing demographics and dynamics in communities. ■ Benefits and entitlements linked to austerity. ■ Barriers for communities to link to GAVO. ■ Active Citizenship and links to communities across the patch. ■ Marketing to communities. ■ Public awareness and attitudes toward volunteering and community service can impact recruitment and engagement. ■ Marmot issues such as poverty, health disparities, and education can influence focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agile working dynamics. ■ Improved and more targeted use of social media which is in line with its impacts on modern-day ways of living. ■ Advances in technology can improve GAVO's operations with innovative technologies enhancing efficiency and outreach. ■ Increased digital tools require data security and protecting against cyber threats becomes critical. ■ The use of social media and other digital platforms can enhance communication.

Legal	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Equality Act. ■ GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). ■ Health and Safety. ■ Policies and Procedures. ■ How do we adapt to changes in regulations? ■ Charity Law Compliance. ■ Employment Law. ■ Environmental regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure legislation and ethical responsibilities around this such as recycling and its costs. ■ Employment levels and issues. ■ The cost-of-living crisis. ■ Funding and grants. ■ Links with Public Services but expanding to the Private Sector. ■ Working practices and ensuring we adapt to move with a changing economy. ■ Impacts of an agile working world.

11. Risk Analysis

GAVO is committed to managing organisational risks through a strategic risk register that involves all staff in a collaborative effort. This register is regularly discussed and shared among employees to benefit the entire organisation. Risks are categorised into various sections, with the overall management assigned to the GAVO Senior Management Team. Their role is to engage the broader organisation in risk avoidance, mitigation, or acceptance.

GAVO has defined clear work streams within its plan to address the identified risks and continues to work proactively towards managing them effectively.

12. Finance

Sustaining GAVO's financial health is a crucial objective, essential for maintaining our sector support through to 2028. We will consistently review current finances along with projections for the next two years to guarantee effective cash flow and project oversight. Regular financial updates will be provided to our General Purposes Committee, Executive Committee, funders, and presented annually to our auditors.

Additionally, we aim to enhance the collaboration with the GAVO Corporate Management Team, ensuring they have the necessary information, expertise, and support to manage budgets in alignment with GAVO's regional and project priorities.

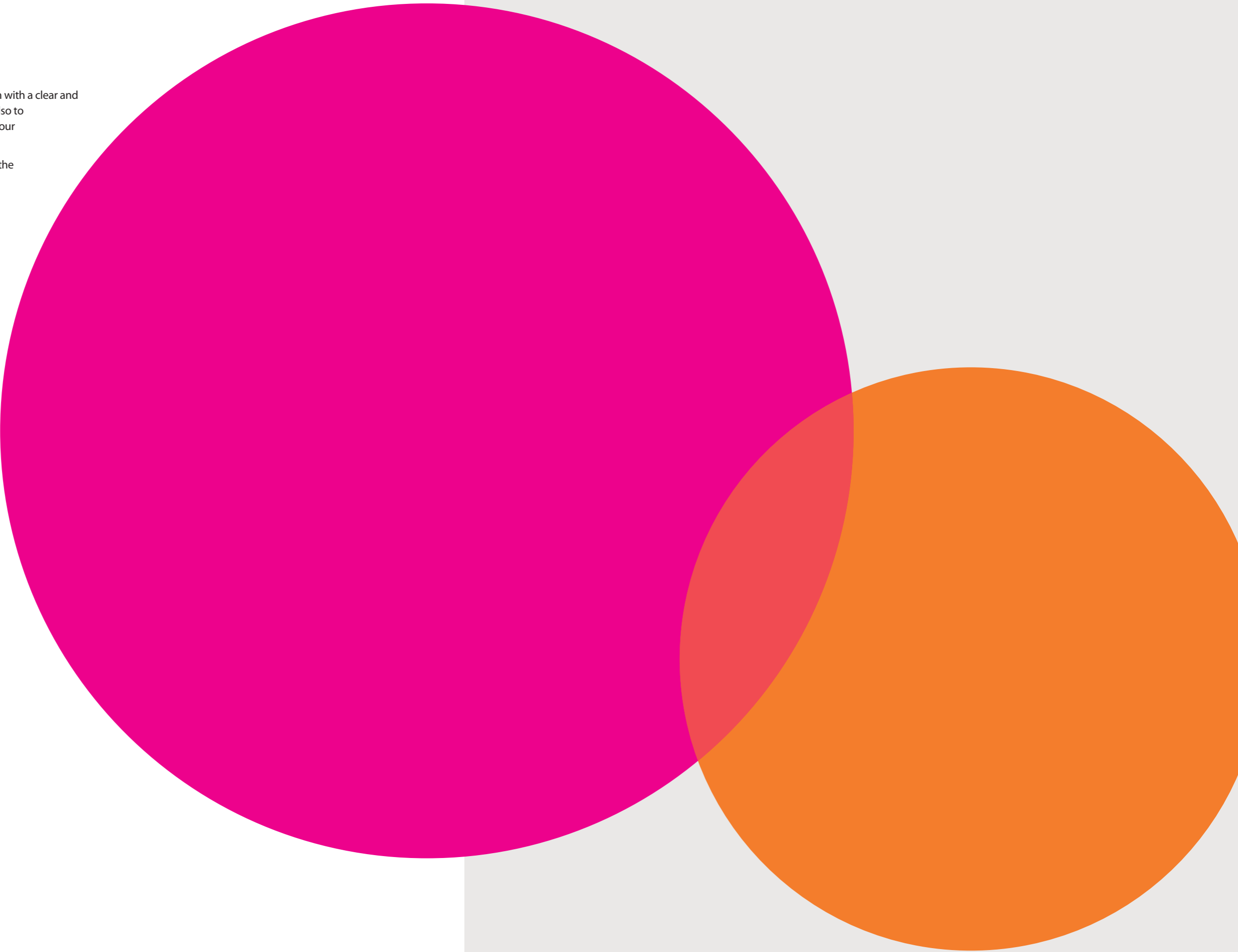
GAVO is committed to ensuring there is financial resilience and sustainability within the Third Sector and our efforts around this, coupled with our sustainability are a key strategic aim for the period 2025-28.

13. Conclusion

GAVO's dynamic Strategic Plan provides the organisation with a clear and defined direction to not only achieve its objectives but also to consistently support and represent the Third Sector and our Volunteers throughout Gwent.

GAVO is committed to being the voice and advocate for the Sector, ensuring it stays fully integrated and informed about the Welsh Government's directives and the implementation of Well-being and Future Generations plans, in accordance with the Future Generations Act 2015 and the Social Services and Well-being Act 2016.

GAVO's Strategic Plan aligns with all these initiatives, fostering collaboration, maintaining a strong and credible voice, and continually adapting to new ways of working within a dynamic environment and changing public, private and third-sector landscape.



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