

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 17TH JULY, 2019

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

PRESENT: Leader of the Council/Executive Member Corporate Services
Councillor N.J. Daniels (Chair)

Executive Member – Environment
Councillor G. Collier

Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins

**Executive Member –
Regeneration & Economic Development**
Councillor D. Davies

WITH: Managing Director
Chief Officer Resources
Corporate Director of Social Services
Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
Head of Education Transformation
Solicitor
Press and Publicity Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>The following apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <p>Councillor J. Mason, Executive Member – Social Services Corporate Director Education</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
	<p><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></p>	
No. 5	<p><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 12th June, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	

ITEM	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 6	<p data-bbox="199 443 686 488"><u>CONFERENCES/COURSES</u></p> <p data-bbox="199 533 1129 577">Consideration was given to attendance at the following:-</p> <p data-bbox="199 622 606 667"><u>Armed Forces Day 2019</u></p> <p data-bbox="199 712 1369 790">RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor M. Moore, Chair of Council, to attend.</p> <p data-bbox="199 835 949 880"><u>Royal Welsh Show, Tuesday, 23rd July, 2019</u></p> <p data-bbox="199 925 1369 1003">RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor Brian Thomas, Armed Forces Champion, to attend.</p> <p data-bbox="199 1048 1141 1126"><u>ADEW Full Meeting, Meeting with Cabinet Members and Annual Meeting with the Minister</u></p> <p data-bbox="199 1126 1181 1171"><u>Thursday 19th September and Friday 20th September, 2019</u></p> <p data-bbox="199 1216 1369 1294">RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor J. Collins, Executive Member for Education, to attend.</p> <p data-bbox="199 1339 1157 1417"><u>Annual GAVO Volunteer Achievement Awards Ceremony</u></p> <p data-bbox="199 1417 694 1462"><u>Thursday, 17th October, 2019</u></p> <p data-bbox="199 1507 1369 1585">RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor M. Moore, Chair of Council, to attend.</p>	

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	<u>DECISION ITEMS</u>													
	<u>LEADER/CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u>													
No. 7	<p><u>PROPOSED EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Leader/Executive Member for Corporate Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Forward Work Programme for 2019/20202 be agreed.</p>													
No. 8	<p><u>GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>Members were advised of the following additional grants that had been submitted for approval since the preparation of the report:-</p> <p><u>ABERTILLERY</u></p> <p><u>Cwmtillery Ward- Councillor M. Day</u></p> <table border="0" data-bbox="212 1570 1382 1711"> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Old Tyleryan RFC</td> <td>£50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Abertillery Town Band</td> <td>£50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Abertillery Excelsiors AFC</td> <td>£100</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Llanhilleth Ward- Councillor J. Collins & N. Parsons</u></p> <table border="0" data-bbox="212 1861 1382 1899"> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Llanhilleth Bowls Club</td> <td>£150</td> </tr> </table>	1.	Old Tyleryan RFC	£50	2.	Abertillery Town Band	£50	3.	Abertillery Excelsiors AFC	£100	1.	Llanhilleth Bowls Club	£150	
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	<u>DEPUTY LEADER/ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u>										
	<p><u>EBBW VALE</u></p> <p><u>Cwm Ward – Councillor D. Bevan & G. Davies</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="213 674 245 707">1.</td> <td data-bbox="325 674 676 707">Cwm Primary School</td> <td data-bbox="1273 674 1362 707">£100</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="213 725 245 759">2.</td> <td data-bbox="325 725 628 759">Cwm Pigeon Club</td> <td data-bbox="1273 725 1362 759">£100</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>NANTYGLO & BLAINA</u></p> <p><u>Blaina Ward – Councillor G. Collier</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="213 1010 245 1043">1.</td> <td data-bbox="325 1010 1123 1043">Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council Mayors Appeal</td> <td data-bbox="1273 1010 1362 1043">£100</td> </tr> </table> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted.</p>	1.	Cwm Primary School	£100	2.	Cwm Pigeon Club	£100	1.	Nantyglo & Blaina Town Council Mayors Appeal	£100	
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No. 9	<p><u>PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICES – DISCONTINUATION OF THE COLLABORATION WITH TORFAEN CBC</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader/Executive Member for Environment advised that the report sought approval to withdraw from collaboration with Torfaen for Public Protection Services. The Deputy Leader noted the report and highlighted the financial implications of an in-year cost pressure which was estimated at £35,000 and going forward a cost pressure for Public Protection of £106,000. He further referred to the options for recommendation and proposed that Option 1 be approved with agreement that a full review of the service would be undertaken.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p>										

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that both Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen had benefitted from the collaboration work and advised that collaboration would still be explored for this area and other service areas.</p> <p>The Leader added that it had been unfortunate that this collaboration had ended, however he was mindful of the budget implications and noted the Authority's commitment to its financial resilience. Therefore the financial implications could not be side tracked it was important that the service was reviewed in order to mitigate the cost pressure created as it would not be transferred from other service areas.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1, namely that this Authority withdraw from the collaboration with Torfaen CBC for Public Protection Services on 30th November, 2019. Following the withdrawal a full review of the service would be undertaken.</p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>APPLICATION TO ACQUIRE LAND AT BEDWELLY PARK</u></p> <p>Consideration given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader/Executive Member for Environment spoke to the report and outlined the information contained therein. The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services added that health and well-being was a key priority of the Council's strategic objectives.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader/Executive Member for Environment noted that throughout the report the acquisition had been referred to as acquire, transfer and sale of the land. He felt that this needed to be clarified as to what transaction had been made.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the aforementioned terms should read 'disposal of land' and it was therefore agreed that this be noted/amended.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and approved Option 1, namely the Council as Charitable Trustees agreed the principal of the disposal of the area of land to Aneurin Bevan Health Board for inclusion within the development of its proposed Health and Well-Being Centre on terms to be agreed subject to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Advertising the proposed transfer under s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and taking account of any representations made; ii) Advertising the disposal in line with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 as detailed at 5.3.7 below; iii) Taking the appropriate advice of an RICS qualified surveyor on the method and terms of the transfer; and iv) As detailed in 5.1.1 below, any capital receipt being ring fenced for use by the Charity and not pooled for use within the Council's General Fund. 	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>MONITORING ITEMS</u>	
	<u>LEADER/CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u>	
No. 11	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – 2018/2019 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report updated the Executive on the provisional outturn against revenue budget for financial year 2018/2019 across all Portfolios. It also reported on the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget virements actioned in the period January 2019 to March 2019; • Details of significant adverse variances across all portfolios; • Provisional outturn for fees and charges; and • Progress on the achievement of the Financial Efficiency Projects for 2018/2019. <p>The Chief Offer Resources Officer highlighted the main points within the report and informed the Executive that the adverse variance as at the 31st March 2019 was £71,000 which was a much improved position to the predicted outcome as at December 2018 which was reported at £810,000. The adverse variance was after the application of £800,000 draw from specific reserves, again a lower amount than had previously been forecast. The main areas contributing to the improved position were lower than anticipated expenditure from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and higher Surplus on Collection, the net expenditure for the Social Services budget was lower than anticipated and the utilisation of the Welsh Government Capital Building Maintenance Grant which had been received. £240,000 of this grant had been allocated to Education and the Corporate Landlord and used against eligible expenditure across the schools portfolio.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Chief Officer Resources further summarised the portfolio analysis as detailed in the report.</p> <p>In conclusion the Chief Officer Resources advised that income generated had been higher than the target by £297,000 and noted the most significant area of income generation. In addition the Chief Officer highlighted the achievement of 91% of the Financial Efficiency Projects agreed for 2018/19 and added that it was a positive report which identified the Council's commitment to achieve the appropriate level of savings.</p> <p>The Leader advised that as a collective both the Executive and CLT met on a regular basis to discuss these matters and particularly cost pressures, therefore the Executive were familiar with the cost pressures and respective actions to be undertaken to reduce the pressure. He commended officers on the amount of work undertaken which demonstrated that the Executive and CLT had worked well together over the last 2 years to achieve positive budgets and this work would be continued. It showed the commitment to improving our financial resilience as £70,000 adverse variance was as good as a clear balance. In terms of the write off of street lighting obsolete stock, the Leader stated that it had been right and proper that this stock be written off as it had been hanging around for years.</p> <p>The Leader further added that this report would feed into the work being undertaken as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Bridging the Gap which positioned the Authority in a better financial position going forward.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development concurred with the comments raised by the Leader and recognised the good work being carried out in all Departments to deliver within their budgets. This was also recognised within communities as services were improving alongside the budgets. The positive feedback was testament to the changes made over the last 2 years. The regular meetings with CLT and Executive had achieved these changes and he was confident it would continue going forward.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>The Managing Director also wished to thank officers across all Departments for their efforts along with CLT and Executive. The Managing Director concurred that it showed that the Authority could live within the budget set as well as protect and improve services.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader also congratulated the Managing Director and Corporate Directors, however he stated that it was paramount that these standards were maintained.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the financial outcomes in the report be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 12</p>	<p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING – 2018/2019 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources outlined the report which provided an overview of each Portfolio’s actual capital expenditure against funding approvals for 2018/2019 financial year. The Chief Officer informed the Executive that there was one overspend for capital schemes in respect of Company Shop, Tredegar and advised that discussions were ongoing with Cadw to identify a solution to the issues.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and following the appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report, the financial control procedures agreed by Council continue to be supported. Also the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding was noted</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 13	<p data-bbox="197 398 1283 439"><u>USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2018/2019</u></p> <p data-bbox="197 483 1342 524">Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p data-bbox="197 568 1382 904">The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report provided the draft reserves position for 2018/2019 and advised that the information contained in the report linked with the reports previously presented. The Chief Officer highlighted the main points within the report and noted that the general reserve as at year end 2018/2019 had increased by £0.412m to £5.894m which was above the 4% target level. The level of earmarked reserves had also increased by £1.551m which totalled £6.568m</p> <p data-bbox="197 949 1382 1285">The Chief Officer Resources advised that a review of provisions and reserves, together with Council's decision that windfall income be allocated to the general reserve had increased the level of both general and ear marked reserves. The Chief Officer added that going forward the Council would maintain the 4% target for the General Reserve and where possible increase the levels of reserves. This would enhance the Council's financial stability in the short and medium term.</p> <p data-bbox="197 1330 1382 1756">The Leader welcomed the report which showed that the Council was heading in the right direction and there was a commitment to move forward. The Leader noted that the Wales Audit Office had criticised the Council in the Annual Improvement Report not specifically on the level of reserves but on the trend of the significant use of reserves in previous years, approximately £16m in a 4-5 year period had been used and politically it had now been recognised that there was logic to replenish reserves as part of the approval given to the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Leader added that the Wales Audit Office had acknowledged the commitment to rebuild reserves at a recent meeting.</p> <p data-bbox="197 1800 1382 2047">RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the actual use of general and earmarked reserves for 2018/2019 was noted together with the planned maintenance of the General Reserve at the 4% target level for 2018/2019 and future years. The Executive would continue to challenge budget overspends and implement appropriate service Action Plans, where required.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 14	<p data-bbox="197 434 1050 517"><u>QUARTER 4 (JANUARY TO MARCH 2019)</u> <u>JOINT FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT</u></p> <p data-bbox="197 562 1382 645">Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Governance and Partnership.</p> <p data-bbox="197 689 1382 902">The Leader noted the report which provided a summary of the performance of the Council. He added that Executive Members and Corporate Directors would be sighted on the information contained therein as the information had been monitored and discussed on a regular basis.</p> <p data-bbox="197 947 1382 1160">The Corporate Director Social Services reported improved performance in Social Services as part of early intervention and prevention work particularly within our Information, Assistance and Advise Service within both Adults and Children with both statutory partners such as Health, the Police and with our third sector partners.</p> <p data-bbox="197 1205 1382 1675">The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services referred to the benefits of reinvestment into services such as street cleansing and highways which was testament to the teams on the ground. The Corporate Director also noted the increased number of start-up businesses and the Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development concurred that it was good to see new businesses and existing businesses being retained within Blaenau Gwent. The Executive Member added that housing developments were now emerging and were a key element to growing the economy. There had been the future investment as part of the Tech Valleys Project which would only further grow opportunities within Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p data-bbox="197 1720 1382 1803">RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be approved.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS</u>	
No. 15	<p><u>PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFE REDUCTION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN STRATEGY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children Services.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the report provided progress made in relation to the implementation of the Safe Reduction of Looked After Children Strategy 2017-2020. He gave a detailed overview of the report which noted the number of looked after children and advised that these numbers had slowly reduced since July 2018 by 23 children. Therefore at present there were 214 looked after children compared to 237 in July 2018, a reduction of 10% over the period. This was as a result of the actions taken as part of the Strategy and with a number of other measures to be implemented we would hopefully see further progress going forward.</p> <p>An Executive Member noted the children who are placed out of Wales into care and asked what was being undertaken to ensure these children were placed closer to home. The Corporate Director Social Services advised that all authorities in Wales struggled with placements available locally and clearly there was a demand. This would inevitably be a recommendation of the Welsh Government Technical Group to develop more suitable accommodation in Wales</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained in the report be noted.</p>	

ITEM	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>DEPUTY LEADER/ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u>	
No. 16	<p><u>WASTE AND RECYCLING PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader outlined the report which provided an update on waste and recycling performance outcomes for 2018/2019. The Deputy Leader advised that there had been an increase in recycling since the introduction of side waste enforcement and the sorting of black bags at the Household Waste Recycling Centre. The Deputy Leader reported that at the moment an unverified figure of 59.26% was reported which was a great improvement. The Deputy Leader also noted increased rates in green waste and food waste with a reduction in residual waste.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader/Executive Member for Environment welcomed the positive report which showed an increase of 3.26% percentage in recycling compared to 2017/2018 with the rate exceeding the Welsh Government target.</p> <p>The Leader noted the positive report and advised that he had attended a meeting recently with the Managing Director and the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government and her Civil Servants. The Leader advised that assurances had been given that Blaenau Gwent were committed to increasing recycling rates and provided information on our plan to tackle these issues. The Leader stressed that to ensure the target of 64% and beyond was reached the Council needed to implement a second Household Waste Recycling Centre in the Ebbw Fach area. An excellent presentation was given by the Service Manager Community Services which showed the commitment of the Authority and we asked for assistance with funding for the scheme. The Leader had hoped that Welsh Government would support this request which would be a very powerful asset for Blaenau Gwent to meet recycling targets</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 2, namely the information contained in the report be approved along with the recommendations brought forward by the Scrutiny Committee, as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider roll out of ‘on the go’ recycling bins (Ward members to be consulted on locations). • Investigate options around animal waste recycling • Scope possibility of grass collection following cutting of open spaces • Green waste collections from CAT organisations on a request basis • Wider scope for Roadshows to target low performance areas 	
	<p><u>EDUCATION MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 17</p>	<p><u>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION OUTCOMES FOR EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS – AUTUMN TERM 2018 AND SPRING TERM 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Education spoke the report and provided an overview of the feedback received from Estyn following the inspections.</p> <p>At this juncture the Leader recognised the number of positive reports presented which highlighted increased performance, reduction in looked after children along with increased waste and recycling figures. The Estyn Inspections identified improvements made in schools and an encouraging budget position. The Leader noted that positive reports had been submitted from all Portfolios and he felt that it demonstrated the commitment of CLT and the strategic approach undertaken by the Executive. He wished to express collective thanks to the Managing Director and officers as well as the political support provided to officers.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>DECISION ITEM</u>	
	<u>REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u>	
No. 18	<p><u>OPTION TO ACQUIRE LAND AT RASSAU, EBBW VALE</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and Head of Estates and Strategic Asset Management.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons including the Authority be accepted and Option 2 be endorsed, namely the course of action undertaken to date be supported and an Option Agreement be entered into by the Authority.</p>	