

DRAFT AGENDA

ID	1825
Committee	Pwllgor Craffu Gwasanaethau Cymunedol
Date	27/02/2020
Attendees	<p>Gemma Wasley (Swyddog)</p> <p>Cynghorydd Joanna Wilkins (Cadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Clive Meredith (Is-gadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Peter Baldwin (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Martin Cook (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Gareth L. Davies (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr D. Lyn Elias (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Stewart Healy (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Wayne Hodgins (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Julie Holt (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Hedley McCarthy (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorydd John P. Morgan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Greg Paulsen (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Tim Sharrem (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Bob Summers (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Lisa Winnett (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Richard Crook (Swyddog)</p> <p>Anne-Louise Clark (Swyddog)</p> <p>Clive Rogers (Swyddog)</p> <p>Steve Smith (Swyddog)</p> <p>Matthew Perry (Swyddog)</p> <p>Dave Thompson (Swyddog)</p> <p>Andrew Long (Swyddog)</p> <p>Liz Thomas (Swyddog)</p> <p>Andrea Jones (Swyddog)</p> <p>Steve Berry (Swyddog)</p> <p>Deborah Jones (Secretary)</p> <p>Gwasanaethau Democrataidd (Notify)</p> <p>Pob Cynghorydd (Notify)</p> <p>Louise Bishop (Notify)</p> <p>Rhian Hayden (Swyddog)</p> <p>Lynette Jones (Swyddog)</p> <p>Damien McCann (Swyddog)</p> <p>Michelle Morris (Swyddog)</p> <p>Sean Scannell (Swyddog)</p> <p>Lisa Griffin (Swyddog)</p>

Item ID	1861
Item Title	Cyfieithu ar y Pryd
Summary	Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae

	angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o hysbysiad ymlaen llaw os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais.
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Item ID	1862
Item Title	Ymddiheuriadau
Summary	Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

Item ID	1863
Item Title	Datganiadau Buddiant a Goddefebau
Summary	Derbyn datganiadau buddiant a goddefebau.

Item ID	2186
Item Title	Pwllgor Craffu Gwasanaethau Cymunedol
Summary	Derbyn cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwllgor Craffu Gwasanaethau Cymunedol a gynhaliwyd ar 16 Ionawr 2020. (Dylid nodi y cyflwynir cofnodion ar gyfer pwyntiau cywirdeb yn unig).

Item ID	2183
Item Title	Dalen Weithredu - 16 Ionawr 2020
Summary	Derbyn y ddalen weithredu.

Item ID	2184
Item Title	Dalen Benderfyniadau'r Pwllgor Gweithredol
Summary	Derbyn yr adroddiad.

Item ID	2187
Item Title	Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru: Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol - Gwella mynediad i, ac ansawdd gofodau agored er budd ein cymunedau, busnesau ac ymwelwyr
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad Rheolwr Tîm, Amgylchedd Naturiol.

Item ID	2185
Item Title	Swyddfa Archwlio Cymru: Cyflenwi gyda Llai - Adolygiad dilynol Iechyd yr Amgylchedd - Tachwedd 2019
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Gwasanaeth, Diogelu'r Cyhoedd.

Item ID	2192
Item Title	Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Focussed Audit
Summary	To consider the report of the Service Manager Public Protection.

Item ID	2189
Item Title	Adroddiadau Gweithgareddau - Gwasanaeth Trin Rheoli Plahyd at fis Rhagfyr 2019
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Gwasanaeth, Diogelu'r Cyhoedd.

Item ID	2190
Item Title	Blaenraglen Gwaith - 30 Ebrill 2020
Summary	Derbyn yr adroddiad.

Item ID	1865
Item Title	Eitem(au) Eithredig
Comment	Derbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiad(au) dilynol sydd ym marn y Swyddog Priodol yn eitem(au) eithredig gan roi ystyriaeth i'r prawf budd cyhoeddus ac y dylai'r wasg a'r cyhoedd gael eu heithrio o'r cyfarfod (mae'r rheswm am y penderfyniad am yr eithriad ar gael ar atodlen a gedwir gan y Swyddog Priodol).

Item ID	2191
Item Title	Capasiti Claddedigaethau Mynwentydd
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Tîm, Hamdden a Golwg Strydoedd.

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: **COMMUNITY SERVICE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16th JANUARY, 2020**

REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. WILKINS (CHAIR)

Councillors C. Meredith
 G.L. Davies
 L. Elias
 S. Healy
 W. Hodgins
 J. Holt
 H. McCarthy
 T. Sharrem
 B. Summers

WITH: Corporate Director Community Services & Regeneration
 Head of Community Services
 Service Manager Community Services
 Team Leader Waste & Fleet Management
 Communications, Marketing & Customer Access Manager
 Ecologist
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received for Councillors M. Cook and G. Paulsen.</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillor W. Hodgins declared an interest in the following item:</p> <p>Item No. 7 Local Nature Reserve Designation and Declaration.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 5th December, 2020 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 5th DECEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 5th December, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u><i>Bridging the Gap – Trade Waste Service – Strategic Business Review</i></u></p> <p>A Member referred to the responses listed on Appendix 6 and expressed concerned regarding the number of responses received from Education. The Service Manager Community Services undertook to investigate.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	

No. 7

LOCAL NATURE RESERVE DESIGNATION AND DECLARATION

Consideration was given to report of the Head of Community Services.

At the invitation of the Chair, the Ecologist presented the report which sought approval for the designation and declaration of five Local Nature Reserves, namely Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland, Central Valley, Garden City, Parc Bryn Bach and Sirhowy Hill Woodlands.

Blaenau Gwent currently had seven designated Local Nature Reserves totalling 120.3 hectares. Declaration and designation of the sites contributed to the Council's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-22) which was developed in order to comply with the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.

A Member said he welcomed the report and supported the proposed areas. However, in designating these areas, public opinion was that the Council was responsible for future maintenance, and with limited resources the Council was struggling to maintain existing rights of way etc.

In response the Officer confirmed that the areas were within Council ownership and already part of our day to day work. The Council were already working in partnership with community groups to maintain and enhance these areas, and Welsh Government were also looking to get more people involved, and promoting nature recovery issues through grant funded projects, e.g. A Resilient Greater Gwent.

A Member said he fully supported the proposals and was happy to support Option 2.

Another Member referred to Parc Bryn Bach and expressed concern that designating the area may have a detrimental impact on any future proposals and subsequent planning applications submitted. He therefore proposed that the report

be amended, and that Parc Bryn Bach be removed at this time, pending discussions with Aneurin Leisure Trust.

The Officer said Parc Bryn Bach was already designated a SINC area so Development Management Procedure 14 would apply in terms of any future planning applications.

The Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services explained that designation of LNR would not preclude any future development. However, such designation would have the advantage of enhancing and protecting the area, and also provide opportunities to access resources to support this work.

A Member referred to the funding secured from the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being Grant to deliver 12 sub-projects across the five Local Authority areas in Greater Gwent, and asked how much had been allocated for Blaenau Gwent.

The Ecologist confirmed that the amount was approximately £210k for the 5 Greater Gwent Local Authority areas. Blaenau Gwent would receive approximately £40k, however, it was a project running on agile terms and the whole project budget had yet to be allocated.

A discussion ensued regarding maintenance when the Officer said designation of LNR was about ensuring protection of these areas. Maintenance of pathways etc., would always be challenging in terms of the budget, but it was about prioritising, and partnership working, and hopefully funding could be directed towards these issues.

The Chair asked whether designation of LNR would be subject to public consultation, and the Officer confirmed that the legislation did not require public consultation, but it would form part of the LDP Deposit Plan process.

The Chair then referred to the Options for Recommendations, and a Member proposed Option 2, with an amendment that Parc Bryn Bach be removed from the list pending further discussions with ALT.

The proposal was seconded.

	<p>A vote was then taken on the proposed amendment and 4 Members voted in favour of the amendment.</p> <p>Another Member proposed that Option 2 be supported, as outlined in the report, and this was seconded.</p> <p>A vote was then taken on Option 2 and 5 Members voted in favour.</p> <p>The Committee therefore AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Option 2 be supported, as outlined in the report, namely to designate and declare five Local Nature Reserves; Sirhowy Hill Woodlands, Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland, Parc Bryn Bach, Garden City and Central Valley.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>STREET LIGHTING SERVICE REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Team Leader Waste & Fleet Management presented the report which provided an update on the Street Lighting Review, which was requested following a Members' Briefing in February 2019. The review consisted of three overarching priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 – Financial diligence • Priority 2 – Stock management and assets; and • Priority 3 – Legislative drivers and performance of the service. <p>The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member referred to section 2.4 of the report which outlined the outputs against Priority 2, and asked whether the remaining stock could be used to undertake in-house repairs etc.</p> <p>In response the Officer explained that the Engineering Team had significantly reduced over the years, and the type of work undertaken had changed to more reactive minor repairs, and with major works being contracted out.</p>	

However, he confirmed that redundant stock was used where possible, if it was not obsolete.

A Member referred to insurance claims and asked what process was undertaken previously, and whether the Council had any outstanding claims.

The Officer said there was no system in place previously. The issue was raised at a Members' briefing session, so the Team looked at the system used by Cardiff City Council, and mirrored that approach. The first test case was successful, with almost full cost recovery, and other cases would be looked at.

A Member referred to the Solar LED lanterns introduced in Newtown, Ebbw Vale and the Officer reported that unfortunately the amount of sunlight in the Borough was insufficient to power the lanterns, but alternative technology was being considered.

A discussion ensued regarding capacity within the Team, and the Refit Programme, when the Officer confirmed that moving to LED lanterns would reduce maintenance requirements, and enable the Team to respond to other work.

A Member pointed out that the reduction in maintenance may impact on future staffing levels. He also stated that changing to LED lanterns should impact significantly on the budget.

In response the Head of Community Services said in theory it should, but energy prices were increasing at a faster rate than the return of implementing energy saving initiatives. However, the cost of not undertaking these works would prove more expensive in the future.

A further brief discussion ensued when the Officer clarified points raised by Members.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted (Option 1).

No. 9

**COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKFORCE SICKNESS
ABSENCE PERFORMANCE**

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.

The Head of Community Services presented the report which outlined the Directorate's sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement. He said whilst sickness levels remained high it was important to note that the majority of employees have little or no sickness absence and attend work regularly, and the vast majority of Council employees have excellent attendance levels, as data indicated that 2,463 employees attended work every day during the period from April 2018 to March 2019 with the Council having an attendance level of 94.3%.

In terms of actions for improvement, the Officer said whilst there was evidence of managerial action in managing sickness the Directorate acknowledged that better use of the iTrent system was required. A number of actions had been agreed, as outlined in Section 4.1 of the report, and these would be monitored by the Directorate Management Team, and sickness absence would continue to be a regular item on the Management Team Agenda.

A Member said more information was needed in terms of recording return to work meetings on the iTrent system.

In response the Officer said the report was populated by Organisational Development, and it was the first time for the report to be presented in this format. He confirmed that return to work meetings were taking place, but in some instances were not being reported through the iTrent system. He confirmed that the Member's comments would be raised with OD.

A discussion ensued when the Corporate Director said it was important to note that return to work meetings were being undertaken, and Managers were complying with the Attendance Management Policy. However, there were some areas within the Directorate that were unable to access the system, and this was being looked at, but he assured that

	<p>return to work meetings were being undertaken, albeit not recorded on iTrent.</p> <p>The Chair said the format of the report needed further consideration to ensure we get the information needed, and it would also be interesting to see what other Scrutiny Committees thought of the format.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and having scrutinised the sickness absence performance information and proposed arrangements to improve attendance rates within the Regeneration & Community Services Directorate discussed further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement (Option 1).</p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 27TH FEBRUARY, 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled for the 27th February, 2020.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted.</p>	

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Community Services Scrutiny Committee – Thursday 16th January 2020

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
9	<p><u>Community Services Workforce Sickness Absence Performance</u></p> <p>Members requested a cross scrutiny committee working group be established to discuss information provided in the report and what Members would like to see included in the report.</p>	<p>Performance & Democratic Team / Scrutiny Members</p>	<p>Working Group of scrutiny members, with support from the Performance and Democratic Team, to be arranged to discuss what information Members would like to see in the report moving forward.</p>

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Report to: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**
 Subject: **Executive Decision Sheet**

Item	Scrutiny Committee Recommendation	Executive Decision	Recommendation			Executive Member invited to attend if recommendation accepted in part or rejected
			Approved	Accepted in Part	Rejected	
Executive: 29 th January 2020 Review of Blaenau Gwent Homes Housing Allocation Policy	The Scrutiny Committee recommended Option 1, to consider the proposed policy changes to Blaenau Gwent Homes Housing Allocation Scheme for implementation in April 2020 and recommend approval by the Executive Committee.	Resolved, that the report be accepted and the Executive approved the proposed policy changes to the Blaenau Gwent Homes Housing Allocation Scheme for implementation on the 1 st April 2020 (Option 1).	Scrutiny recommendation accepted			No further action.

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Agenda Item 7

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **27th February 2020**
Report Subject: **Wales Audit Office: Well-being of Future Generations – Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors’**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr G Collier, Deputy Leader / Executive Member Environment**
Report Submitted by: **Chris Engel Team Manager – Natural Environment**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	✓	13.02.20	31.03.20		27.02.20			

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Community Services Scrutiny Committee with the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report, ‘*Well-being of Future Generations – Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors’* (appendix 1). The report also includes the management response that the Council has made to the WAO in response to the proposals for improvement.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The WAO published their report, ‘*Well-being of Future Generations – Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors’* in October 2019 and covers the 2019-20 audit year

2.2 The report considered how the Council has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle public bodies must take account of the following ways of working:

- Long Term;
- Prevention;
- Integration;
- Collaboration; and
- Involvement.

2.3 The WAO found that:

‘The Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle; it collaborates well with others, but lacks a clear long-term, joined –up plan.

Following this conclusion, the WAO identified areas for improvement. The response of which is found in the management response (appendix 2).

- 3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 CLT has responded to the WAO that they approve of the information contained within the report.

Option 1 (Preferred option)

Accept the WAO review and actions to implement the proposals for improvement.

Option 2

To consider the report further and offer additional comment to Welsh Governments Audit Office

- 4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been used to scope out this WAO study. This will also be the focus of future reviews undertaken by the WAO.

- 5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

There are no direct financial implications as part of these audit reports and all proposals for improvement will be met within existing resources.

- 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
- The Council recognises it needs to address the proposals for improvement from the WAO in order to ensure compliance with legislation and audit reports. If these requirements are not met, the Council is at risk of reputational damage and intervention.

- 5.3 ***Legal***
- There are no legal implications arising from this report.

- 5.4 ***Human Resources***
- There are no additional workforce implications as part of the WAO review as business plans already identify where capacity is required in order to deliver the service.

- 6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

In response to the WAO's proposal for improvement the Council has identified the steps it will take to achieve these suggested improvements (appendix 2).

The activity of the proposal for improvement will be undertaken largely by the Community Services Department, but as indicated within the report the step is a corporate responsibility and as such all departments will be

responsible for the development of the step in order to ensure its successful development and will be monitored as part of the business plans, and reported within the Joint Finance and Performance Report.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The priority, 'Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors' The step was designed to prevent ecosystem decline and promote wellbeing of local people, but more data is needed to measure and monitor progress.

6.3 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

The Council has designed some projects to deliver longer term outcomes, but has yet to plan the delivery of the step over the long term.

6.4 ***Integration (across service areas)***

The step is designed to deliver multiple benefits and is integrated across Gwent however it is not yet fully reflected across Council Plans as it remains in the 'ownership of the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate.

6.5 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Council is collaborating well to deliver the step and wants to expand its network of partners, but better coordination is needed.

6.6 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Council demonstrate a number of strengths in its approach to involving a number of community groups but could do more to involve business and local people

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The proposals for improvement from the WAO will be included within the relevant business plan which will be updated with progress on a quarterly basis.

The information will be reported within the Joint Finance and Performance Report to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – WAO Report

Appendix 2 – Management Response

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WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of 'Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors' – **Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

Audit year: 2019-20

Date issued: October 2019

Document reference: 1537A2019-20

This document has been prepared for the internal use of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as part of work performed in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

No responsibility is taken by the Auditor General, the staff of the Wales Audit Office or in relation to any member, director, officer or other employee in their individual capacity, or to any third party.

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info.officer@audit.wales.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

This document is also available in Welsh.

The team who delivered the work comprised Dave Wilson, Charlotte Owen and Allison Rees, programme managed by Non Jenkins under the direction of Huw Rees.

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The Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle: it collaborates well with others, but lacks a clear long-term, joined-up plan.

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Although some projects have been designed to deliver longer-term outcomes, the Council has yet to plan delivery of this step over the long term 6

The Council has designed this step to prevent ecosystem decline and promote the wellbeing of local people, but more data is needed to measure and monitor progress 7

The step has been designed to deliver multiple benefits, and there is positive integrated working between key partner organisations across Gwent, however, this is not yet fully reflected within plans, and within the Council this step remains in the 'ownership' of the Regeneration and Community Services 9

The Council is collaborating well to deliver this step and wants to expand its network of partners, but collaboration could be better co-ordinated 10

Although the Council works well with several community groups in designing and managing open spaces, it could do more to involve businesses and local people 12

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Summary report

Summary

Why we undertook the Examination

- 1 In accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) the Auditor General for Wales (the Auditor General) is statutorily required to examine public bodies to assess the extent to which they have acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when:
 - a setting their wellbeing objectives; and
 - b taking steps to meet them.
- 2 The Act defines the sustainable development principle as acting in a manner: '...which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.
- 3 The Auditor General must provide a report on his examinations to the National Assembly for Wales at least a year before each Assembly election. The first such report must be published in 2020, before the 2021 Assembly election.
- 4 The Auditor General has undertaken examinations across the 44 bodies covered by the Act to inform his report to the National Assembly during 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- 5 The findings in this report are based on fieldwork that we undertook during the period July to September 2019.
- 6 This report sets out our findings from our examination of 'improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors', a step the Council is taking to meet its wellbeing objectives.
- 7 It also sets out the Council's initial response to our findings.

What we examined

- 8 We examined the extent to which the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors.
- 9 In order to act in accordance with the sustainable development principle public bodies must take account of the following 'ways of working':

Exhibit 1: The 'five ways of working'

The table below sets out the 'five ways of working' as defined in the Welsh Government's 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 The Essentials'¹ document.

The Five Ways of Working
Long term The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
Prevention How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.
Integration Considering how the public body's wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.
Collaboration Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its wellbeing objectives.
Involvement The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

- 10 Our examination found that the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle: it collaborates well with others, but lacks a clear long-term, joined-up plan.

¹ Welsh Government, **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 The Essentials**, 2015.

Detailed report

Part One: Examination Findings

Although some projects have been designed to deliver longer-term outcomes, the Council has yet to plan delivery of this step over the long term

What we looked for

- 11 We looked for evidence that the Council:
- has a thorough understanding of current and long-term needs and the associated challenges and opportunities;
 - is planning over an appropriate timescale;
 - has resources allocated to ensure long-term benefits; and
 - has appropriate monitoring and review.
- 12 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for the 'long term' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.²

What we found

- 13 We identified the following strengths:
- the Council's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) contributes to meeting the wellbeing objective of Strong and environmentally Smart Communities.
 - the Council proactively seeks external funding to help resource delivery of this step. It recently secured Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing in Wales (ENRaW) funding for the Resilient Greater Gwent Project, which will tackle biodiversity decline and help increase ecosystem resilience across Gwent.
 - the ENRaW grant provides short/medium-term funding but is designed to enhance biodiversity in the long term.
- 14 We identified the following areas for improvement:
- the Council does not have a long-term strategy for improving access and quality of open spaces, supported by outcomes.
 - the Council's Corporate Plan 2019-20 (or its well-being statement for 2018-19) does not include evidence to support why this step is important.

² See Appendix 1

- while the Corporate Plan 2019-20 contains three potential measures of performance to assess progress in delivering this step, there is no baseline data or information, nor projected targets/ambitions included in the corporate plan against which progress can be measured; and
- the Council considers delivering this step as potentially vulnerable as most of the funding available to support the step is from external grants. Without external grants, officers say they would only have the resources to focus on the basics of land and footpath maintenance.

The Council has designed this step to prevent ecosystem decline and promote the wellbeing of local people, but more data is needed to measure and monitor progress

What we looked for

- 15 We looked for evidence that the Council:
- has a thorough understanding of the nature and type of problem the step could help prevent from occurring or getting worse;
 - has resources allocated to ensure preventative benefits will be delivered; and
 - is monitoring and reviewing how effectively the step is preventing problems from occurring or getting worse.
- 16 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'prevention' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.³

What we found

- 17 We identified the following strengths:
- the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) will support delivery of this step by helping to maintain and improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people who live and work in the borough and offer opportunities for community engagement and volunteering.
 - the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) also seeks to prevent serious or irreversible damage to ecosystems.

³ See Appendix 1

- Blaenau Gwent’s wellbeing assessment has drawn on research by Mind (2013)⁴ on the significant positive associations between mental and physical wellbeing and increased trees and access to greenspace in urban areas.
- the future population of Blaenau Gwent is predicted to decline. Officers say that improving access, quality and better promotion of open spaces can help reverse the predicted population decline by creating a great place to live to retain people living in the Borough and attract new businesses, thereby creating new employment opportunities in the Borough.
- the Council wants to eliminate and prevent social exclusion, isolation, and loneliness, by ensuring social events such as litter picks in open spaces get more residents involved and generate a sense of pride in their communities and prevent anti-social behaviour.

18 We identified the following areas for improvement:

- the Council needs to better understand the current physical and mental health of its residents and levels of social isolation to ensure delivery of this step is making a positive difference to people’s lives.
- the Council would like to engage more with GPs and other health practitioners to prescribe ‘access to open spaces’ to patients to help improve their mental health. For over ten years, GPs have been able to prescribe physical activity through the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) and the Council would like to widen this offer to improve mental health.
- the Council is aware that anti-social behaviour within the open spaces is a possible deterrent for local communities to visit and enjoy open spaces. Prior to the WFG Act, in 2015, Torfaen County Borough Council developed a South East Wales Uplands Landscape Crime Toolkit within an area encompassed by Torfaen, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Councils. The toolkit contains approximately 40 actions to address arson, fly-tipping and illegal off-road driving. The Council has yet to assess the impact of this toolkit in preventing anti-social behaviour in the Borough’s upland areas.

⁴ Feel better outside, feel better inside: Ecotherapy for mental wellbeing, resilience and recovery. Available from: <http://www.mind.org.uk/media/336359/Feel-better-outside-feel-better-insidereport.pdf>.

The step has been designed to deliver multiple benefits, and there is positive integrated working between key partner organisations across Gwent, however, this is not yet fully reflected within plans, and within the Council this step remains in the ‘ownership’ of the Regeneration and Community Services

What we looked for

- 19 We looked for evidence that the Council understands:
- how this step could contribute to the seven national wellbeing goals;
 - how delivery of this step will impact on the Council’s wellbeing objectives and wider priorities; and
 - how delivery of this step will impact on other public bodies’ wellbeing objectives.
- 20 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for ‘integration’ that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁵

What we found

- 21 We identified the following strengths:
- the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) links to each of the national wellbeing goals and the Council’s wellbeing objective of Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities;
 - ‘to look after and protect the environment’ is a Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) wellbeing objective. The PSB recognises the value of accessing open spaces, with significant benefits to people’s mental and physical wellbeing. This PSB wellbeing objective aligns closely to this step.
 - the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment identifies the need to ‘create opportunities and improve access to green spaces for the communities of Blaenau Gwent and visitors to the county’. The Council has drawn on this evidence base to inform the development of the step.
 - the PSB provides a strategic link with partners who are able to support delivery of this step. The Strategic Support Group brings partners together at a more operational level.
 - the Resilient Greater Gwent bid led by the Council’s ecologist identified the opportunity to integrate work across partner organisations to further enhance the quality of open spaces.

⁵ See Appendix 1

- the Gwent Green Grid Partnership, of which the Council is a member, is identifying regional pathways to improve access to open spaces locally and throughout the region. This partnership working will result in a Gwent Access Strategy.
- Council officers have contributed towards the South East Wales Area Statement to identify strategic opportunities to improve the quality of open spaces. They have also worked with partners to profile the resilience of ecosystems in South East Wales.
- the Council works closely with Natural Resources Wales on the production of a State of Nature report for Gwent and an associated Nature Recovery Action Plan.
- the Council's work on biodiversity and ecosystem resilience has been designed to contribute to the Welsh Government's Nature Recovery Action Plan objectives.

22 We identified the following areas for improvement:

- while the Council officers we spoke to understand the wider benefits of meeting other Council priorities, ownership of this step remains mostly within Regeneration and Community Services, suggesting that the Council has not yet taken the opportunity to harness wider Council resources to plan and deliver the step.
- it is unclear how delivery of this step is reflected in the plans of partners and other council services identifying specific actions they will take and timescales.
- 'Building a Healthier Gwent' is the ten-year public health strategic plan to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Gwent. Improving access to and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of public health is not included.

The Council is collaborating well to deliver this step and wants to expand its network of partners, but collaboration could be better co-ordinated

What we looked for

23 We looked for evidence that the Council:

- has considered how it could work with others to deliver the step (to meet its wellbeing objectives, or assist another body to meet its wellbeing objectives);
- is collaborating effectively to deliver the step; and
- is monitoring and reviewing whether the collaboration is helping it, or its stakeholders meet wellbeing objectives.

24 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'collaboration' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁶

What we found

25 We identified the following strengths:

- the Council is the lead body for the Resilient Greater Gwent project and a member of the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP). These groups work together to improve the health of Gwent's natural assets and maximise the wellbeing benefits that they provide.
- there is a joint Local Nature Partnership between the Council and Torfaen County Borough Council. The Local Nature Partnership set up a steering group this year to structure its work.
- Council officers participate in the Eastern Valleys Panel (one of Natural Resources Wales' landscape panels). Council officers facilitated involvement of the local nature partnership (which spans the boundaries of both Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen) into the landscape panel.
- Council officers facilitate and co-chair the Gwent Strategic Wellbeing Assessment Group. Whilst this group was not established specifically to support delivery of the step, it does identify the need for good quality natural areas to be a key regional priority.
- while the PSB provides strategic direction, the Strategic Support Group provides operational collaboration specifically with the Police and Fire and Rescue services. The Fire and Rescue service has provided a water filling facility along the Ebbw Fawr trail which was funded by Natural Resources Wales as part of the PSB's 'Blaenau Gwent on the Move' project.
- there is close collaboration with neighbouring authorities on the development and delivery of projects relating to rivers, footpaths, cycle paths etc which cross county boundaries;
- community groups endorse the management plans put in place by the Council and manage some of the Borough's nature reserves in partnership with the Council.
- there are several community groups that have an interest and an active role in managing local green spaces. These groups either work together across a wide area or are dedicated to one open space within the Borough. The Ebbw Fawr Trail consists of 14 individual community groups that help manage numerous sites including Beaufort Ponds and Woodlands, Parc Nant-y-Waun and Roseheyworth Community Woodland. As well as working with the Council, these groups engage with the Gwent Wildlife Trust, Groundwork

⁶ See Appendix 1

Wales and Keep Wales Tidy. This collaborative approach has resulted in five open spaces in the Borough being awarded Community Green Flag status.

- the Council has recently started collaborating with smallholders and local farmers. Old school playing fields are left to grow as hay meadows and are available for farmers to cut to feed livestock. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement as these were grass areas the Council traditionally cut. The Council is assessing other possible areas in the Borough for the same purpose.
- Council officers in the Regeneration and Community Service proactively support community groups with good, positive working relationships.

26 We identified the following areas for improvement:

- the Council has a range of measures in place to improve the quality of, and access to, open space, but has not yet identified how it can encourage people to make use of it. It recognises that behaviour change is one means of achieving this.
- the Council is not maximising the potential of other Council services staff to work with Regeneration and Communities staff to deliver this step.
- the Council stated that collaboration can be challenging due to the political will of some neighbouring councils to work together, the limited resources and staff capacity to commit to pursuing and maintaining further collaborations.
- the lack of a long-term strategy on delivering this step means collaboration is not always as joined up and co-ordinated as it could be.

Although the Council works well with several community groups in designing and managing open spaces, it could do more to involve businesses and local people

What we looked for

27 We looked for evidence that the Council has:

- identified who it needs to involve in designing and delivering the step;
- effectively involved key stakeholders in designing and delivering the step;
- used the results of involvement to shape the development and delivery of the step; and
- sought to learn lessons and improve its approach to involvement.

28 Our examination was also informed by the positive indicators for 'involvement' that we have identified and used as part of this examination.⁷

What we found

29 We identified the following strengths:

- in preparing the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan, there was involvement of residents and other stakeholders through the 'Blaenau Gwent we want' engagement programme. This revealed that people wanted more to be done to protect the environment and to make the area a better place to live, work and attract more visitors.
- the Council has engaged with businesses on some activities designed to deliver the step, eg the Active Travel agenda and community allotments, with businesses interested in accessible open spaces from a workforce wellbeing perspective.
- the Council promotes 'paws on patrol' which encourages dog walkers to report suspicious behaviour to the police. This initiative encourages community involvement and responsibility for their areas to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) identifies several opportunities to engage with young people.
- the Council is acting as the lead PSB sponsor of the 'Blaenau Gwent on the Move' project which sought funding from Natural Resources Wales. As part of this project, the Council is working with partners, businesses and residents to improve access to the outdoors for health benefits. This project helps the Council become aware of some of the community groups as well as how many people use some of the open spaces. Examples include local litter picking groups in different open spaces with the Council providing personal protective equipment and a weekly Parkrun at Bryn Bach Parc.
- through the management plans in place for some open spaces in the Borough, the community groups managing these spaces can design and deliver activities and projects within these areas.

30 We identified the following areas for improvement:

- despite the step referring to improving quality and access of open spaces for the benefit of businesses and some specific examples of where this happened, there has been limited work undertaken to date with businesses.
- the Council will need to decide what information it needs to plan and deliver this step. This is likely to be different to the information it currently holds.

⁷ See Appendix 1

- the Council wants to involve local people to help it gain a better understanding of who is using open spaces and why, as well as understanding why people do not use open spaces.

Part Two: Council's response

- 31 Following the conclusion of our fieldwork, we presented our findings to the Council at a workshop in September 2019. In attendance was the Council's Ecologist, Team Leader for Green Infrastructure, Infrastructure Service Manager, Education Transformation Manager, Education Facilities Officer, Community Safety Manager, and Professional Lead for Community Engagement, Equalities and Welsh Language. Also attending the workshop was a representative from the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the Commercial Director for Aneurin Leisure Trust.
- 32 At this workshop the Council began to consider its response to our findings and as a result of discussions at the workshop and further reflection on our findings the Council has developed the following actions:

Long term

- Develop a clearer vision within the Corporate Plan – long term 30 years
- Increase areas of managed land (woodlands/grassland/habitats)
- Engage with parents at an early stage to support a greater level of early years engagement
- Encourage economic ventures that will ensure management of the resource through employment and education

Prevention

- Ensure people feel, and are able to access open spaces, eg through:
 - Providing the right information – maps, routes etc
 - Promotion
 - Culture and behaviour change
 - Ensuring open spaces are accessible, inclusive and safe

Integration

- Build on the Forward Environment Plan.
- Ensure all business plans recognise the step and play an active role. Section 6 duty.
- Ensure there are clear goals that all organisations can buy into and work towards.

Collaboration

- Expand 'Blaenau Gwent we want' to capture and help understand people's views on open and green spaces
- Develop measures around recycling levels, antisocial behaviour issues and evidence of behaviour change

Involvement

- Collate local evidence of groups with status and increase the number of constituted community groups involved in managing Green Open Spaces

33 We may monitor the Council's progress in implementing these actions and the extent to which they address the areas for improvement we identified in this report.

Appendix 1

Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working

Exhibit 2: Positive Indicators of the Five Ways of Working

The table below sets out 'positive indicators' for each of the five ways of working that we have identified. We have not used the indicators as a checklist. They should be viewed as indicators. They helped us to form conclusions about the extent to which a body is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in taking steps to meet its wellbeing objectives.

What would show a body is fully applying the long-term way of working?

- There is a clear understanding of what 'long term' means in the context of the Act.
- They have designed the step to deliver the wellbeing objective/s and contribute to their long-term vision.
- They have designed the step to deliver short or medium-term benefits, which are balanced with the impact over the long term (within the project context).
- They have designed the step based on a sophisticated understanding of current and future need and pressures, including analysis of future trends.
- Consequently, there is a comprehensive understanding of current and future risks and opportunities.
- Resources have been allocated to ensure long-term as well as short-term benefits are delivered.
- There is a focus on delivering outcomes, with milestones/progression steps identified where outcomes will be delivered over the long term.
- They are open to new ways of doing things which could help deliver benefits over the longer term.
- They value intelligence and pursue evidence-based approaches.

What would show a body is fully applying the preventative way of working?

- The body seeks to understand the root causes of problems so that negative cycles and intergenerational challenges can be tackled.
- The body sees challenges from a system-wide perspective, recognising and valuing the long-term benefits that they can deliver for people and places.
- The body allocates resources to preventative action that is likely to contribute to better outcomes and use of resources over the longer term, even where this may limit the ability to meet some short-term needs.
- There are decision-making and accountability arrangements that recognise the value of preventative action and accept short-term reductions in performance and resources in the pursuit of anticipated improvements in outcomes and use of resources.

What would show a body is taking an 'integrated' approach?

- Individuals at all levels understand their contribution to the delivery of the vision and wellbeing objectives.
- Individuals at all levels understand what different parts of the organisation do and proactively seek opportunities to work across organisational boundaries. This is replicated in their work with other public bodies.
- Individuals at all levels recognise the cross-organisation dependencies of achieving the ambition and objectives.
- There is an open culture where information is shared.
- There is a well-developed understanding of how the wellbeing objectives and steps to meet them impact on other public sector bodies.
- Individuals proactively work across organisational boundaries to maximise their contribution across the wellbeing goals and minimise negative impacts.
- Governance, structures and processes support this, as do behaviours.

What would show a body is collaborating effectively?

- The body is focused on place, community and outcomes rather than organisational boundaries.
- The body has a good understanding of partners' objectives and their responsibilities, which helps to drive collaborative activity.
- The body has positive and mature relationships with stakeholders, where information is shared in an open and transparent way.
- The body recognises and values the contributions that all partners can make.
- The body seeks to establish shared processes and ways of working, where appropriate.

What would show a body is involving people effectively?

- Having an understanding of who needs to be involved and why.
- Reflecting on how well the needs and challenges facing those people are currently understood.
- Working co-productively, working with stakeholders to design and deliver.
- Seeing the views of stakeholders as a vital sources of information that will help deliver better outcomes.
- Ensuring that the full diversity of stakeholders is represented and they are able to take part.
- Having mature and trusting relationships with its stakeholders where there is ongoing dialogue and information is shared in an open and transparent way.
- Ensure stakeholders understand the impact of their contribution.
- Seek feedback from key stakeholders which is used to help learn and improve.

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Management Response – Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of ‘Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors’ – Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Document Reference: 1537A2019-20

Date Issued: October 2019

Ref	Proposal for Improvement	Actions to take forward	Completion Date	Responsible Officer
Long Term	Develop a clearer vision within the Corporate Plan – long term 30 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the year 2 evaluation of the Corporate Plan (undertaking the self assessment from the Commissioner) include reference to long term planning with regards to the Environment and Carbon etc. Approval at Council and then formal publication. 	June / July 2020	Gemma Wasley with CLT and Executive
	Increase areas of managed land (woodlands / grassland / habitats)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Natural Environment Team are currently developing funding through Welsh Governments (WG) Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing (ENRaW) Fund that identifies resources to improve management of land. The programme will cover a 3 year period from 2020 to 2023. The Natural Environment Team have secured funding under the above WG funding (ENRaW) for 3 years to improve management for biodiversity 	April 2020 - 23 July 2019- July 2022	Chris. Engel Liz Hancocks
	Engage with parents at an early stage to support a greater level of early years engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A service level agreement has been established within a number of our schools to develop a greater understanding of the benefits of our natural environment. This initiative is to be developed within Education to expand future benefits and engagement with Parents. 	Sept 2019- 22	Nadine Morgan
	Encourage economic ventures that will ensure management of the resource through employment and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities are to be explored through collaborative work with Regeneration and through ENRaW 	April 2023	Chris Engel/ Ellie Fry
	Preparation Designation and Declaration of 5 Local Nature Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal to designate and declare Sirhowy Hill Woodlands, Beaufort Hill Ponds and Woodlands, Parc Bryn Bach, Garden City and Central Valley as local nature reserves(LNR) To be considered at Community Services committee on 16th January 2020, approval at Executive 29th January 2020., followed by Welsh Government approval. 	April 2020	Liz Hancocks/ Chris Engel
Prevention	Ensure people feel, and are able to access open spaces, e.g. through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing the right information – maps, routes etc – Promotion – Culture and behaviour change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and evaluation of the ENRaW programme 	April 2023	Liz Hancocks/ Chris Engel

Management Response – Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of ‘Improving access to, and the quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors’ – Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

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	– Ensuring open spaces are accessible, inclusive and safe			
Integration	Build on the Forward Environment Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business plan updates to be used to inform the progression of the Environment Plan. 	Now onwards	Gemma Wasley / Liz Hancock
	Ensure all business plans recognise the step and play an active role. Section 6 duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Act Champion actions included within relevant business plans and to inform Joint Report in future and annual review of Environment Plan. Business plans to be updated alongside the review of the Corporate Plan. (See Long Term above) 	Complete June / July 2020	Gemma Wasley / Liz Hancock Gemma Wasley
	Ensure there are clear goals that all organisations can buy into and work towards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business plans to be updated alongside the review of the Corporate Plan. (See Long Term above) 		
Collaboration	Expand ‘Blaenau Gwent we want’ to capture and help understand people’s views on open and green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring through ‘Blaenau Gwent We want 		Chris Engel / Emma Scherptong
Involvement	Collate local evidence of groups with status and increase the number of constituted community groups involved in managing Green Open Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENRaW – monitoring and evaluation 	April 2020 - 23	Liz Hancocks/ Chris Engel

Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **27th February 2020**
Report Subject: **Wales Audit Office: Delivering with Less – Environmental Health follow-up review – November 2019**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Garth Collier, Deputy Leader / Executive Member Environment**
Report Submitted by: **David Thompson – Service Manager – Public Protection**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
21/1/20	28/1/20	13.03.20	31.03.20		27/02/20			

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to present Community Services Scrutiny Committee with the Wales Audit Office's (WAO) Delivering with Less – Environmental Health follow-up review (Appendix 1) and the Authority's response to the WAO's proposals for further improvement.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 As part of his 'delivering with less' series of Local Government Improvement Studies, the Auditor General published the report, Delivering with less – the impact on environmental health services and citizens, in October 2014.

2.2 In this report, the Auditor General drew attention to recent and forthcoming legislation, and the concerns of Councils that they would be unable to deliver the commitments contained within it. Many of the legislative proposals referred to in the Auditor General's 2014 report have subsequently been implemented, including the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 and the Public Health (Wales) Act in 2017. The Auditor General also published local reports for each Council as part of the 2014 study.

2.3 The follow-up review assessed whether there have been any budget and staff changes within the Council's environmental health services and the extent to which it has addressed the recommendations included in the 2014 national report. For the purposes of this review, WAO focussed on the Council's progress in addressing recommendations 2,3,4, and 5 of the national report, which are summarised below:

- Provide scrutiny chairs and members with the necessary skills and support to effectively scrutinise and challenge service performance, savings plans and the impact of budget reductions (Recommendation 2)

- Improve engagement with local residents over planned budget cuts and changes (Recommendation 3)
- Improve efficiency and value for money (Recommendation 4)
- Improve strategic planning (Recommendation 5)

2.4 WAO findings. The review sought to answer the question: **Has the Council acted upon the recommendations in the Auditor General's Environmental health – Delivering with Less report published in October 2014?**

2.5 Overall WAO concluded that: **The Council has made progress in addressing the recommendations raised in 2014. Collaborative working with Torfaen CBC to date has contributed to the Council's ability to deliver with less. Following the withdrawal from the arrangement in November 2019 the Council will face additional financial and operational pressures that may affect its ability to continue providing environmental health services to the same standard.**

2.6 In summary, WAO reached the above conclusion because:

- i. Environmental health services are routinely considered by the Council's scrutiny arrangements. Support to Members is provided proactively and training compares well against what has been observed elsewhere.
- ii. Frontline environmental health services have not been subject to budget cuts in this period, although residents have been consulted on changes.
- iii. The Council has identified its statutory and non-statutory duties and self-assessed against the Best Practice Standards.
- iv. Environmental health priorities have been agreed and documented in the service business plan.
- v. The Council has improved efficiency and maintained performance via outsourcing of services and collaborative working with Torfaen CBC, which resulted in a 38% reduction in Manager grade FTE since 2014.
- vi. Environmental health service objectives are aligned to corporate and wellbeing objectives. The Council currently makes limited use of technology and ICT in service delivery.
- vii. Budgets for environmental health services have reduced from £1.7 million in 2013-14 to £1.5 million in 2019-20, which represents a reduction of approximately 13.5%.
- viii. Following termination of the joint working arrangement the Council will face additional financial pressures and should consider how services may need to change as a result. The financial impact of this decision has been estimated as £35,000 in 2019-20 and £100,000 recurring each year thereafter.

- ix. As a result of the above, the Council is considering reconfiguring its service.
- 2.7 As a result of the review, WAO has identified the following proposals for improvement:
- 2.7.1 The Council should ensure that it has assessed the impact of withdrawing from the collaborative working arrangement with Torfaen CBC on the financial and operational sustainability of the environmental health service. It also needs to consider how to continue to respond to the Council's budget challenge and to new legislation. This may include:
- i. seeking new partnership agreements with other Authorities;
 - ii. review of existing contracts with third party providers to maximise income generation opportunities
 - iii. transformation and innovation, such as use of digital intelligence to predict future patterns of service delivery and/or inform decision-making around service provision.
- 2.7.2 In reconfiguring the service, the Council should ensure that statutory powers and duties are sufficiently prioritised alongside discretionary areas.
- 2.8 The Authority's response to the above recommendations have been tabulated and outlined in Appendix 2.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 **Option 1** – That members consider the report and support the Officer's response to the WAOs recommended proposals
- 3.2 **Option 2** - That members consider the report and the proposals in Appendix 2 and make any alternative recommendations for consideration by Executive Committee.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
The services under review in this report are statutory front line duties, a number of which also align to the Authority's Regeneration, Environmental and Social Services corporate priorities.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***
There are no direct financial implications a result of this report.
- 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
The Council recognises it needs to address the proposals for improvement from the WAO.
- 5.3 ***Legal***
There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no additional workforce implications as a direct result of this WAO report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Officers have identified the steps that should be taken to achieve these suggested agreed improvements (Appendix 2).

6.2 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

Not applicable to this report.

6.3 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**

The services that have been subject to WAO review in this report are designed to promote short, medium and longer-term public health gain in the community.

6.4 **Preventative focus**

The services that have been subject to this WAO review are aligned to the prevention agenda by promoting social, physical and mental well-being.

6.5 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Collaboration issues have been discussed as part of the review outlined in this report.

6.6 **Integration (across service areas)**

The services that have been subject to this WAO review positively impact on the work undertaken by other internal departments and other public bodies such as the NHS, Police and other local authorities.

6.7 **EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**

Not directly applicable in relation to this report.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The proposals for improvement from the WAO will be included within the relevant business plan and updated Quarterly. The information will be reported within the Finance and Performance Report to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – WAO Report – Environmental Health follow-up

Appendix 2 – Management Response



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

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Auditor General for Wales

Environmental Health follow-up review – Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Audit year: 2018-19

Date issued: November 2019

Document reference: 1611A2019-20

This document has been prepared for the internal use of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as part of work performed in accordance with Section 18 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 (the 2004 Act). It may also inform our examinations work under section 15 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

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info.officer@audit.wales.

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is also available in Welsh. Delete if not applicable.

The team who delivered the work comprised Ginette Beal and Lidia Vorontsova of Grant Thornton LLP under the direction of Non Jenkins and Sara-Jane Byrne.

Contents

The Council has made progress in addressing the recommendations raised in 2014. Collaborative working with Torfaen CBC to date has contributed to the Council's ability to deliver with less. Following the withdrawal from the arrangement in November 2019 the Council will face additional financial and operational pressures that may affect its ability to continue providing environmental health services to the same standard

Summary report

Summary 6

Detailed report

Environmental health services are routinely considered by the Council's Scrutiny arrangements. Support to Members is provided proactively and training compares well against what has been observed elsewhere. 9

Frontline environmental health services have not been subject to budget cuts in this period, although residents have been consulted on changes. 9

The Council has identified its statutory and non-statutory duties and self-assessed against the Best Practice Standards. Environmental health priorities have been agreed and documented in the service business plan. 10

The Council has improved efficiency and maintained performance via outsourcing of services and collaborative working with Torfaen CBC. Following termination of the joint working arrangement the Council will face additional financial pressures and should consider how services may need to change as a result. 10

Environmental health service objectives are aligned to corporate and well-being objectives. The Council currently makes limited use of technology and ICT in service delivery. 11

Summary report

Summary

What we reviewed and why

- 1 As part of his 'delivering with less' series of Local Government Improvement Studies, the Auditor General published his report, Delivering with less – the impact on environmental health services and citizens, in October 2014.
- 2 In this report, the Auditor General drew attention to recent and forthcoming legislation, and the concerns of Councils that they would be unable to deliver the commitments contained within it. Many of the legislative proposals referred to in the Auditor General's 2014 report have subsequently been implemented, including the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 and the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016. The Public Health (Wales) Act was also passed in 2017.
- 3 The Auditor General also published local reports for each Council as part of the 2014 study.
- 4 In a letter to local authority Chief Executives on 11 January 2018, the Auditor General set out his intention to undertake some thematic work more closely aligned to his programme of Local Government Studies. The purpose of aligning thematic work more closely to Local Government Studies programme is to make the most effective use of audit resources in discharging the Auditor General's duties whilst ensuring that issues, themes and learning identified in Local Government Study reports are 'followed-up' and explored with councils locally in subsequent years.
- 5 This review assessed whether there have been any budget and staff changes within the Council's environmental health services and the extent to which it has addressed the recommendations included in our 2014 national report. For the purposes of this review, we focussed on the Council's progress in addressing recommendations 2,3,4, and 5 of the national report.
- 6 The report contained six recommendations that are set out in Exhibit 1 below:

Exhibit 1 – recommendations made in 2014 national report, Delivering with less – the impact on environmental health services and citizens

Recommendation	Responsible Partners
R1 Revise the best practice standards to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• align the work of environmental health with national strategic priorities;• identify the wider contribution of environmental health in delivering strategic priorities of the Welsh Government; and• identify the benefit and impact of environmental health services on protecting citizens.	Councils, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Cymru

Recommendation	Responsible Partners
R2 Provide scrutiny chairs and members with the necessary skills and support to effectively scrutinise and challenge service performance, savings plans and the impact of budget reductions.	Councils, Welsh Local Government Association
R3 Improve engagement with local residents over planned budget cuts and changes in services by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consulting with residents on planned changes in services and • using the findings to shape decisions; • outlining which services are to be cut and how these cuts will impact on residents; and • setting out plans for increasing charges or changing standards of service. 	Councils, Welsh Local Government Association
R4 Improve efficiency and value for money by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying the statutory and non-statutory duties of council environmental health services. • agreeing environmental health priorities for the future and the role of councils in delivering these. • determining an 'acceptable standard of performance' for environmental health services (upper and lower) and publicise these to citizens. • Improving efficiency and maintaining performance to the agreed level through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – collaborating and/or integrating with others to reduce cost and/or improve quality; – outsourcing where services can be delivered more cost effectively to agreed standards; – introducing and/or increasing charges and focusing on income-generation activity; – using grants strategically to maximise impact and return; and – reducing activities to focus on core statutory and strategic priorities. 	Councils, Welsh Local Government Association, Welsh Government
R5 Improve strategic planning by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying, collecting and analysing financial, performance and 	Councils

Recommendation	Responsible Partners
demand/need data on environmental health services; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysing collected data to inform and understand the relationship between ‘cost: benefit: impact’ and use this intelligence to underpin decisions on the future of council environmental health services; and • agree how digital information can be used to plan and develop environmental health services in the future. 	
R6 Clearly set out the expectations of council environmental health services under new housing and health legislation and agree how these new duties will be delivered.	Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association

7 We undertook this review during the period July to August 2019.

What we found

8 Our review sought to answer the question: **Has the Council acted upon the recommendations in the Auditor General’s Environmental health – Delivering with Less report published in October 2014?**

9 Overall we found that: **The Council has made progress in addressing the recommendations raised in 2014. Collaborative working with Torfaen CBC to date has contributed to the Council’s ability to deliver with less. Following the withdrawal from the arrangement in November 2019 the Council will face additional financial and operational pressures that may affect its ability to continue providing environmental health services to the same standard.**

10 We reached this conclusion because:

- Environmental health services are routinely considered by the Council’s scrutiny arrangements. Support to Members is provided proactively and training compares well against what has been observed elsewhere.
- Frontline environmental health services have not been subject to budget cuts in this period, although residents have been consulted on changes.
- The Council has identified its statutory and non-statutory duties and self-assessed against the Best Practice Standards. Environmental health priorities have been agreed and documented in the service business plan.
- The Council has improved efficiency and maintained performance via outsourcing of services and collaborative working with Torfaen CBC. Following termination of the joint working arrangement the Council will face

additional financial pressures and should consider how services may need to change as a result.

- Environmental health service objectives are aligned to corporate and well-being objectives. The Council currently makes limited use of technology and ICT in service delivery.
- To date, budgets for environmental health services have reduced from £1.7 million in 2013-14 to £1.5 million in 2019-20 (please refer to Exhibit 2), which represents a reduction of approximately 13.5%.
- Staff numbers have reduced from 35.5 FTE in 2014 to 28.4 FTE 2019 (please refer to Exhibit 3).
- In 2015, Blaenau Gwent CBC and Torfaen CBC established a joint Trading Standards and Licensing service, which was extended to include Environmental Health in 2016.
- Both Councils realised financial savings through introduction of a shared management structure in June 2016, reduction of posts and cross-Council working. This is supported by a 38% reduction in Manager grade FTE, as well as 31% reduction in Administrator grade FTE since 2014.
- Originally, both Councils were looking to develop the working relationship into a fully shared service. In July 2019, the Blaenau Gwent CBC Executive approved the decision to withdraw from the arrangement.
- The financial impact of this decision has been estimated as £35,000 in 2019-20 and £100,000 recurring each year thereafter.
- The Council is considering reconfiguring its service. Options include seeking a partnership arrangement with a different Council.

Exhibit 2 – the net cost of environmental health services: revenue budget compared to outturn, 2012-13 to 2019-20

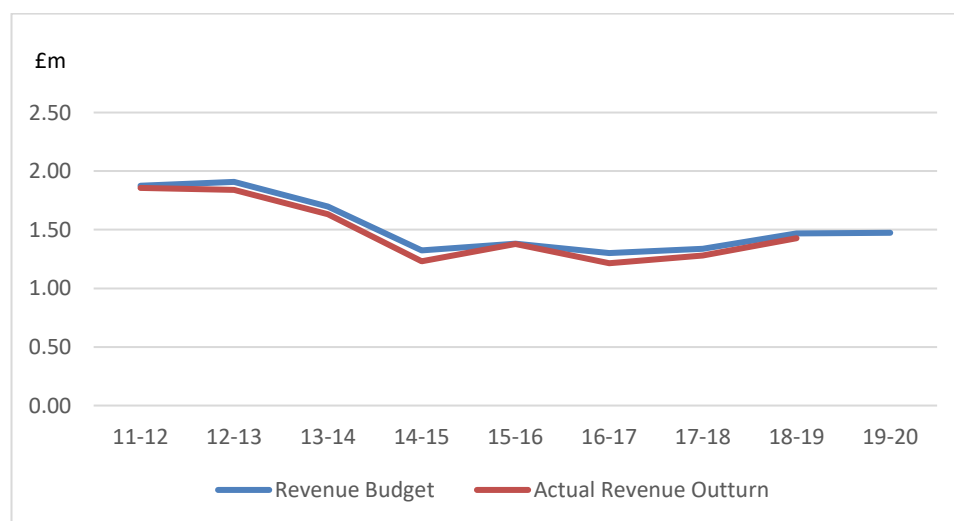
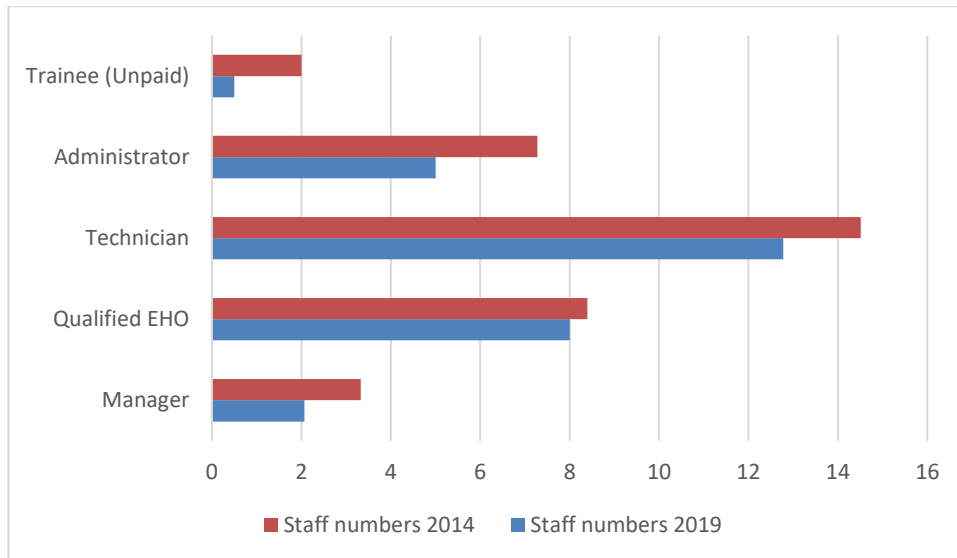


Exhibit 3 – staff numbers (full time equivalents) 2014 compared to 2019



Proposals for Improvement

Exhibit 1: proposals for improvement

The table below sets out the proposals for improvement that we have identified following this review.

Proposals for improvement	
P1	<p>The Council should ensure that it has assessed the impact of withdrawing from the collaborative working arrangement with Torfaen CBC on the financial and operational sustainability of the environmental health service. It also needs to consider how to continue to respond to the Council's budget challenge and to new legislation. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• seeking new partnership agreements with other Authorities (ensuring that appropriate governance arrangements are in place);• review of existing contracts with third party providers to maximise income generation opportunities; and• transformation and innovation, such as use of digital intelligence to predict future patterns of service delivery and/or inform decision-making around service provision. <p>In reconfiguring the service, the Council should ensure that statutory powers and duties are sufficiently prioritised alongside discretionary areas.</p>

Detailed report

The Council has made progress in addressing the recommendations raised in 2014. Collaborative working with Torfaen CBC to date has contributed to the Council's ability to deliver with less. Following the withdrawal from the arrangement in November 2019 the Council will face additional financial and operational pressures that may affect its ability to continue providing environmental health services to the same standard

Environmental health services are routinely considered by the Council's Scrutiny arrangements. Support to members is provided proactively and training compares well against what has been observed elsewhere

11 In reaching this conclusion we found that:

- environmental health matters are considered by the Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee.
- Member training is provided via briefing sessions, either requested by Members or proposed by the service.
- in 2018-19, sessions delivered covered the following:
 - Environment Act Duty;
 - Development of a Local Toilet Strategy;
 - Side Waste Enforcement Update.
- the Committee does not routinely self-assess its effectiveness.
- there is a Council-wide Annual Scrutiny Evaluation process with Member feedback gathered via a questionnaire.
- however, we note that participation in 2018-19 was low, with only 9 responses received out of 34.

Frontline environmental health services have not been subject to budget cuts in this period, although residents have been consulted on changes.

12 In reaching this conclusion we found that:

- the Council consulted local residents on the following changes to the service:
 - collaborative enforcement policy with Torfaen;

- local toilet strategy; and
- changes to the taxi policy.
- results of these consultations were presented to the relevant Scrutiny committees and used to shape the decision-making process.
- the Council previously introduced charges for its Pest Control service, however the arrangements for the services have since been reconsidered – this is discussed in further detail in [paragraph 14](#).

The Council has identified its statutory and non-statutory duties and self-assessed against the Best Practice Standards.

Environmental health priorities have been agreed and documented in the service Business Plan

13 In reaching this conclusion we found that:

- the Council separates services into non-statutory priority, non-statutory non-priority, statutory prescribed and statutory choice.
- 11 strategic priorities for the service have been agreed and documented in the Public Protection Business Plan 2018-2022. Progress against achieving these is assessed on a quarterly basis.
- the environmental health service has self-assessed against the Best Practice Standards and has met the 'required' standards across most environmental health services, with many achieving one or more aspects of the 'better' standard.
- acceptable standards have been defined internally through a set of KPIs, but have not been publicised.

The Council has improved efficiency and maintained performance via outsourcing of services and collaborative working with Torfaen CBC. Following termination of the joint working arrangement the Council will face additional financial pressures and should consider how services may need to change as a result

14 In reaching this conclusion we found that:

- the Council has served notice to exit its joint working arrangement with Torfaen CBC in November 2019. This will lead to further financial pressures.
- collaborative working has, to date, allowed the Councils to improve efficiency and maintain or improve performance, including key PAMs relating to environmental health.

- it should be noted that performance against PAM/013 (% empty properties brought back into use) and PAM/023 (% food establishments that meet food hygiene standards) remains below Welsh average.
- the Council outsources its Pest Control service to Mitie and its Litter and Dog Control Enforcement service to Kingdom.
- performance of both third party contractors is reviewed annually by Scrutiny.
- we note that the latest Scrutiny review identified that the enforcement service only generated a small surplus for the Council after Kingdom charges. Initiatives to increase income are being discussed.
- the environmental health service is not in receipt of significant amounts of grant funding.
- budget cuts to date have focussed on staff reductions. The Council ceased provision of discretionary Pest Control activities in 2014 but reintroduced this due to an increase in public health issues.

Environmental health service objectives are aligned to corporate and well-being objectives. The Council currently makes limited use of technology and ICT in service delivery

15 In reaching this conclusion we found that:

- the service reviews its performance against achieving strategic objectives on a quarterly basis.
- this includes review of financial and performance (qualitative and quantitative) data.
- costs, benefits and impacts are considered within the budgeting process in relation to growth or funding reductions.
- we note, however, that the decision to enter or exit the joint service arrangement was not subject to an options appraisal or a cost/benefit analysis. There was no Joint Working Agreement or other formal governance arrangement in place between the two Councils.
- use of digital technology is currently limited. We noted that an incident reporting app is being developed for Streetscene services.

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Management response

Local Authority: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Report title: Environmental Health follow-up review

Issue date: November 2019

Ref	Proposal for improvement	Intended outcome/ benefit	High priority (yes/no)	Accepted (yes/no)	Management response	Completion date	Responsible officer
1	The Council should ensure that it has assessed the impact of withdrawing from the collaborative working arrangement with Torfaen CBC on the financial and operational sustainability of the environmental health service. It also needs to consider how to continue to respond to the Council's budget challenge and to new legislation. This may include:	Ensure that the financial implications of the changes to the working arrangements have been fully assessed and future funding implications have been fully considered.	Yes	Yes	Jan 2020. The financial pressures resulting from the withdrawal have been assessed at £106,000. Some mitigation has been achieved (£18k by way of reducing hours for a Trading Standards position) and work is continuing to mitigate the pressures along with a wider service review that has been requested relating to Front Line Enforcement. The service has also been required to grow activity in relation to Empty Property incentives and enforcement (as part of the Corporate Growth Strategy. Any service reductions/changes resulting from all the above review will be impact risk assessed and communicated as necessary.	July 2019 and ongoing Internal Service Review/ Restructure Q1 2020	DT

Ref	Proposal for improvement	Intended outcome/ benefit	High priority (yes/no)	Accepted (yes/no)	Management response	Completion date	Responsible officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seeking new partnership agreements with other Authorities (ensuring that appropriate governance arrangements are in place); 	As above	Yes	Yes	<p>The Service has another longer standing local authority partnership arrangement relating to Animal Health, Welfare & Licensing (Powys CC). This is ongoing and subject to regular review.</p> <p>Officers are exploring new collaborative arrangements with neighbouring local authorities and some joint work is currently proposed with Torfaen in setting up (task sharing) new statutory enforcement regimes for local delivery. (This type of joint working with other LAs, central government agencies and others is common by way of long established professional networks).</p>	Ongoing	DT

Ref	Proposal for improvement	Intended outcome/benefit	High priority (yes/no)	Accepted (yes/no)	Management response	Completion date	Responsible officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review of existing contracts with third party providers to maximise income generation opportunities; 	As above	Yes	Yes	<p>The Service has contracts with private providers for Litter and Dog Control Enforcement, Stray Dog Kennelling and Pest Control treatment services. These are subject to regular review and corporate procurement processes during which cost reduction/income opportunities are explored.</p> <p>- Stray Dog Kennelling procured in 2019 for 3 years</p> <p>- Litter & Dog Control Enforcement Contract – under review.</p> <p>- Pest Control Services – procured 2019 –</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2019</p> <p>April 2020</p> <p>Interim review completed in Jan 2020.</p>	DT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> transformation and innovation, such as use of digital intelligence to predict future patterns of service delivery and/or inform decision-making around service provision. 	As above	Yes	Yes	<p>Agreed. Significant progress has been made with service volume data collection and analysis to help inform decision-making around service performance and provision. Further opportunities will be investigated.</p>	March 2021	DT

Ref	Proposal for improvement	Intended outcome/ benefit	High priority (yes/no)	Accepted (yes/no)	Management response	Completion date	Responsible officer
	In reconfiguring the service, the Council should ensure that statutory powers and duties are sufficiently prioritised alongside discretionary areas.	As above	Yes	Yes	Agreed. The Service continues to prioritise statutory functions along with local need/corporate priorities. Any service reductions/changes resulting from all the above will be impact risk assessed and communicated as necessary.	Ongoing	DT

Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **27th February 2020**

Report Subject: **Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Focussed Audit**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Garth Collier- Deputy Leader / Executive Member Environment**

Report Submitted by: **Dave Thompson – Service Manager Public Protection**

Reporting Pathway (Dates to be Entered)								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
21/01/20	28/01/20	13.02.20			27/02/19	11.03.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee in respect of the findings of the focussed audit of the implementation and operation of the statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (“the Scheme”) within Blaenau Gwent carried out by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The FSA is the lead agency responsible for the oversight of food safety (including food hygiene) within Wales and across the rest of the UK. The FSA mainly have responsibility for the direct regulation of meat cutting plants with the majority of other food businesses falling to Local Authorities in terms of regulatory responsibility. The FSA and Local Authorities work closely together. Audits and reviews of local authority food law services are part of the FSA’s programmed work and are aimed at improving consumer protection and confidence in relation to food.
- 2.2 The Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Act 2013 (“the Act”) established a statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Wales which came into force on the 28th November 2013. The specific details of the operation of the scheme in Wales were contained in the subsequent Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Regulations 2013 (“the Regulations”). All food authorities, including Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, are required to inspect food business establishments within their area and produce food hygiene ratings for them adhering, for consistency purposes, to criteria published by the FSA which has been produced in consultation with Local Authorities. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is currently responsible for the delivery and implementation of the Scheme across a total of 657 premises within the Borough (figure correct to the 10th December 2019). This work is delivered by Officers of the Commercial Team that sit within the Public Protection Service.

- 2.3 On the 28th February 2018 a report on the ‘Review of the implementation and operation of the statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and the operation of the Appeals system in Wales’ was laid before the National Assembly. This report detailed the findings of a three year review of the implementation and operation of the Scheme across Wales and made a number of recommendations for action either by the FSA and/or Local Authorities. Recommendation 5 of the aforementioned report proposed the following action which is of relevance to this update:

Recommendation 5: *That the FSA publishes a report on the findings of its audit of local authority delivery of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme by May 2018.*

A full copy of the 2018 review report is available to download here:

<http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/gen-ld11433/gen-ld11433-e.pdf>

- 2.4 The audit referred to in Recommendation 5 was a focussed audit of local authority delivery and implementation of the Scheme against the standards and requirements outlined in the Food Hygiene Rating (Wales) Act 2013, associated regulations, the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) 2014 (“the Code”) and any relevant centrally issued guidance. All 22 Local Authorities in Wales were subjected to the focussed audit and were required to return a detailed questionnaire together with other relevant supporting information to the FSA during October 2017. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council participated fully in the focussed audit process and returned the requested information within agreed timescales.

Outcomes

- 2.5 In the Spring of 2019 the final report detailing the findings of the audit was published. The report contained a total of 13 recommendations for Local Authorities to consider (where applicable) and also highlighted areas which the FSA had identified and perceived to be good practice. Appendix 1 provides the summary of the 13 identified recommendations outlined in the above report. A copy of the full audit report is available to download here:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/other/focused-audits>

- 2.6 The FSA did not identify specific Local Authorities by name where areas for improvement were identified. They did however name Authorities where good practice had been observed. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council was named as one of the Council’s demonstrating good practice in the following area which is an extract directly from the published audit report:

4.4.26 The law requires food businesses to display ratings at every public entrance. One local authority included a specific prompt on an ancillary FHRS display aide-memoire to check display at all entrances. The remaining

authorities had not included any documented instruction to their officers to check display at all entrances.

Good Practice

An ancillary FHRS display aide-memoire used by Blaenau Gwent CBC prompts officers to record the display of ratings at all customer entrances to a food business establishment.

- 2.7 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has representation at the All Wales Food Safety Expert Panel. This is a working group with representatives across all 22 local authorities in Wales, the FSA, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and other core and co-opted members (as necessary). Discussions at this group are focussed around food hygiene related issues including matters such as the delivery and implementation of the Scheme. During a meeting of this group the findings of the audit report were considered and discussed with representative from the FSA. It was agreed that in order to support local authorities to identify the specific recommendations or relevant parts of recommendations applicable to themselves a further detailed analysis of local authority performance against the audit criteria would be provided. As previously outlined in point 2.6 above the recommendations and content of the audit report did not specifically name individual Local Authorities where areas for improvement had been identified. This resulted in difficulties for Local Authorities to identify the areas that they may need to address.
- 2.8 The additional detailed information was supplied by the FSA to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in March of 2019 and this was reviewed by key staff within the Commercial Team and any areas for potential improvement were identified for action. The information provided by the FSA contained a mixture of both areas where no action was required and those where potential action was needed. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the areas where potential improvements have been identified and the corresponding action that has been taken or which is planned to address these matters.
- 2.9 An update on progress against the action plan will be provided to the Public Protection Service Manager at the end of the financial year for 2019/20. At the time of writing this report there is no known follow-up work planned by the FSA in respect of checking the Authorities progress against any identified recommendations or parts of recommendations.

3. Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 Option 1 – That the Community Services Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the contents of this report and the associated appendices, make any recommendations as may be relevant and recommend approval of the content of the action plan detailed in Appendix 2 to the Executive Committee (preferred option);
- 3.2 Option 2 – That the Community Services Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the contents of this report and the associated appendices and do not recommend

approval of the content of the action plan to the Executive Committee detailed in Appendix 2.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The continued improvement of the Food Law Service will ensure ongoing contribution to the key themes of Blaenau Gwent's Corporate & Well-being Plans. The Food Law Service meets the relevant well-being goals through the continued provision and planned improvements (as outlined in Appendix 2) of a service with retained expertise that aims to protect public health and consumer safety.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget*** (short and long term impact)

There are no direct financial implications associated with the acceptance of this report.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The areas of work of the Food Law Service referred to in this report are a statutory function of the Council and, as such, carries with it risks of damage to reputation or legal action in the event of under provision or negligence in terms of service delivery. A lack of appropriate regulation, advice and support to local businesses can increase the risks to health associated with food safety related issues (including serious illness and death) to members of the public within and beyond the County Borough.

5.3 ***Legal***
As above.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no direct staffing implications associated with the acceptance of this Report. The planned improvements identified will be delivered by existing staff within the Public Protection Service.

6. **Supporting Evidence:**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

There is no additional performance information that can be provided at this time other than that which has already been outlined above in terms of the findings of the FSA audit and the proposed improvements subsequent to this. An updated outcome report outlining the progress against the proposed actions detailed in Appendix 2 will be provided to the Public Protection Service Manager at the end of the financial year for 2019/20.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

To reduce the potential risks to health associated with food safety related issues (including serious illness and death) to members of the public within and beyond the County Borough through continued regulation of food businesses within the Borough for which the Authority has a regulatory role.

6.3 **Involvement** (*consultation, engagement, participation*)

The plan outlined in Appendix 2 has been drafted with the full co-operation of relevant lead colleagues whom are responsible for the delivery of the Food Law Service, specifically in respect of food hygiene related functions, within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long term** (*forward planning*)

The continued implementation and operation of the statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is a statutory requirement. The activities detailed in the action plan outlined in Appendix 2 will assist in the improvement of the Food Law Service and ensure its continued contribution to the protection of public health.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

The full implementation of proposed action plan outlined in Appendix 2 will allow the Food Law Service to continue to contribute to the key themes of Blaenau Gwent's Community Strategy 2010-2030. The Food Law Service meets the relevant well-being goals through the continued provision and planned improvement of a service with retained expertise that aims to protect public health and consumer safety.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The improvements identified in the action plan provided in Appendix 2 have been developed in-line with the recommendations of the FSA audit report and also in discussion with key staff responsible for the area of Service Delivery in question.

6.7 **Integration** (*across service areas*)

The full implementation of proposed action plan outlined in Appendix 2 will allow the Food Law Service to continue to contribute to the key themes of Blaenau Gwent's Community Strategy 2010-2030. The Food Law Service meets the relevant well-being goals through the continued provision and planned improvement of a service with retained expertise that aims to protect public health and consumer safety.

6.8 **EqIA** (*screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed*)

No adverse impact identified.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 An updated outcome report outlining the progress against the proposed actions detailed in Appendix 2 will be provided to the Public Protection Service Manager at the end of the financial year for 2019/20.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – FSA Focussed All Wales Audit Recommendations

Appendix 2 – FSA Focussed Audit Action Plan – Blaenau Gwent Specific Actions

<https://www.food.gov.uk/other/focused-audits>

<http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/gen-ld11433/gen-ld11433-e.pdf>

APPENDIX 1 – FSA Focussed All Wales Audit Recommendations

The information below details the recommendations at an **ALL** Wales level. It was not possible from this information for Local Authorities to identify the specific recommendations or relevant parts of recommendations applicable to themselves just from this information.

As a result of the above the FSA were requested to provide further detail in respect of individual Local Authority performance and this information is provided in Appendix 2 to this report.

Recommendation Number	Recommended Action
1	Local authorities must include in their annual intervention programmes, a commitment to undertake all interventions due in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales), an estimate of the number of new businesses requiring a first rating inspection in the year and include the numbers of all outstanding interventions carried over from previous years. [The Standard 3.1]
2	Local authorities should set up, maintain and implement appropriate back up systems for any electronic databases, and systems or documented procedures which have been designed to minimise the risk of corruption or loss of information held on its databases. Local authorities should ensure that reasonable security measures are in place to prevent access and amendment by unauthorised persons. [The Standard – 6.4]
3	Local authorities should ensure their databases are operated in such a way as to be able to provide the required information to the FSA. Procedures must include a requirement to upload Scheme ratings within the prescribed time period and to avoid the upload of sensitive information. Databases should record scheme information in relation to safeguards and enforcement; including any re-ratings and dates of all actions taken. [The Standard – 6.3]
4	Local authorities must carry out interventions/inspections at all food establishments in their area, at a frequency which is not less than that determined under the intervention rating schemes set out in the relevant legislation, codes of practice or other centrally issued guidance. [The Standard 7.1]
5	<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>Local authorities should ensure that documented procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the method they use to prioritise risk amongst unrated premises to ensure that higher risk businesses, including those within the remit of the Scheme, are inspected first. • Specify that revision of the intervention type and rating should be considered when new information arises. • Specify that in relation to multi-site businesses, reports must be provided to the food business operator and copied to the local outlet where appropriate.

APPENDIX 1 – FSA Focussed All Wales Audit Recommendations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include instructions to check for the display of valid rating stickers and to ensure the removal of stickers where they are not valid. • Include advice to officers in relation to conspicuous display and to ensure that checks are made at all entrances and in all relevant locations where multiple businesses operate from one establishment. [The Standard- 7.4]
6	Local authorities should ensure that aides-memoire include prompts to check for the display of valid rating stickers and ensure the removal of stickers where they are not valid. Further, aides-memoire should include prompts to officers in relation to conspicuous display and to ensure that checks are made at all entrances and in all relevant locations including where multiple businesses operate from one establishment. Local authorities should also review their aides-memoire to ensure that all requirements of the Scheme in relation to publicity materials are sufficiently included. [The Standard-7.4]
7	Local authorities must ensure that risk rating data is consistent with Annex 5 of the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) to ensure the correct intervention frequency and allocation of the correct food hygiene rating under the Scheme. [The Standard – 7.2]
8	Local authorities must ensure that within 14 days of an inspection the operator of an establishment is provided with all the necessary information required under the Scheme. The prescribed statutory information relating to requests for re-rating visits, submitting right to reply comments and how the appeals process will be decided, and the business informed of the outcome, is to be provided when the rating is notified. Local authorities must also ensure that the circumstances in which a rating and sticker cease to be valid is clearly given when the rating is notified to the business. [The Standard – 7.2]
9	Local authorities should ensure that their documented procedures include provision for the issue of the prescribed statutory information relating to safeguards. [The Standard – 7.4]
10	Local authorities must ensure that all re-ratings are conducted within three months of the date of request. Further, where the improvements that have been made are issues concerned with confidence in management/control procedures, re-rating inspections should take place towards the end of the 3-month period in order to establish that the improvements are fully implemented and sustained. [The Standard – 7.2]
11	Local authorities should document their procedure for enforcement action to be taken for contraventions of the Scheme in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Wales) and official guidance. Such procedures should include checking compliance with display requirements following completion of the FPN process. [The Standard – 15.2]

APPENDIX 1 – FSA Focussed All Wales Audit Recommendations

12	<p>Local authorities should document internal monitoring procedures that include checking a specified sample of interventions at prescribed frequencies to ensure they meet the requirements of the Scheme. Documented internal monitoring procedures should include the following checks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That the risk rating, food hygiene rating and due intervention date are correct.• Scores in relation to confidence in management/control procedures accurately reflect the compliance track record of the business.• That the food hygiene rating is notified within 14 days.• Information on safeguards is provided.• Information held on establishment files is consistent with that held on the database.• Information on the database is consistent with the FSA ratings website. [The Standard -19.1]
13	<p>Internal monitoring procedures should be fully implemented, and local authorities should record the outcome of any check and the action taken in relation to any inconsistency identified. [The Standard - 19.1 & 19.3]</p>

Source: “*Focused Audit Of Local Authority Implementation And Operation Of The Statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme In Wales*” (2019), <https://www.food.gov.uk/other/focused-audits>

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APPENDIX 2 – FSA Focussed Audit Action Plan – Blaenau Gwent Specific Actions

The information below details the specific areas for improvement relevant to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council following the all Wales audit. The report paragraph identified links back to the specific sections of published audit report.

Report Paragraph Number	Issues Identified*	Actions Taken / Planned	Timescale
4.1 Organisation & Management			
4.1.3	Eleven local authorities made specific reference to the Scheme in their service aims and objectives, indicating a specific commitment to delivering the Scheme. In seven local authorities a reference was made to the Scheme in their Corporate, Strategic or higher-level Business Plans.	The 2020/21 Food Law Service Delivery Plan will contain a more detailed statement regarding Blaenau Gwent's commitment to delivering the Scheme.	Quarter 1 2020/21 Service Planning Development
4.1.11	In 11 service plans, insufficient information was provided on how the authorities intended to address all of their outstanding interventions.	The 2020/21 Food Law Service Delivery Plan will contain a more detailed statement confirming Blaenau Gwent's intention to deliver any outstanding interventions (if any) identified at the end of the reporting year in the subsequent financial year.	Quarter 1 2020/21 Service Planning Development
4.3 Database/Systems Management			
4.3.2	The database management of the Authority was not sufficient to demonstrate that back-up systems and procedures had been considered.	Update of database management procedure planned to incorporate business continuity arrangements in event of a failure of key systems.	January 2020

APPENDIX 2 – FSA Focussed Audit Action Plan – Blaenau Gwent Specific Actions

4.4 Inspections/Interventions			
4.4.2	The authorities had completed almost all of their due interventions, indicating that their intervention programme was broadly in accordance with the Code.	Continue to plan interventions within 28 days of due date or of opening (new business).	Action ongoing (no end date)
Procedures			
4.4.12	The authority operated an intervention procedure that conflicted with their FHRs procedure regarding timescales for sending out inspection letters.	Updated FD1 inspection procedure to remove reference to 10 working days and amend to reflect specific wording of FHRs guidance (i.e.14 calendar days).	Completed.
4.4.23	The local authority had not included instructions relating to the checking and removal of all stickers in their procedures.	Update planned to operational FHRs procedure to document specific instruction to officers for checking and removing old FHRs stickers. This action is already being completed in practice by officers during inspections.	January 2020
Aides-Memoire			
4.4.27	Information on the number of public entrances or number of stickers requested by the business was provided was not being detailed on aides-memoire. There was no space allocated on the aide- memoire provided to record the new FHRs rating following an inspection.	Update planned to aide memoire to include specific section to capture information relating to the number of entrances/ stickers being requested. Any requests from businesses relating to number and nature of rating stickers are addressed. Any new rating issued is currently captured on a separate risk rating	January 2020 Completed

APPENDIX 2 – FSA Focussed Audit Action Plan – Blaenau Gwent Specific Actions

		form which was not requested by the FSA during the pre-audit questionnaire. As there was no follow-up to the audit we were unable to clarify this point to them.	
4.4.29	The aides-memoire for low-risk food businesses did not prompt the capture of information on public entrances or number of stickers requested by the business.	Update planned to aide memoire to include specific section to capture information relating to number of entrances/ stickers being requested. Any requests from businesses relating to number and nature of rating stickers are addressed.	January 2020
4.4.30	Approved premises - The local authority had not prompted officers to capture information on the display of the FHRS rating. The local authority had not prompted officers to record the number of public entrances or number of stickers requested by the business.	Update planned to aide memoire to include specific section to capture information relating to number of entrances/ stickers being requested and agreement for location of display.	January 2020
4.4.32	The data from Nineteen authorities was assessed to determine if the total risk score had been calculated correctly. This score was calculated correctly in all cases by Eleven authorities. In the remaining Eight authorities almost all scores were correctly calculated, however, where anomalies were identified, these indicated that at least one of the Eight criteria may not be correct.	No information has been provided as to the identity of the premises to which this information relates despite a further request to the FSA. Routine review of information during intervention planning will continue to be used alongside internal monitoring to identify any errors on officer inputs of risk ratings. Any anomalies identified through this process have since been corrected.	Completed
4.5 Records and Interventions / Inspections Reports			
4.5.4	The authorities did not inform the business of the circumstance in which a rating and sticker ceased to be valid.	The routine inspection letter will be updated to include this information.	January 2020

APPENDIX 2 – FSA Focussed Audit Action Plan – Blaenau Gwent Specific Actions

4.5.9	The local authority had not submitted a documented food hygiene rating scheme procedure which included safeguards.	FHRS specific operational procedure to be produced to compliment statutory guidance.	Completed
Re-Ratings			
4.5.13	Information on how and when the re-rating cost must be paid was not provided in full.	It was agreed that the All Wales Re-rating application form would be amended to include this information by the FSA.	Completed
Appeals			
4.5.20	The authorities had not provided some information on the process by which the appeal will be decided, and the business informed of the outcome.	This information is available on FSA website with the appeal information and is also provided to new businesses on registration in the form of the FSA leaflet. The post inspection letter will also be updated to include this information.	January 2020
4.6 Enforcement			
4.6.4	The authorities did not made specific reference to dealing with non-compliance in such establishments within documented enforcement procedures.	The current enforcement policy is being reviewed with a view to including this information.	March 2020
4.8 Internal Monitoring of Interventions			
4.8.4	There was no evidence that a variety of internal monitoring activity had been undertaken by the local authorities.	Internal monitoring has since commenced.	Action ongoing (no end date)

Agenda Item 10

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **27th February 2020**
Report Subject: **Activities Report – Pest Control Treatment Service up to December 2019**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr G. Collier, Deputy Leader / Executive Member Environment**
Report Submitted by: **David Thompson – Service Manager – Public Protection**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
14.1.20	21.1.20	13.02.20			27.2.20	11.3.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update Members on the pest control treatment service currently provided by Rentokil

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Local Authorities are not under a statutory duty to provide a Pest Control treatment service. However, historically, it was common place for local councils to provide treatment services as part of their wider public health role either directly or indirectly by way of arrangements with specialist service providers. The availability of timely treatment services enables earlier eradication and prevention of pest problems and reduces the need for enforcement action by Environmental Health, which in many cases is a statutory duty.

2.2 Until 2012/13, Blaenau Gwent provided an in-house Pest Control treatment service. However, with ongoing issues relating to service resilience and annual pressures for revenue budget savings, alternative options for service delivery were considered with a view to achieving a more sustainable service at reduced cost. This included a consideration of private market testing and partnering with another local authority.

2.3 In April 2013, the Authority partnered with Caerphilly CBC, achieving revenue budget savings of £23k. Caerphilly delivered the service on behalf of Blaenau Gwent under an SLA for 2 years before the service was discontinued completely by the Council, in 2015, due to further budget pressures. (However, Caerphilly CBC is continuing to undertake sewer baiting on behalf of the Authority - see paragraph 10.7, below). As a result, Environmental Health enforcement action duly increased.

- 2.4 In 2016/17, the decision was taken by the Authority to reintroduce a Pest Control Service, further to complaints about rats relating to refuse accumulations in local neighbourhoods resulting from problems associated with changes to household waste and recycling arrangements. After due consideration, agreement was received to tender for a private company to deliver the service on behalf of the Authority, to minimise set-up and delivery and administrative costs and to enable expedient implementation and service resilience.
- 2.5 Mitie Group plc was awarded the work following a competitive tender process undertaken in accordance with corporate procurement rules by way of access to an established ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) framework. The cost of the service at the time was £60,000. A budget was allocated and the contract was awarded for an initial 12 months with an option to extend the contract for a further 12 months.
- 2.6 For 2019/20, the service was re-tendered in accordance with procurement rules. The tender specification was unchanged from the initial tender in 2016 to include concessions for the chargeable services reflecting the high levels of deprivation in Blaenau Gwent. Mitie was again successful although the contract price increased by £10,000. Mitie were awarded the contract for 12 months with an option to extend for a further 12 months. During 2019, Mitie Pest Control were taken over by Rentokil. As such, since 1st October 2019, Rentokil has delivered the Blaenau Gwent contract on the same terms as Mitie.
- 2.8 The cost of the current contract is £70,000 per annum. Despite the increase in cost since 2016, the budget allocated by the Authority has remained the same (£60,000). No additional funds were allocated. Thus, the service has had an ongoing budget pressure of £10,000.
- 2.9 However, given the low take up of concessions, Officers and Rentokil representatives have agreed to restructure the contract costs and paid for service costs to enable a revised contract price of £59,793 per annum (with concession costs being invoiced on a pay as you go basis). The contract will be extended until March 2022, with an option to extend it again until March 2023. Based on current demand for concessions, the max cost to the Authority is estimated at £61-62k per annum.
- 2.10 As a condition for the change, Rentokil has requested that the paid for price for wasp treatments is increased by a small amount from £48.00 to £57.60 (incl VAT) in line with the other paid for treatment prices. This has been agreed.
- 2.9.1 **Current Service** (see Appendix 1). The current contract is for free rat infestation treatments for all residential properties. Other treatments, including mice, bedbugs, cockroaches and fleas, are available at a charge (direct to Rentokil) of £58.70. However, residents who are on the following benefits (Universal credit, Income support, Council tax reduction, Working or child tax income credit, Job seekers allowance (income based)) currently receive a 50% concession for the treatment of mice, bedbugs, cockroaches and fleas.
- 2.9.4 Appendix 2 outlines the service demand data currently available for 2018/19 and 2019/20 up to 31st December 2019. Based on the current data, completed rat treatments

are set to remain at a similar level in 19/20 to the 1,140 completed in 18/19. During the summer months of 2019, the number of wasp treatments increased significantly as too the number of concessions, which is positive.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1

That Members note the service performance and provide any specific comments and recommendations for consideration by Executive Committee.

3.2 Option 2

That Members accept the report as provided.

4 Recommendation(s)/Endorsements by other Groups

4.1 Corporate Leadership Team and Regeneration & Community Services Leadership Team have considered this report.

5 Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

5.1 Well-being Plan, Objective 2 – Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities. The use of a free pest control service to target rats helps to create clean and safe environments. By providing this service, the Authority is taking positive steps to try to create a clean and safe environment.

5.2 Corporate Plan – Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities Priority objective - To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control. The provision of a free pest control service will assist in achieving this goal.

5.3 While the Local Authority is not under a statutory duty to provide a pest control treatment service, by providing a free treatment for rat infestations the Authority can respond to service demands and concerns by the community about pest infestations that may present a risk to public health and take steps to achieving the goals set out in the Wellbeing and Corporate Plan.

6. Implications Against Each Option

6.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

6.2 As outlined above, the current budget for this contract is £60,000. The cost of the current contract is currently £70,000 per annum which has created a £10,000 budget pressure. This is now largely mitigated. As a result of the change in contractual arrangements, and the current trend data relating to concessions, a new budget level of £62,000 will be built in to the 2020/21 budget, with the difference met from other service budgets where possible.

7. Risk including Mitigating Actions

7.1 With the ongoing service delivered by Rentokil, risks are low. Reputational risks have reduced with the Authority providing a free service for rat treatments. See also paragraph 9.1, below.

8. **Legal**
- 8.1 There is no legal duty to provide a pest control treatment service however the benefits that it provides have been highlighted.
9. **Human Resources**
- 9.1 There are no staffing/workforce implications in relation to this report. The free treatment of rats has prevented the increase and spread of rodent problems. Without this service there would be increased demand/pressure on Environmental Health to investigate complaints and take statutory enforcement action on property owners and occupiers due to rodent problems. This would require an increased staffing resource.
10. **Supporting Evidence**
- 10.1 **Performance Information and Data**
- 10.2 See above and Appendix 2
- 10.3 Sewer Baiting. The Authority has continued with arrangements with Caerphilly CBC to enable sewer baiting to reduce/control the general rodent population within the drainage network. This work is funded by Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water (approx. £5k per annum) and results in approximately 600 “man-hole lifts” for treatments each year. Many of these treatments are undertaken at the request of Environmental Health at specific locations in Blaenau Gwent as a result of complaints about rodent activity in the general environment in areas where it is not possible to safely and legally bait. In 2018/19, 16 referrals were made (all referrals would result in multiple “man-hole lifts”), and to 31st December 2019, there have been 27 referrals.
11. **Expected outcome for the public**
- 11.1 Improved public health through the free treatment of rat infestations in domestic premises and the prevention of the spread of infestations to third party land.
12. **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**
- 12.1 The Executive Member – Environment has been consulted on these minor amendments to the contract. Procurement colleagues participated in the recent contractual discussions and were consulted on the content of this report, as appropriate.
13. **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
- 13.1 The service outlined in this report is necessary to ensure long-term improvements in public health and to reduce the likelihood of the spread of disease.
14. **Preventative focus**
- 14.1 By proactively treating pest infestations in specific locations the Authority is preventing further spread and proliferation of infestations to other areas of the County Borough. .
15. **Collaboration / partnership working**
- 15.1 The scheme is run in partnership with a private sector service provider.
16. **Integration(across service areas)**
- 16.1 The scheme contributes to relevant well-being and environment Agendas.

17. **EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**

17.1. The proposals will no adverse effects against the protected characteristics.

18. **Monitoring Arrangements**

18.1. The service will be monitored by Public Protection Managers and by way of relevant reports to the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services, CLT and Scrutiny Committee, as necessary.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Pest Control - Current Service Offer

Appendix 2 – Pest Control Treatment Data 19/20

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Pest Control

Blaenau Gwent CBC provides a domestic pest control service in partnership with Rentokil Pest Control.

The service offers free treatments for rat infestations at domestic properties within Blaenau Gwent.

Rentokil Pest Control also offer other pest control treatments at domestic properties for which there is a charge (payment is by credit or debit card over the phone directly to Rentokil Pest Control). These services are-

- Mice £57.60
- Bedbugs £57.60
- Cockroaches £57.60
- Fleas £57.60
- Black garden ants £57.60
- Cluster fly £57.60
- House crickets, firebrats & silverfish £57.60
- Textile moth £57.60
- Wasps nests £48.00 (**£57.60 from 1st April 2020**)

*All the above prices are inclusive of VAT

Residents of Blaenau Gwent who are on the following benefits will receive a 50% concession for the treatment of mice, bedbugs, cockroaches and fleas as long they reside at the domestic premise where the treatment takes place:

- Universal credit
- Income support
- Council tax reduction
- Working or child tax income credit
- Job seekers allowance (income based)

(You will be asked to provide proof of benefit receipt during the pest control operative's initial visit before treatment can begin. Please note that no services other than rat treatments will be undertaken without pre-payment.)

The pest control service operates from Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5pm. (Please note the service does not operate on public holidays)

To arrange for a pest control visit from Rentokil please contact them directly on-

- Telephone- 01454 771515

Rentokil also offers pest control services to commercial and industrial premises. For prices on these treatments please contact Rentokil Pest Control directly.

For information about pests visit the [British Pest Control Association website](#).

END

Appendix 2 Pest Control 2019/20 (Q3 position)

Pest Control	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual to q3	2018/19
Total number of all pest control service requests received by Mitie	326	398	279		1003	1198
Total Rat Treatments carred out	296	285	275		856	1140
Total Number of visits Including revists)	671	704	480		1855	2219
Chargeable Pest Control Service Requests Received By Type	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual to q3	2018/19
Wasps/Bees	16	61	1		78	41
Fleas	2	11	2		15	17
Mice	3	3	1		7	4
Cockroaches	0	0	0		0	1
Ants	2	1	0		3	2
Bedbugs	0	3	0		3	8
Other	3	0	0		3	7
Total	26	79	4	0	109	80
No. of concessions granted per chargeable service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual to q3	2018/19
Wasps	4	31	0		35	7
Fleas	0	1	0		1	4
Mice	0	0	0		0	0
Cockroaches	0	0	0		0	1
Ants	0	0	0		0	0
Bedbugs	0	1	0		1	1
Other	0	0	0		0	2

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Agenda Item 11

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **27th February 2020**
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 30th April 2020**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Garth Collier, Deputy Leader / Executive Member Environment**
Report Submitted by: **Cllr Joanna Wilkins, Chair of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	13.02.20			27.02.20			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Community Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 30th April 2020 for discussion and to update the Committee on any changes.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans. Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
 - 2.3 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in June 2019, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
 - 2.4 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 30th April 2020, and
 - Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;

- Suggest any additional invitees that the committee requires to fully consider the reports; and
- Request any additional information to be included with regards to the topics to be discussed.

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting 30th April 2020, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 30th April 2020

Community Services Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme

Scrutiny Meeting Date: Thursday 30th April 2020

Scrutiny Deadline to receive reports: Wednesday 15th April 2020

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Report	Method/ Expert Witness/Exec Member	Latest CLT Sign Off Date	Executive Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Annual Review of Flood Management Plan	Clive Rogers	Monitoring To report progress on the Flood Management Plan.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21 (Info Item)	N/A
Aneurin Leisure Trust Six Monthly Performance	Dave Watkins	Monitoring Members to consider the content of the six monthly performance report.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21 (Info Item)	N/A
Annual Review of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan	Liz Hancocks	Monitoring Members to consider the Annual review of the Forward Plan.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21 (Info Item)	N/A
Progress on the Gwent Homelessness Strategy	Dave Thompson / Mark Congreve	Information To provide Members with a progress update on the Gwent Homelessness Strategy.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21 (Info Item)	N/A
Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) Annual Return 2018/19	Dave Watkins	Monitoring Members to consider the Annual Assessment from Welsh Government which highlights Blaenau Gwent's performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21 (Info Item)	N/A
Review of Asset Management Disposal Policy	Paul Miles	Policy Development To provide Members with the opportunity to review the current Disposal Policy to ensure it is fit for purpose.	Agenda Item	14.04.20	FWP – 2020/21 (Info Item)	N/A
Highways Capital Works Programme 2019/20 Update	Clive Rogers	Monitoring To provide Members with update on progress of the current Highways Capital Works Programme for 2019/20.	Agenda Item	11.02.20	11.03.20	N/A

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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