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**THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND**

17th January 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

**REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee will be held in Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale on Thursday, 23rd January, 2020 at 2.00 pm.

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris  
Managing Director

**AGENDA**

**Pages**

**1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION**

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

**2. APOLOGIES**

We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh or English. / Croesawn ohebiaith trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

Municipal Offices  
Civic Centre  
Ebbw Vale  
NP23 6XB

Swyddfeydd Bwrdeisiol  
Canolfan Dinesig  
Glyn Ebwy  
NP23 6XB

*a better place to live and work*  
*lle gwell i fyw a gweithio*

To receive.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND  
DISPENSATIONS**

To receive.

4. **REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 5 - 10

To receive the minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2019.

(Please note the minutes are submitted for accuracy points only).

5. **ACTION SHEET - 9TH DECEMBER 2019** 11 - 12

To receive action sheet.

6. **REGENERATION WORKFORCE SICKNESS  
ABSENCE PERFORMANCE** 13 - 20

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and the Head of Organisational Development.

7. **TRANSPORT STRATEGY** 21 - 24

To consider the report of the Head of Regeneration.

8. **TECH VALLEYS** 25 - 30

To consider the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services.

9. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - 5TH MARCH 2020** 31 - 34

To receive the report.

To: Councillor L. Parsons (Chair)  
Councillor J. Hill (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor M. Cross  
Councillor G. A. Davies  
Councillor G. L. Davies  
Councillor M. Day  
Councillor P. Edwards  
Councillor M. Holland  
Councillor H. McCarthy

Councillor J. Millard  
Councillor M. Moore  
Councillor J. C. Morgan  
Councillor K. Pritchard  
Councillor K. Rowson  
Councillor B. Willis

All other Members (for information)  
Manager Director  
Chief Officers

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**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

**REPORT TO:** **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE  
REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**SUBJECT:** **REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2019**

**REPORT OF:** **DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

**PRESENT:** COUNCILLOR L. PARSONS (CHAIR)

Councillors J. Hill  
G.A. Davies  
G.L. Davies  
M. Holland  
J. Millard  
J.C. Morgan  
B. Willis

**AND:** Corporate Director Regeneration & Community  
Services  
Head of Regeneration  
Service Manager Development & Estates  
Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities  
Team Manager Connected Communities  
Residential Development Officer  
Business Regeneration Manager  
Scrutiny Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b>  It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b>  Apologies for absence were received for Councillors M. Day, P. Edwards, M. Moore, K. Pritchard, M. Cross, H. McCarthy.	

No. 3	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>Councillor J.C. Morgan declared an interest in the following:</p> <p>Item No. 8 - Regeneration and Economic Development Six Month Performance</p>	
No. 4	<p><b><u>REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><b><u>ACTION SHEET – 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2019</u></b></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><i><u>Action Sheet 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2019 (Request for a Joint Committee – Leisure Services)</u></i></p> <p>A Member requested an update on the situation regarding the request for a Joint Committee. He said Leisure Services had been considered by a Joint Committee initially, and he felt this arrangement should continue, particularly in light of a number of Members on the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee sitting on the Leisure Review Members' Working Group.</p> <p>In response the Scrutiny Officer said Leisure Services sits within the remit of the Community Services Committee, and any request for a Joint Committee would need to be referred to the Chair of that Committee for consideration.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
No. 6	<p><b><u>ENERGY PROSPECTUS</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p>	

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The Team Manager presented the report which sought Members' support to recommend the draft Energy Prospectus to the Executive for approval, to be released and marketed to potential project partners and investors. It was hoped that the Prospectus would demonstrate the proactive approach being taken by the Council to increase local energy generation and offer a significant contribution towards the reduction of our carbon footprint.

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

A Member enquired regarding the air quality in Blaenau Gwent, and also what benefits could be expected after implementation of all the proposed initiatives. He was sceptical regarding the use of electric vehicles, as while there had been some advances, the infrastructure was still not in place for electric vehicles.

The Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services said the air quality in the Borough was monitored and reported through the Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis. There were currently no issues with our air quality, and hopefully some of the initiatives outlined in the Energy Prospectus would ensure that position. In terms of implementation of projects, there was significant funding available to invest in energy projects, and the Council had committed to reducing our carbon footprint.

The Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities said reduction of the carbon footprint was on the National agenda, and there may well be targets imposed in the future, and financial penalties for not hitting those targets. In relation to the Member's comments regarding electric vehicles, the Officer said this was also part of the National agenda, and was something that the Council could not afford not to take into account, however, there was national funding available to support this initiative.

A Member said he fully supported and welcomed the report. As part of the Bridging the Gap proposals the Authority had committed to reducing its carbon footprint to zero by 2030, and he said this Prospectus was evidence that we are moving towards that target.

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	<p>Another Member said he also welcomed the report, but felt that it could be extended to include the wider community.</p> <p>In response the Officer said the Prospectus was very much a starting point, and it seemed appropriate to look at businesses in the first instance as they are the largest energy users in the Borough. However, another strand of the programme identified the need to understand how our residents use energy and what can be done to help them reduce their carbon footprint.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Scrutiny Committee support the Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus and recommend approval by the Executive Committee (Option 2).</p>	
<b>No. 7</b>	<p><b><u>LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration &amp; Community Services.</p> <p>The Residential Development Officer presented the report which informed Members of the requirement to update and revise the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) in line with Welsh Government guidance, and sought the views of the Committee prior to Executive approval to engage in developing a new Local Housing Strategy.</p> <p>A discussion ensued when the Team Manager Connected Communities said the aim of the LHS was to achieve a balanced community with a greater mix of affordable housing and open market homes. Whilst we want to attract people to the area, we also want to create good quality homes for our residents. In terms of homelessness, the Officer said Blaenau Gwent did not have significant issues to the levels seen within Newport and Cardiff, however, there were people in Blaenau Gwent with no permanent housing arrangements and having to 'sofa surf' with family and friends.</p> <p>A Member said this Strategy was very important for the Borough, and he was pleased to see a focus on the provision of good quality housing.</p>	



	<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Scrutiny Committee endorse the Council to work collaboratively with Gwent wide Local Authorities to investigate the possibility of producing a Regional Housing Strategy and local action plan (Option 2).</p>	
<b>No. 8</b>	<p><b><u>REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SIX MONTH PERFORMANCE</u></b></p> <p>Councillor J.C. Morgan declared an interest in this item.</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Regeneration.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration &amp; Community Services presented the report which provided service activity from April 2019 to September 2019, and highlighted how the Department contributed towards four of the Council's corporate aims in terms of delivering a resilient Wales, healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, and a Wales of more cohesive communities. He said this was the first time the report had been presented in the new format.</p> <p>A discussion ensued when a Member said the report should include the aims of the Future Generations Act, and aspects of Tech Valleys and Cardiff City Deal.</p> <p>A Member welcomed the new format. He referred to the Aspire apprenticeship scheme and asked whether new housing developers in the Borough were being contacted regarding apprenticeship opportunities.</p> <p>In response the Team Manager Connected Communities confirmed that opportunities for apprenticeships were explored wherever possible with local contractors. In terms of the larger housing developments now coming through, some of the larger contractors offered apprenticeships as part of community benefits.</p> <p>A further discussion ensued regarding the options for recommendation, when a Member proposed an additional recommendation (Option 3), namely that the report be accepted, subject to the inclusion of the aims of the Future</p>	

	<p>Generations Act, and aspects of Tech Valleys and Cardiff City Deal.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Officer explained that the Member's comments would be raised as an action point and passed to the Performance Team for inclusion in future reports, Members agreed this course of action; and it was</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted as provided (Option 2).</p>	
<b>No. 9</b>	<p><b><u>TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration &amp; Economic Development.</p> <p>The Team Manager Connected Communities presented the report which outlined the recommendation to establish a Town Centre Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>The Chair sought nominations from the Committee when a Member said there should be representation for each Town Centre.</p> <p>Following a brief discussion, the Chair confirmed that he would discuss representation with Members, and it was</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the establishment of a Town Centre Strategy Task and Finish Group be approved (Option 1).</p>	
<b>No. 10</b>	<p><b><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 23<sup>RD</sup> JANUARY, 2020</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2020.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted.</p>	

**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

**Action Sheet**

**Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
5	<b><u>Action Sheet – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019</u></b>  Members referred to the Leisure and Culture Services Review and asked that the Chair of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee consider opening up the meeting in February to invite all Scrutiny Members to take part in discussions for this item.	Chair, Community Services Scrutiny Committee	Response to be provided.
8	<b><u>Regeneration and Economic Development Six Months Performance</u></b>  A member requested that in future reporting all 7 aspects of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the areas of Tech Valleys and Cardiff Capital Region City Deal be included in the report.	Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services / Corporate Performance Team	<p>For each Well-being Objective, as identified within the Corporate Plan, the key Well-being Goals that they will support to implement have been identified. The Well-being of Future Generations Act does not require for all Well-being Objectives to meet all of the Well-being Goals as the intention is for them to concentrate on certain area in which they can have the most impact.</p> <p>More information can be included in the performance report on City Deal etc, however, it should be noted that a separate report on the City Deal and Tech Valleys is presented to the committee.</p>



# Agenda Item 6

*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: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **23<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

Report Subject: **Regeneration Workforce Sickness Absence Performance**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor D. Davies**

Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Director of Regeneration and Community Services**  
**Andrea J Prosser, Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
DMT	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	17.12.19	13.01.20			23.01.20			

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members of Regeneration Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge relevant Directorate sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Staff attendance is critical in delivering services and the Council's priorities and is a key performance indicator reflected in the quarterly Finance and Performance report. Improving attendance remains a key priority for the Council and is linked to the need to create efficiencies and improve service delivery.
- 2.2 Sickness absence within the Authority is identified as a key risk and it is acknowledged that high levels of sickness absence will have a detrimental impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively. Therefore, the need to reduce the impact and cost of sickness absence has been identified as a corporate priority.

## 3 Performance Information

- 3.1 The overall year end outturn figure for 2018/19 the Council was 12.66 days per full time equivalent (FTE) employee. An increase from the previous year's outturn of 11.2 days and exceeds the target set of 8.5 days.
- 3.2 Whilst sickness levels remain high it is important to note that the majority of employees have little or no sickness absence and attend work regularly. The vast majority of Council employees have excellent attendance levels as data indicates that 2463 employees attended work every day during the period from April 2018 to March 2019 with the Council having an attendance level of 94.3%.

- 3.3 A report reviewing workforce Sickness Absence Performance for the Council went to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations for improvement and also recommend the following; that processes be put in place for individual Directorates to report quarterly to their specific scrutiny committees for challenge and scrutiny on Directorate's sickness absence performance; and that the Executive Committee also have the opportunity to review this report.
- 3.4 **Appendix 1** outlines the sickness performance information for the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate for quarter 1 and 2 of 2019/20 as well as summarising the position in 2018/19.

#### 4. **Directorate Comments/Actions for Improvement**

- 4.1 Whilst there is evidence of managerial action in managing sickness the Regeneration Service acknowledges that better use of the iTrent system is required, at present 16.48% of return to work meetings were recorded on iTrent, and the department needs to ensure that all return to work meetings are recorded within iTrent.

##### **Actions**

- Targets and improvement objectives set for each service area
- Focussed quarterly session with Regeneration and Community Services Management Team and OD to review sickness absence and application of the Managing Attendance Policy
- Continued awareness raising with managers on the importance of application of the Managing Attendance Policy and the timely updating of iTrent
- Review of sickness absence to be added to all managers 121 sessions
- Update training for managers on managing sickness will be facilitated jointly with OD in new year
- Regeneration and Community Services Management Team to monitor agreed actions – sickness absence to continue to be a regular item on the management team agenda.

#### 5. **Options for Recommendation**

##### 5.1 **Option 1**

That the Scrutiny Committee having scrutinised the sickness absence performance information and proposed arrangements to improve attendance rates within the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate identify any further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement.

##### 5.2 **Option 2**

That the Scrutiny Committee endorse the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance.

- 6. Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 6.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**  
There are direct and indirect costs of sickness absence which are a key driver in the Council's approach to effectively improve attendance at work.
- 6.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions**  
The underperformance in relation to the high levels of sickness absence does present a significant risk in terms of the impact on front line service delivery and continuity through lost time and staffing changes. In addition, the financial implications associated with sickness absence directly impact on the Council's financial efficiency targets and the level of financial savings that the Council needs to achieve. Mitigating actions are detailed within the report.
- 6.3 Legal**  
There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 6.4 Human Resources**  
The staffing implications are detailed within the content of the report.
- 7. Supporting Evidence**
- 7.1 Performance Information and Data**  
The detailed performance evidence is detailed in appendix 1 as well as the actions taken to address the level of underperformance.
- 7.2 Expected outcome for the public**  
Information included within the report will provide opportunity for the public to scrutinise the Council's performance and provide accountability across the Council.
- 7.3 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation) – Trade Union** have been consulted on the sickness absence performance and are committed to working with the Council to improve attendance.
- 7.4 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**  
Options detailed in this report contribute directly to enabling the workforce for the future.
- 7.5 Preventative focus**  
The review of the Organisational Development Strategy will focus on prevention.
- 7.6 Collaboration / partnership working**  
There are regular discussions with the national Human Resources Directors Network and regionally in terms of good practice or emerging practice in reducing sickness absence. There are early discussions with the WLGA to launch a project to learn from England any initiatives in relation to wellbeing.

7.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

NA

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

The review of sickness absence performance was carried out and included all employees of the Council.

**8. Monitoring Arrangements**

- 8.1 Sickness absence statistics are reported to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and an annual performance report is presented to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee. Directorate positions and actions for improvement will be reported to specific scrutiny committees. Biannual workforce profiles are discussed with Managers and Headteachers.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – Sickness Absence Monitoring – Quarters 1 and 2



## Sickness Absence 2019/20 (Quarter 1 & 2) – Regeneration & Community Services

Corporate Director – Richard Crook

Head of Regeneration & Development – Ellie Fry

Head of Community Services – Clive Rogers Evans

Service Manager Public Protection – Dave Thompson

### Total Days lost per FTE Employee (Annual Council Target 11 days per FTE Employee)

2019/20	Qtr1 (Target 2.75)	Qtr2 (Target 5.50)
Council	3.06	5.93
Corporate Services	1.71	4.34
Social Services	3.62	7.45
Education	2.84	5.09

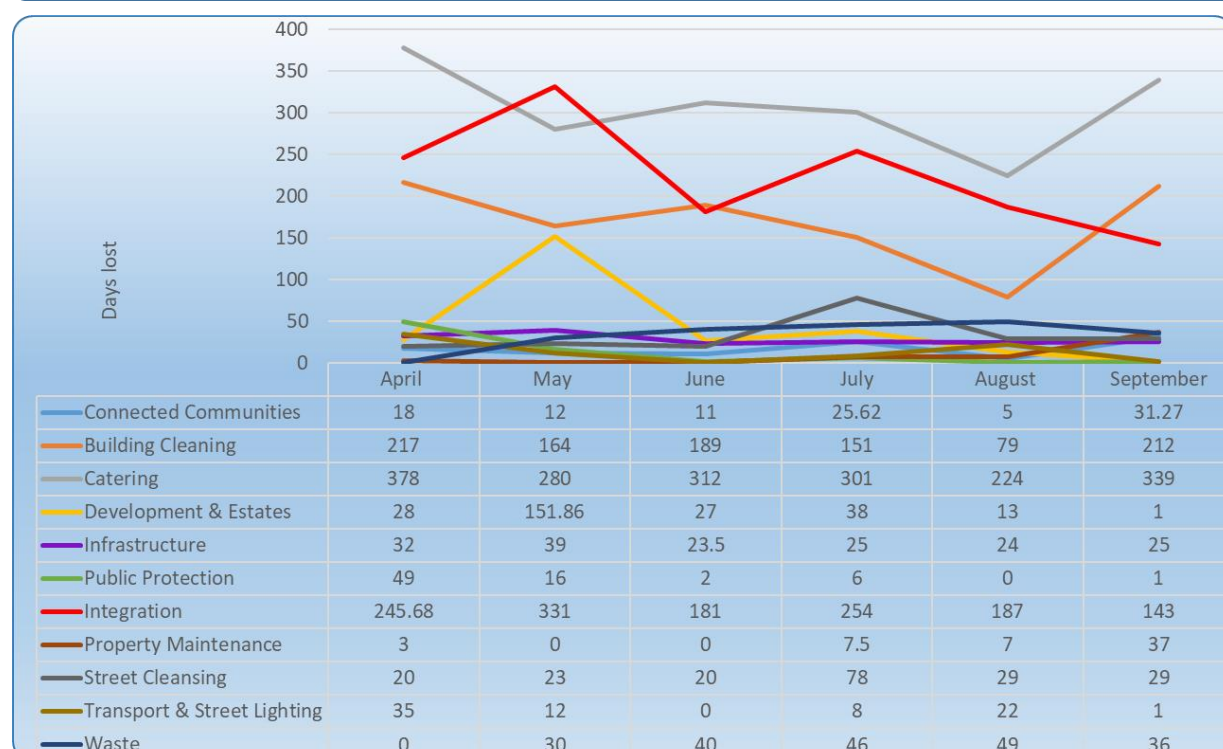
2019/20	Qtr1 (Target 2.75)	Qtr2 (Target 5.50)
Regeneration & Community Services	3.78	7.09
Regeneration & Development	1.57	2.80
Community Services	4.74	9.00
Public Protection	1.71	1.86
Senior Management	0.00	0.00

### 2018/19 – Annual Review Regeneration & Community Services

- 11.21 FTE days lost (Quarter 1 – 2.93, Quarter 2 – 6.62)
- 65.96% of absences were long term
- 69 employees with one or more absences - mental health
- 4706 calendar days lost - mental health
- 16 employees with more than 6 calendar months sickness
- 9 employees disciplined for sickness absence

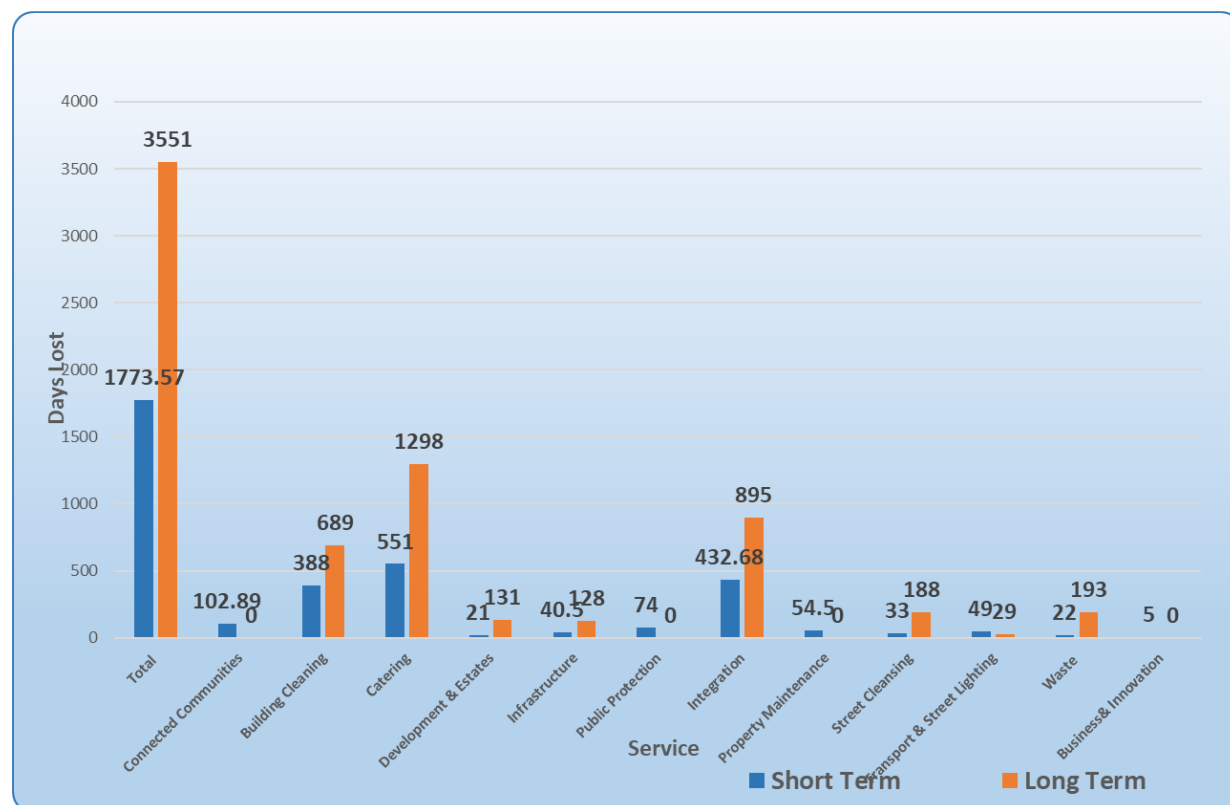
### Total Working Days Lost - 01.04.19 – 30.09.19

- 5,324.57 working days lost to sickness absence (24,094.24 hours)



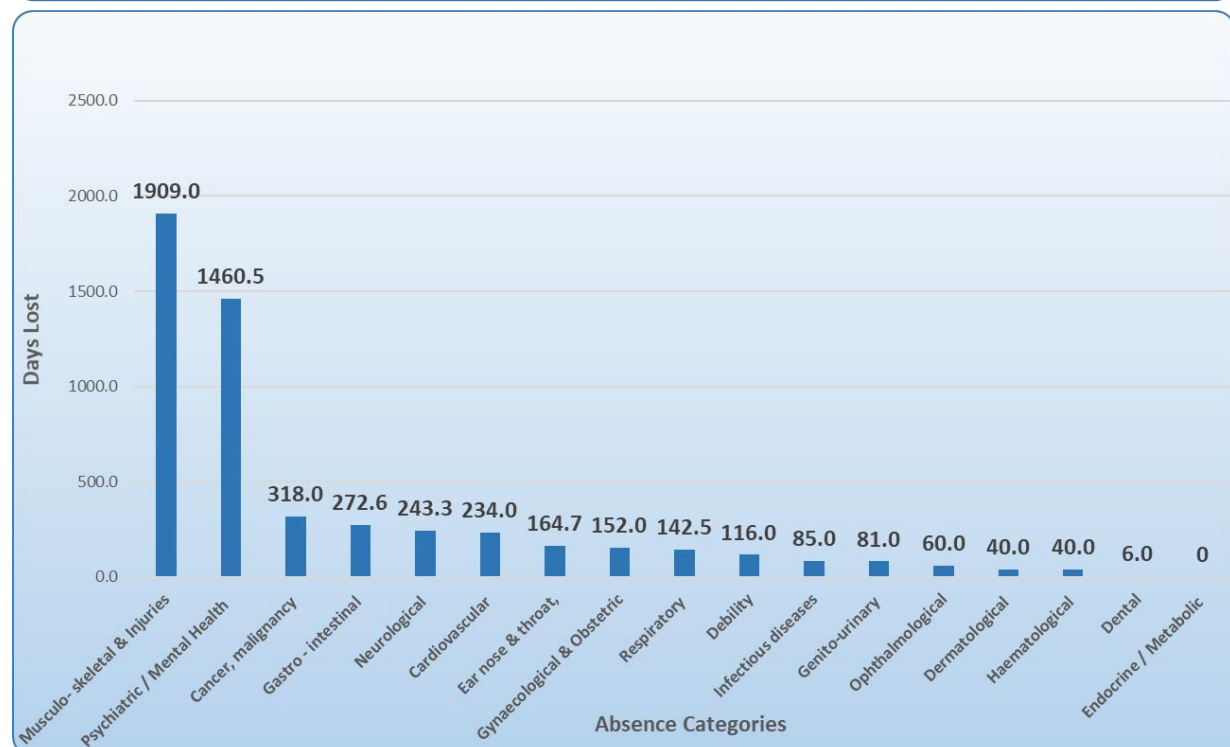
### Total Working Days Lost - Short Term / Long Term

- **66.7%** of absence is long term



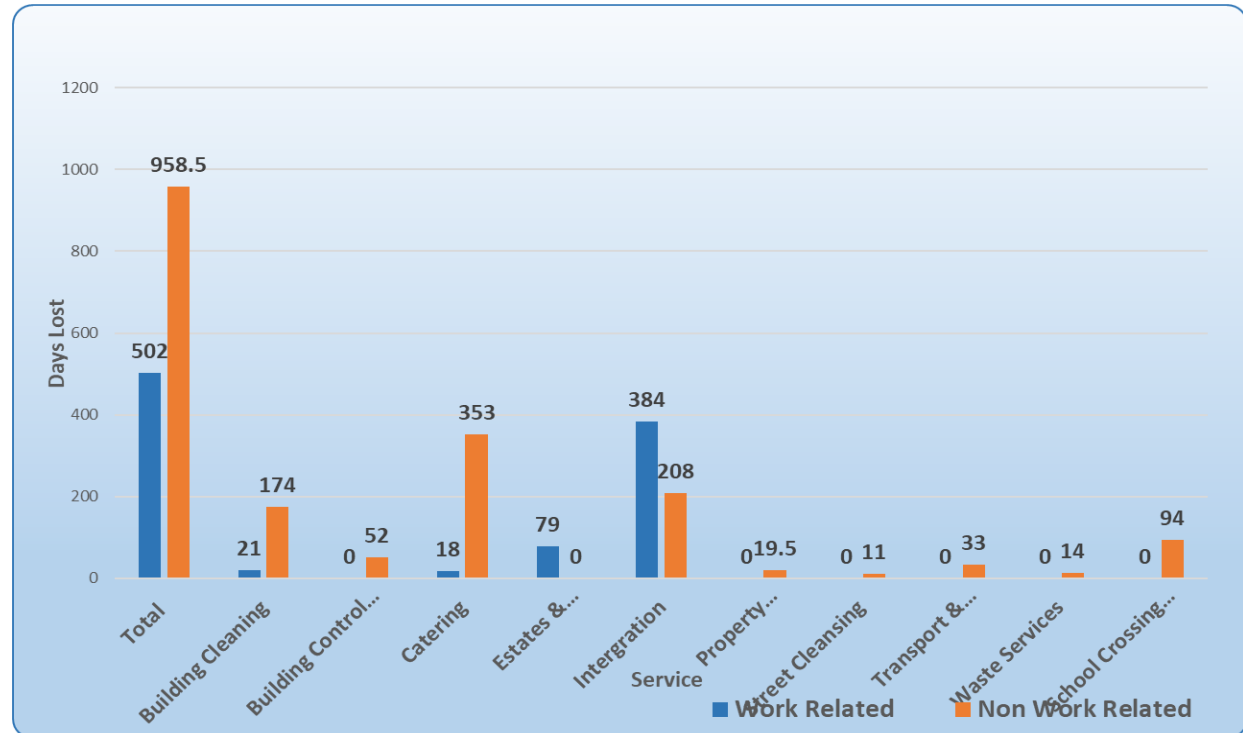
### Total Working Days Lost by Reason

- **Top 3 reasons** – Musculoskeletal & Injuries, Psychiatric/Mental Health, Cancer/ malignancy
- **1909** working days lost to Musculoskeletal & Injuries



### Total Working Days lost Psychiatric / Mental Health (Work / Non Work Related)

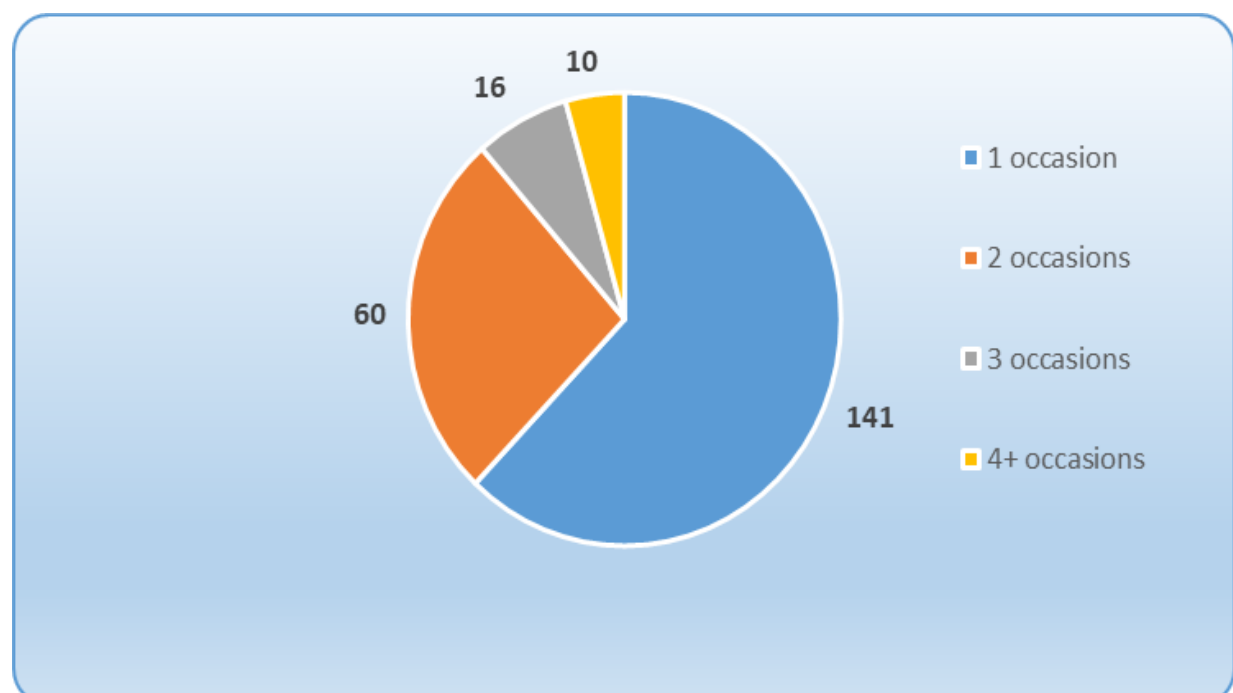
- **34%** of days lost to Psychiatric / Mental Health identified as work related
- **46** employees with one or more absences - Mental Health
- **65** occasions of absence - Mental Health



### Number reporting sickness

- Number of staff reporting sick – **231**
- Number of occasions of sickness absence - **357**

### Number of occasions of absence per employee



### Impact - Financial / Staff Resources

- The cost of lost time for the six-month period is estimated at **£288,649** based on an average salary of **£23,107.11 – £11.98** per hour (Average Salary - Pay Policy calculation excluding staff on the Teachers pay and conditions). These costs do not include on-costs, cover arrangements or management time to manage the sickness.
- This equates to **25 FTE** employees being absent for the full 6 months.

### Management of Sickness Absence

- **25** Open sickness cases as at 30.09.19
- **40** Occupational health referrals made during the period
- Number of Trigger Breaks based on the most recent absence in the period for each employee (however they may have broken more than one trigger in the rolling year)
  - **95 employees - 3 or more occasions**
  - **144 employees - 10 or more days absence**
  - **75 employees - 3 or more occasions & 10 or more days**
  - **118 employees - Did not hit a trigger**
- **16.48%** Return to works have been recorded on iTrent
- **5** Written Warnings issued
- **1** Dismissal on Medical Capability

# 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: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**  
Date of meeting: **23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020**  
Report Subject: **Transport Strategy**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**  
Report Submitted by: **Ellie Fry, Head of Regeneration & Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
17.12.19	07.01.20	13.01.20			23.01.20	11.03.20		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Members views on the content and scope of the proposed transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. The transport strategy is to take into account the local needs of the community around existing and new developments of housing, business and employment, and Town centres; but also have in mind the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 in terms of helping to support a:

- Resilient Wales
- Healthier Wales
- More equal Wales, and
- A Wales of more cohesive communities

The strategy will also have a close alliance with the Local Development Plan (LDP) and its policies relating to transport and connectivity.

- 2.2. The scope of the strategy should include elements on:

- What our integrated local transport services would look like with 4 trains per hour and 2 trains per hour – including taxis, responsive community transport, etc.
- How do we assist more people to get to work?
- The purpose of the Council's subsidy – should it be for people to access work or access services, or both?
- Consider the wider transport links to other local authority areas
- Working with service operators' future plans, and other partners e.g. third sector
- How active travel fits and how we promote it
- How we achieve this with a low, or zero carbon approach

There has been some work undertaken on good practice in transport strategies and this has given some clear guidelines in how to approach developing and implementing a clear and robust strategy.

- 2.3. Some of the main strategic recommendations that we need to consider are around developing a long term vision for the strategy that commits to long-term planning, including:
- the recognition of the inter-dependencies between local, regional and national transport strategies and Transport for Wales Metro proposals;
  - recognition of how transport contributes to broad social, economic and environmental goals;
  - referencing how the local and regional transport underpins the Welsh Government's approach to their strategy delivery with clear allocation and division of responsibilities between WG, other agencies and local authorities;
  - clear links to other policy frameworks like spatial planning and economic development; clear identification of the transport problems and issues facing the local citizens both currently and in the future;
  - a set of overarching policy objectives with the specific transport sub-objectives framed within these to enable real solutions to be developed rather than retro-fitting a solution as an objective;
  - Use of analytics to understand how transport demand and conditions might change in the future and to appraise/prioritise components of the strategy;
  - Consensus building through participation of key stakeholders.
- 2.4. Alongside the policy considerations there are operational improvements and new opportunities that can be explored and utilised:
- The Welsh Government White Paper proposals for the new joint implementation arrangements;
  - Recognition of the growing role of all modes of transport, active travel, and their interdependencies;
  - Opportunities to improve efficiency and visibility of operations through better digital connectivity and emerging technical solutions;
  - Aspirations for improvements in operations, maintenance, and infrastructure;
  - Gradual implementation of the strategy, allowing public support to be generated and maintained;
  - Recognition of risks in delivering the strategy and mechanisms for providing early warning signs and managing those risks;
  - Recognising we need to assess progress by drawing on robust evidence and data to modify our implementation accordingly.
- 2.5. The WelTAG assessment work that is currently being undertaken by Transport for Wales and Welsh Government will inform the interdependencies between the national, regional and local service provision in terms of rail and bus interchange needs. Once the main rail options are identified there will be another stage of more detailed studies by TfW and the local transport strategy will be an important reference document.

- 2.6 In a similar way to the skills strategy consultation, the transport strategy will consult with groups of stakeholders across the County Borough at various stages in its development.
- 2.7 A future, regional (CCR) transport strategy to cover South East Wales post 2020 with our neighbouring authorities is a probability that has not been confirmed yet, but one we are expecting. We will need to compete our local transport strategy with a knowledge that a higher level regional plan would sit above it as transport is linear and connective understanding movements between other neighbouring local authority areas and regional trip attractors like hospitals and other destinations is key.

### **3. Options for Recommendation**

#### **3.1 Option 1 – to await the WeITAG clarity and begin the local transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent**

That the local transport strategy is started in 2020 following the publication of the direction for local rail travel and ties in with the Wales Transport Strategy and future CCR Transport Strategy.

#### **3.2 Option 2 – to not undertake work to a Blaenau Gwent transport strategy.**

That we do not undertake a local transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent but await the regional transport strategy when that is undertaken.

#### **Preferred Option**

Option 1 – to proceed writing the strategy for BG.

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

#### **4.1. This topic supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2022 in the following area:**

- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities

This strategy will support policies in the Local Development Plan (LDP)

### **5. Implications Against Each Option**

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

The budget for the Transport Strategy will be from the Local Transport Grant and costs could be shared with other local authorities.

#### **5.2. *Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There are no risks directly associated with this report

#### **5.3. *Legal***

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4. ***Human Resources***

There are no additional implications for human resources at this point.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1. ***Performance Information and Data***

N/A

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

Improved economy and community benefits subject to the strategy outputs and take up of resulting services

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

The strategy and action plan is designed to be a method to organise support to target areas of need identified

6.4. ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Potential for collaboration and stakeholder engagement

6.5. ***Integration (across service areas)***

Potential for integration across service areas.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

To be agreed

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

*None*



# 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: **Regeneration Scrutiny**  
Date of meeting: **23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020**  
Report Subject: **Tech Valleys**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D. Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**  
Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
17.12.19	07.01.20	13.01.20			23.01.20	11.03.20		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide background, context and an overview of the progress of the Tech Valleys programme.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Welsh Government announced the Tech Valleys programme in the summer of 2017 and the Tech Valleys is a £100 million WG commitment over ten years to create 1,500 sustainable jobs focused on Blaenau Gwent and hinterland by capitalising on opportunities arising from the fourth industrial revolution, encouraging the adoption of digital technologies and developing high value advanced technologies that support cutting edge industries. The programme will be delivered through a portfolio of related and complementary projects together with support for inward investment propositions.

*In 2027 the South Wales Valleys, and Blaenau Gwent in particular, will be a globally recognised centre for the development of new technologies, to support cutting edge industry.*

- 2.2 As part of the wider review of the governance of the Enterprise Zone programme in Wales, Welsh Government decided to wind up the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone Board and in respect of Blaenau Gwent they introduced the Tech Valleys Advisory Group with the following role.
- 2.3 The role of the Tech Valleys Strategic Advisory Group is to provide coordinated advice to the Welsh Government on:
- strategic objectives, priorities and delivery related to Tech Valleys;
  - best practice and learning in other regions of the UK and internationally;

- deployment and roll out of the investment in Tech Valleys to encourage maximum positive impact across Blaenau Gwent in particular and the wider economy of Wales; and
- activity and progress to date in relation to Tech Valleys, which may include strategic advice towards investment opportunities, encouraging supply chain development, identifying property and infrastructure needs, business support, international export, R&D, marketing and promotion of the wider Heads of the Valleys area.

#### 2.4 The current members of the Advisory Group are:

- Mark Langshaw MBE, Managing Director Continental Teeves Ebbw Vale (Chair)
- Katy Chamberlain. Chief Executive of Business in Focus and Deputy Chair of the ICAEW Strategy Board for Wales
- Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services, Blaenau Gwent CBC
- James Davies, Chair of Industry Wales and Council members at HEFCW
- Stephen Doran, CEO Compound Semiconductor Applications Catapult
- Julian Morris, Director Cisco Services
- Prof Rossi Setchi Leader of high Value Manufacturing Group, Cardiff University
- David Warrender, Chief Executive Innovation Point, Newport
- Tim Williams, Chief Welsh Automotive Forum

#### **Current Position**

- 2.5 Over the last six months good progress has been made establishing the programme management for Tech Valleys and there has been significant work to build the relationships with companies and other organisations across the region, and to develop ideas that can be translated into robust business cases that can be considered for funding from the Tech Valleys programme.

Final business case stage: 6  
 Early business case stage: 6  
 Ideas in development: 9

- 2.6 The following projects totalling in the region of £18.5M have been included as part of the programme:

- National Digital Exploitation Centre – This facility which is delivered by Thales provides 4 core activities, a test facility for the protection of critical infrastructure such as energy, a test facility to test new products from a Cyber Security perspective, Schools and wider educational activity and a base for Phd's in the Cyber Security area.
- The refurbishment of the former Tech Board Building (220,000 sq ft).
- The construction of the 50000sqft building at Rhyd y Blew.
- The provision of composite centre at the Learning Zone.
- Lime Avenue Business Units as part of a Joint Venture with the Council.
- In addition, match funding towards a bid for the development of a 5G testbed in Blaenau Gwent has been agreed as part of a £30m project which would have Welsh Government, DCMS and £15m of private sector funding. The test bed would allow the application of future technology to be tested in a range of conditions across public and private platforms.
- Roseheyworth Constrained Units refurbishment.
- Box works, Lime Avenue – 21 start units on the Works site.
- Potential support for the Rassau and Tafarnaubach Business improvement district.

2.7 The TV Advisory Group has also supported the development of 2 further business cases:

(i) Industry in Schools

The project will establish a co-ordinated programme of support, centred on “industry in schools (STEM) facilitation” within Blaenau Gwent, raising aspiration and preparing pupils for their journey into the world of work; and complimentary to the current and emerging school curriculum.

The project will:

- Establish an initial pilot project area, within the Ebbw Fawr Cluster.
- Establish a STEM baseline within schools to enable, targeted intervention, tracking of progress and associated outcomes;
- Consider a seamless and quality STEM provision as part of the transition between primary and secondary;
- Utilise key initiatives to drive change and increase uptake and attainment in STEM;
- Engage positively with stakeholders including children, teachers, parents, partners and business; and
- Engage with business and industry to proactively support schools and establish a business offer.

(ii) Future Skills Academy

The project will:

- be an industry led centre of excellence supporting existing and future business to meet current and long term skills requirements;

- provide capacity for higher level training delivery from HE and FE for Business in existing and future/emerging technologies;
- provide a 'maker space' to support inward investment and business start-ups by offering companies access to latest technologies;
- have an apprenticeship programme that will generate engineers and technicians for the future;
- provide a "first level or back to work" employment experience; and
- support the culture of enterprise through the establishment of a Tech Lab.

2.8 The proposal under consideration will require capital and revenue investment from Tech Valleys and it is envisaged that this will be phased over the length of the programme. The contribution will be detailed within a business plan and demonstrate the commitment over a period of time.

2.9 There has already been a financial commitment made by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council with the purchase of premises for the proposed academy, the former Monwel Hankinson Building on Letchworth Rd in Ebbw Vale. The projects identified to date in the report will form part of a longer term investment pipeline of activity in line with the vision.

### **Options for Recommendation**

#### **3.1 Option 1**

To note and endorse the work of the Tech Valleys Programme

#### **Option 2**

To note but not endorse the work of the Tech Valleys Programme

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

The work of the Tech Valleys is informed by key WG documents; Prosperity for All, Employability Delivery Plan, Apprenticeships Skills Policy Plan, Economic Action Plan and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The work of Tech Valleys provides a regional and strategic context that support local priorities and associated work including;

- Corporate Plan - Economic Development and Regeneration
- Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan; Forge new pathways to prosperity
- Regeneration Priorities; employment & skills and enterprise & innovation.
- Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan (Approval Mar 2020).

## **5. Implications Against Each Option**

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

There is no immediate impact on budget associated with the report, aside from the Council's financial commitment in relation to the former Monwel Hankinson building. However, future projects may require the use of the match funding identified in the Council Capital programme.

### **5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Endorsing the work of the Tech Valleys Programme will assist the delivery of the programme and the ability to secure longer term economic benefits from the programme. CCR Skills Partnership and being an engaged and proactive stakeholder.

### **5.3 *Legal***

There are no legal implications associated with the report

### **5.4 *Human Resources***

There are no immediate resource implications associated with the report.

There is representation from BGCBC on the Advisory Board and in regular dialogue with Welsh Government

## **6. Supporting Evidence**

### **6.1 *Performance Information and Data***

Performance of the Tech Valleys Programme

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

- Appropriate skills provision and offer available, aligned to key sectors
- Opportunity to secure further Investment into Blaenau Gwent to secure the vision of Tech Valleys
- Increased number of employment opportunities available
- Increased range of employment opportunities available

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

The Tech Valleys programme is developed through a collaborative approach involving representation from key business sectors, education, universities and WG.

Continued engagement with and the involvement of all key stakeholders is an ongoing priority for Tech Valleys.

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

The Tech Valleys programme plan has been developed as a proactive approach to ensure that the long term Vision for Tech Valleys can be delivered with the economic benefits addressing the long term challenges faced by the Authority.

#### **6.5 *Preventative focus***

#### **6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working***

Collaboration and partnership working is at the centre of the Tech Valleys programme

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

Integration across WG, Further Education, Higher Education, Public Sector, Business etc. is a key component of the plan in delivering successful actions and outcomes.

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

### **7. *Monitoring Arrangements***

#### **7.1 Any regional reviews will be reported for information to BGCBC Scrutiny and Executive.**

#### **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

# 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: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr David Davies, Executive Regeneration and Economic Development**

Report Submitted by: **Cllr Lee Parsons, Chair of the Regeneration 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				23.01.20			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
  - 1.1 To present to Members the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 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 5<sup>th</sup> March 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 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020, as presented.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020



**Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**  
**Forward Work Programme**

**Scrutiny Meeting Date:** Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Scrutiny Deadline to receive reports:** Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020

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Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Report	Method/ Expert Witness/Exec Member	CLT Sign Off	Executive Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Review of Asset Management Disposal Policy	Paul Miles	<b>Policy Development</b> To provide Members with the opportunity to review the current Disposal Policy to ensure it is fit for purpose.	Agenda Item	11.02.20	11.03.20	26.03.20
Targeted Regeneration Funding (TRI) Update	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	<b>Monitoring</b> Members to receive an update on TRI funding.	Agenda Item	11.02.20	22.04.20	N/A
Employment and Skills Plan	Bethan McPherson / Tara Lane	<b>Policy Development</b> To consider and recommend for approval the Skills Strategy.	Agenda Item  <i>Invitee:</i> PSB Scrutiny Members	11.02.20	11.03.20	N/A
NEW ITEM Crowd Funding	Bethan McPherson	<b>Service Delivery</b> To seek endorsement to engage and be the lead authority for a regional crowd funding platform, providing funding for community based projects.	Agenda Item	11.02.20	11.03.20	N/A
<b>INFORMATION ITEMS</b>						
Annual Monitoring of the Regeneration Business Plan	Richard Crook / Ellie Fry	<b>Information</b> To receive an update on the Regeneration Business Plan.	Information item	11.02.20	22.04.20	N/A

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