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

Dydd Gwener, 28 Chwefror 2020 Dydd Gwener, 28 Chwefror 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

**PWLLGOR CRAFFU ADFYWIO**

A meeting of the Pwllgor Craffu Adfywio will be held in Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale on Dydd Iau, 5ed Mawrth, 2020 at 10.00 am.

***Please note that a pre and post meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start and following the conclusion of the meeting for members of the committee.***

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris  
Managing Director

**AGENDA**

**Pages**

**1. CYFIEITHU AR Y PRYD**

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.

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

2. **YMDDIHEURIADAU**  
Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.
3. **DATGANIADAU BUDDIANT A GODDEFEBAU**  
Derbyn datganiadau buddiant a goddefebau.
4. **PWLLGOR CRAFFU ADFYWIO** 5 - 18  
Derbyn cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Adfywio a gynhaliwyd ar 23 Ionawr 2020.  
(Dylid nodi y cyflwynir y cofnodion er pwyntiau cywirdeb yn unig).
5. **DALEN WEITHREDU – 23 IONAWR 2020** 19 - 20  
Derbyn dalen weithredu.
6. **CYNLLUN CYFLOGAETH A SGILIAU 2020-2023** 21 - 54  
Ystyried adroddiad Bethan McPherson, Rheolwr Tîm Cymunedau Cysylltiedig.
7. **BUDDSODDIAD ADFYWIO WEDI'I DARGEDU** 55 - 64  
Ystyried adroddiad Rheolwr Tîm Cyfleoedd Adfywio.
8. **BLAENRAGLEN GWAITH – 7 MAI 2020** 65 - 68  
Derbyn yr adroddiad.

To: L. Parsons (Cadeirydd)  
J. Hill (Is-gadeirydd)  
M. Cross  
G. A. Davies  
G. L. Davies  
M. Day  
P. Edwards  
M. Holland  
H. McCarthy  
J. Millard  
M. Moore  
J. C. Morgan  
K. Pritchard  
K. Rowson

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 –  
23<sup>RD</sup> JANUARY, 2020**

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

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

Councillors M. Cross  
M. Day  
H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons)  
M. Moore  
J. C. Morgan  
K. Pritchard  
K. Rowson  
B. Willis

**AND:** Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services  
Head of Regeneration  
Service Manager – Development & Estates  
Business and Regeneration Manager  
Scrutiny Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Edwards, J. Hill, J. Millard and M. Holland.</p>	

<p><b>No. 3</b></p>	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<p><b>No. 4</b></p>	<p><b><u>REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously,</p> <p>AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p><b>No. 5</b></p>	<p><b><u>ACTION SHEET – 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2019</u></b></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:</p> <p><b><u>Action Sheet – 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 – Leisure and Culture Service Review</u></b></p> <p>A Member expressed his disappointment that the Chair of Community Services Scrutiny Committee had declined the request to allow all Scrutiny Members to participate in the discussion relating to the Leisure and Culture Service Review at the Committee’s meeting in February 2020.</p> <p>It was noted that at the time that the original proposal to establish the Leisure Trust had been presented, a meeting of the relevant Scrutiny Committee had been opened up to all Scrutiny Members to discuss the proposal (with only those Members appointed to the Committee allowed to vote on the proposal).</p> <p>The Member continued by pointing out that a Working Group had undertaken a considerable amount of work over the last 12 – 18 months in respect of this issue and that it was unfortunate that as the Members of the Working Group were not Members of the Community Services Committee, they would be unable to participate or provided with the</p>	

	<p>opportunity to provide feedback to the newly established Task and Finish Group on the work undertaken to date.</p> <p>It was noted that the Wales Audit Office had commented previously that the review of Leisure Services lacked timely and meaningful Scrutiny Member involvement.</p> <p>The Member concluded by reiterating his disappointment that the request for a Joint Scrutiny Committee had been declined and suggested that even if the Members of the original Working Group were not invited to the Committee at the very least, the Chair - Councillor P. Edwards should be invited to attend that meeting.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Officer suggested that a proposal be made to the Chair of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee i.e. that Councillor P. Edwards (Chair of the Working Group) be invited to the February Committee to participate in the discussion in respect of the Leisure and Culture Services Review.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Regeneration &amp; Community Services confirmed that the work undertaken by the Working Group had been incorporated within the final Leisure and Culture Services Review report.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	<p><b>Liz Thomas</b></p>
<p><b>No. 6</b></p>	<p><b><u>REGENERATION WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration &amp; Community Services and the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Regeneration &amp; Community Services presented the report which provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement for the directorate.</p> <p>The Corporate Director advised that this was the first report of this nature that had been presented to Committee (each</p>	

department would be producing a similar report to be presented to their respective Committees) and it was acknowledged that the report was 'work in progress' as further work needed to be undertaken with colleagues in Organisational Development to shape and focus the report to ensure that the statistics and information contained therein related to the Regeneration Service only. It was noted that currently information relating to the Community Services Service had also been included within the report.

The Corporate Director spoke in detail to the report and highlighted points contained therein. He emphasised that the vast majority of Council employees had excellent attendance levels as data indicated that 2463 employees had attended work every day during the period from April to March 2019 with the Council having an attendance level of 94.3%. It was the front line service areas that experienced higher levels of absence.

As a Directorate, sickness absenteeism was discussed at every monthly management meeting. An independent review of the top ten absences had been undertaken which had confirmed that managers were adhering to and applying the Attendance Management Policy.

The Corporate Director continued by stating that whilst there was evidence of managerial action in managing sickness the Regeneration Service acknowledged that better use of the iTrent system was required as at present only 16.48% of return to work meetings were recorded on the iTrent system. It was noted that not every department had access to this system, particularly front line managers and whilst return to work meetings were being held, they could not always necessarily be recorded. Therefore, work was required to improve this position.

Members were then given the opportunity to raise comments/questions in respect of the report.

**Attendance Levels** - a Member referred to the fact that the vast majority of Council employees had excellent attendance levels as the data indicated that 2463 employees attended work every day and said that this was to be commended. He



asked whether these members of staff were commended for their excellent attendance levels.

The Corporate Director acknowledged this valid point and agreed that excellent attendance levels should be celebrated and undertook to pursue this matter at both the departmental management meeting and with Corporate Leadership Team.

**Chronic Sickness** – in reply to question relating to ‘chronic sickness’, the Corporate Director confirmed that this was largely attributed to stress. It was reported that the Council was currently rolling out mental health training for managers in order to better equip them to have appropriate discussions with individuals. It was noted that mental health and stress was a major issue across all organisations.

**iTrent System** – concern was expressed that not all managers had access to this system in order to record sickness information and said that this issue needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

**Report Content** – a Member commended and congratulated officers on the report and said it was beneficial that detailed costings had been supplied.

However, concern was expressed that as the graphs had not been printed in colour Members were unable to decipher this information clearly.

**Mental Health** – a Member referred to the number (46) employees who had lost working days due to mental health illness and as the Council had a duty of care to employees enquired whether there was a procedure in place via occupational health to assist staff suffering with problems of stress and anxiety.

The Corporate Director advised that the Council had increased its training programme in respect of mental health for its managers and this training also highlighted potential ‘triggers’ that could lead to such absences. He pointed out that most staff who were suffering with this condition wanted to attend work and the occupational health advisors needed to be reminded of this. The approach taken needed to be both sympathetic to the business need and the individual.

**Richard Crook**

**Richard Crook/Liz Thomas**

	<p><b>Musculoskeletal &amp; Injuries and Work/Non Work Related Mental Health</b> - a request was made that further information be provided in future reports in relation to Musculoskeletal &amp; Injuries and Work/Non Work Related Mental Health.</p> <p><b>Attendance Management Strategies</b> – a Member asked that further information be supplied in respect of the strategies that were being implemented in order to reduce sickness absence.</p> <p>The Corporate Director undertook to pursue this matter.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously that,</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the sickness absence performance information and proposed arrangements to improve attendance rates within the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate had been scrutinised and further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement had been identified.</p>	<p><b>Richard Crook/OD</b></p> <p><b>Richard Crook</b></p>
<p><b>No. 7</b></p>	<p><b><u>TRANSPORT STRATEGY</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Regeneration.</p> <p>The Head of Regeneration presented this initial report which sought Members views on the content and scope of the proposed transport strategy for Blaenau Gwent. The officer explained that further projects in relation of Metro Plus was on the cusp of being developed and the regional transport work with neighbouring authorities would shortly be drawing to a conclusion. Therefore, it was now the opportune time to develop a local strategy for the next 5 years.</p> <p>The Head of Regeneration, thereupon, spoke in detail to the following paragraphs in the report which outlined:</p> <p><b>Paragraph 2.2</b> – the scope of the strategy and the elements which should be included.</p>	

**Paragraph 2.3** – the main strategic recommendations that needed to be considered around developing a long term vision for the strategy that commits to long-term planning.

**Paragraph 2.4** – operational improvements and new opportunities that could be explored and utilised.

It was noted that relevant stakeholders would also be consulted as part of the process. The Head of Regeneration emphasised that the strategy would not only relate to connectivity for trains but would also include buses, taxis and community transport – i.e. various vehicular movements and the areas/services that required improved access e.g. links were needed to the Rassau and Tafarnaubach Industrial Estates, G.P. surgeries. Discussions would also have to take place with third party organisations e.g. GAVO in order to plug any gaps in the network.

The Head of Regeneration concluded by requesting that discussions primarily focus around paragraph 2.2 i.e. the scope of the strategy and elements that should be included.

Members, thereupon, commented as follows:

- The importance of links to transport people to work.
- Transport links were required to care homes as a matter of urgency as people living in these care settings felt isolated specific mention was made to Red Rose Nursing Home where the nearest bus service was located outside the hospital.
- The provision of bus routes should be a priority.

The Head of Regeneration advised that on occasions commercial bus routes were not available, therefore, alternative forms of transport and options needed to be investigated, for example GAVO ‘book a bus’ for specialist journeys that not were not necessarily commercially viable. There were a number of digital sites available that provided information on the different forms of transport that were available but this needed to made easier for people to use.

- A Member expressed his concern regarding the digital aspect of booking a service and said that some older people did not have access to and use IT facilities.

Another Member suggested that enquiries be made with local bus companies to ask whether they could change their routes to include care homes as there should be direct bus routes provided to these facilities.

The Head of Regeneration undertook to pursue this matter with the Transport Section.

**Ellie Fry**

- A proactive approach should be taken to obtain data from subsidised transport companies.
- As young people undertaking apprenticeships had difficulty accessing job placements, particularly due to access and cost whether there was a system available whereby older persons could voluntarily give up their bus pass to a young person undertaking an apprenticeship in order to provide an opportunity for them to access their placement.

The Head of Regeneration said that she hoped that this initiative could be encouraged. Rassau and Tafarnaubach Industrial Estates were classed as 'Business Improvement Districts' and all these initiatives would be examined for people and young people to access work easier including 'book a bus' for people who worked shifts.

- A Member expressed his concern that the lack of public transport was affecting recruitment (especially of young people) for businesses located within the Heads of the Valleys corridor.

He continued by referring to the report contained in the Information Pack 'Cardiff City Regional Transport Authority' and the work being undertaken as part of these arrangements and said that as this related to the Transport Strategy a precise of this report should have been provided to Members.

He expressed his concern that the information report was portraying that the main project was the Abertillery spur for the railway. However, a comprehensive plan should be provided for the whole of the County Borough which should include the provision of a light railway from Llanhilleth to Brynmawr, connectivity within the

County Borough from east to west and west to east. Also connectivity to and from Abergavenny to Hirwaen and transportation to and from the industrial estates. The Member concluded by suggesting that a Task and Finish Group be established to undertake a piece of work in respect of the transport provision as there numerous ideas that could be captured together with the local knowledge of Members.

The Chair advised that a meeting of the Town Centre Task and Finish Group was due to commence imminently and the issue of transport could be included as part of that agenda. However, subsequently if it was felt that there was a need for an individual Task and Finish Group in relation to transport this would be reported to the next Committee meeting.

**Liz  
Thomas**

The Head of Regeneration advised the report contained in the information pack was a precise of the Regional Transport Authority meetings that had taken place.

- A Member said that in preparing the Local Transport Strategy in addition to the requirements of the County Borough, officers should also take into account the work and projects that other local authorities were pursuing.
- The Ebbw Valley Railway was re-opened in 2008 and at that time it was intended that there be an Abertillery to Newport line. However, as time had now moved on a Member wondered whether this would now do the town more harm than good. He enquired whether officers had looked at the consequences if an Abertillery spur was provided?

The Head of Regeneration advised that a report would be produced by experts who would assess elements such as the socio economic and environmental aspects of the scheme.

With regard to Abertillery there was a need to make the town a vibrant place where people wanted to live and encourage people to make use of lower rents outside of Cardiff and also to attract businesses.

➤ A Member suggested that further work should be undertaken to promote the area and suggested that tourism officers could provide leaflets at Cardiff Central Station in order to promote the benefits of Blaenau Gwent. It was also suggested that a tourist information point be provided at the highest point on the Heads of the Valleys and information be provided at Bryn Bach Park as this was located close to the Heads of the Valleys.

➤ Another Member said that the reintroduction of the railway line had been a great success and had exceeded all expectations. However, he expressed his concern regarding the cost implications of providing an extra mile of railway track to Abertillery and hoped that this would not be detrimental to the overall strategy – there was, therefore, a need to look at the bigger picture.

He continued by referring to the regeneration of Tredegar Town Centre and that its profile had been raised by a Ministerial visit that had been held that day to the town and in particular to the TA Centre. He commended the officers involved in the regeneration projects and requested that officers pass on congratulations and appreciation to Nick Landers and his team for the work undertaken.

➤ Concern was expressed that there was no transport link within the Tredegar valley and asked whether work could be undertaken in conjunction with Caerphilly Council to provide a rail link to Bryn Bach Park.

➤ A suggestion was made that investigations take place into whether people who was in receipt of concessionary travel cards could also benefit using alternative forms of transport such as taxis.

The Head of Regeneration reported that Transport for Wales were introducing a digitised system for tickets which should make route planning easier.

➤ Reference was made to the three old tunnels that linked Sirhowy to Ebbw Vale and that one tunnel entrance

**Ellie Fry**

	<p>was located behind the car park at the Works Site and suggested that this history and artefacts could be incorporated as part of the strategy.</p> <p>The Corporate Director said that transport was currently a major topic nationally and one of the main reasons this strategy was required was in order that the Council could bid for funding to provide affordable and local connectivity throughout the County Borough.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously that,</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the Local Transport Strategy be started in 2020 following the publication of the direction for local rail travel and tied in with the Wales Transport Strategy and future CCR Transport Strategy.</p>	
<p><b>No. 8</b></p>	<p><b><u>TECH VALLEYS</u></b></p> <p>The report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration &amp; Community Services was submitted for consideration.</p> <p>Members were advised that Welsh Government announced the Tech Valleys programme in the summer of 2017 and this was a £100 million Welsh Government commitment over ten years to create 1,500 sustainable jobs focused on Blaenau Gwent and hinterland. In 2027 the South Wales Valleys and Blaenau Gwent in particular, would be a globally recognised centre for development for new technologies, to support cutting edge industry.</p> <p>As part of the wider review of the governance of the Enterprise Zone programme in Wales, Welsh Government had decided to wind up the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone Board and in respect of Blaenau Gwent introduced the Tech Valleys Advisory Group – the role of which was outlined in paragraph 2.3 of the report.</p> <p>Councillor H. McCarthy, B.A. (Hons) left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	

	<p>The Corporate Director, thereupon, gave details of the projects totalling in the region of £18.5m that had been included as part of the programme (outlined in paragraph 2.6 of the report) and in addition, details of two further business cases outlined in paragraph 2.7.</p> <p>At this juncture, Members commented as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It was pleasing to hear details of all the projected ideas and said that inward investment was paramount for the authority succeeding and improve people’s perception and it was hoped that this would come to fruition.</li> <li>➤ Industry in Schools (STEM) – it was hoped that this pilot project could be rolled out to all schools in order to provide equal opportunity and delivery for all pupils in the County Borough.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair advised that the Cardiff City Region Director had spoken at length at a recent meeting regarding STEM and that every authority had been sent an invite for schools to go to Sandhurst STEM Training but that no positive responses had been received from Blaenau Gwent. This had been discussed with the Executive Member.</p> <p>The Corporate Director confirmed that the original bid that had been submitted required a pilot to be undertaken in the first instance and subsequently, this would be rolled out to all schools throughout the County Borough.</p> <p>Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously that,</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Option 1 be endorsed, namely that the work of the Tech Valleys Programme be noted.</p>	
<p><b>No. 9</b></p>	<p><b><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2020</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2020.</p>	



Members were advised that the Information Item – ‘Annual Monitoring of the Regeneration Business Plan’ had been withdrawn.

The following items would be presented to the April Committee:

- Destination Management Report.
- Report relating to the establishment of a Task and Finish Group relating to Public Transport.

Bi-annually an update be provided in respect of:

- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Member Briefings be convened in relation to:

- Tech Valleys.
- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.

The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the following items be submitted to the scheduled meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2020:

- Review of Asset Management Disposal Policy
- Targeted Regeneration Funding (TRI) Update
- Employment and Skills Plan
- Crowd Funding

**Liz  
Thomas**

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**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

**Action Sheet**

**Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action to be Taken</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
5	<p><b><u>Action Sheet – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019</u></b></p> <p><i>Action Sheet: 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019</i> – In relation to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee meeting at which the Leisure and Culture Services Review would be considered – a Member requested that the Chair of the Leisure Review Task and Finish Group be invited to the meeting to provide feedback on the work of the Task and Finish Group.</p>	Chair of Community Services / Scrutiny and Democratic Officer	Chair of the Member Leisure Review Task and Finish Group has been invited to the meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2020.
9	<p><b><u>Forward Work Programme – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020</u></b></p> <p>Member requested additional items be added to the Forward Work Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task and Finish Group – Local Transport Strategy</li><li>• Updates on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Scrutiny Committee to be provided by the Chair</li></ul>	Relevant Officers / Scrutiny and Democratic Officer	<p>Report scheduled into the March FWP.</p> <p>Report to be provided by the Chair in line with the CCRCD Joint Scrutiny Committee meetings.</p>

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# 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**

Date of meeting: **5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

Report Subject: **Employment and Skills Plan 2020-2023**

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

Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Director Regeneration and Community Services**  
**Bethan McPherson, Team Manager Connected Communities**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
04.02.20	11.02.20	20.02.20			05.03.20	11.03.20		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the development of the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan (Appendix 1); further to this seek endorsement for approval by Executive.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Enhancing the skills and work readiness of individuals in Blaenau Gwent is critical to ensuring residents can capitalise on the available employment (including enterprise and self-employment) opportunities, stemming from current demands, emerging investment and growth occurring locally, regionally and beyond, including initiatives such as the CCRCD, Tech Valleys and the Valleys Task Force.
- 2.2 At a national and regional level there is recognition of a growing employment demand within a number of key sectors (Advanced Materials and Manufacturing, Financial and Professional Services, Construction, Information and Communication Technology, Human Foundational Economy). It is imperative that locally, plans are in place outlining the approach that will be taken to ensure Blaenau Gwent and its residents can capitalise on the opportunities.
- 2.3 The plan is not specific to any given sector, ensuring support and provision can be developed and provided in those areas where it is required, including enterprise and business start-up. The plan does however highlight the importance of areas such as STEM, Digital and Advanced Technology to underpin and support wider needs of the economy.

- 2.4 Identified within the Corporate plan is a commitment to “work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development”. The Employment and Skills Plan provides a mechanism through which a co-ordinated approach can be delivered which is responsive to identified need.
- 2.5 There are four regeneration priorities agreed for the Council which interrelate with regional, national and European initiatives and funding opportunities; with Employment and Skills being one of the identified priorities.
- 2.6 The plan is designed to represent the needs of the authority and has been developed based on statistical data, strategic documents, surveys and stakeholder engagement events.
- 2.7 The plan, see attached Appendix 1, focuses on five priority areas, namely;
1. **Business and Enterprise** Facilitate growth and innovation by understanding and responding to local economic need.
  2. **Learning and Skills** Ensure that the skills provision is responsive and accessible to residents.
  3. **Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability** Create a motivated and skilled community, through appropriate employment support, at every stage of an individual’s journey.
  4. **Education and Schools** Raise awareness of opportunity and the aspirations of young people and support their pathway into work.
  5. **Procurement and Community Benefits** Maximise employment and skills related opportunities through utilisation of contract social clauses.
- 2.8 The main Employment and Skills Plan is supported by an action plan that is designed to be a live and evolving document, outlining specific actions to support delivery of the wider plan.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 **Option 1:** Consider the plan and make recommendations prior to Executive approval.
  - 3.2 **Option 2 (Preferred option):** Support the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan; and endorse approval by the Executive Committee.

Approval of the plan would provide a strategic context and clear focus to support a partnership and collaborative approach to implementing specific actions and associated Employment and Skills delivery.

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

- Cardiff Capital Region: Regional Skills Partnership
- Tech Valleys
- Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan: Forge new pathways to prosperity
- Corporate Plan: Economic Development and Regeneration
- Regeneration Priorities: Town centres, employment and skills, housing, enterprise and innovation.

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 plan. There is currently no internal budget for delivery; any financial requirements associated with specific actions will be met through:

- Partner led delivery
- External funding streams
- Realignment of internal budgets

More broadly the activity outlined within the plan is seeking to raise skill and employability levels within Blaenau Gwent in turn seeking to increase local economic productivity, local wage levels and retention of spend locally.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The risks associated with option 1 are:

- Uncoordinated approach to ensure that employment and skills provisions align with current and emerging business need.
- Duplication or unfilled gaps in available support provision.
- Reduced impact on efforts to raise attainment, skills and employment levels of Blaenau Gwent residents.

The risks associated with option 2 is:

- Partners do not fully embrace the approach and work in isolation, continued engagement and collaborative delivery would minimise this risk.

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.

Coordination of the plan will be undertaken by officers within the Regeneration Division. The team may also support and facilitate any working groups and/or partnerships where necessary. Specific actions within the Employment and

Skills Plan/Action Plan will have assigned leads that will include a range of external partner's organisations.

Developmental work to explore new initiatives or opportunities may require additional resource however where possible a collaborative approach with wider stakeholders will be adopted to minimise impact on existing staff. Alternatively external funding will be explored fund additional resource as part of future delivery.

## **6. Supporting Evidence**

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

Key statistics are outlined within the plan providing a baseline against which delivery will be measured.

Measures will be developed to complement specific actions within the plan.

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

The Employment and Skills plan will outline specific priorities and associated actions to:

- Increase the number of employment opportunities available
- Increase the range of employment opportunities available
- Ensure appropriate employment provision to support people into work and progress once in work
- Train and upskill local residents aligned to demand or growth sectors
- Raised awareness of opportunities to support educational attainment and aspiration
- Increased employment and skills opportunities secured through community benefits.

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

To date the emerging Employment and Skills plan has been developed in consultation/discussions with;

- Employment and Skills Stakeholder event (Sep 2019)
- PSB Maximising opportunities for prosperity stakeholder event (July 2019)
- Head Teacher STEM Survey
- Attendance at STEM Head Teacher Conference
- Representation at Tech Valleys and Head Teacher meetings
- Blaenau Gwent Skills Database participant survey
- Employability Provider survey
- STEM Inspiration Event Employer and Pupil survey
- Mapping of local employment and skills provision
- Stakeholder Meetings



The final draft Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan is also being shared with stakeholders for information and final consideration. Any comments/observations as part of this consultation exercise, will be considered and incorporated as appropriate into the plan, presented to Scrutiny and Executive.

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

The plan has been developed as a proactive document, to ensure that long term, local residents are equipped with the necessary skills to undertake the jobs that will be available both now and in the future.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Within the plan there is acknowledgement of current employment, skills and attainment figures relating to the local population and our relatively weak performance comparative to other areas within the region. The plan seeks to address this by putting in place measures to address current performance.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Many of the existing interventions are based on collaborative/partnership working and are identified within the plan. The plan outlines the proposed governance arrangements for delivery, which will be established through the PSB under 'To Forge New Pathways to Prosperity' and may include a main board and supporting sub/working groups; made up with representatives from key sectors and stakeholders.

Lead partners will be identified to drive forward specific actions, engaging with relevant partners as necessary.

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

The contents of the plan will link closely with Education.

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

The plan is aimed at ensuring Blaenau Gwent Prospers, this is inclusive of all in our efforts to raise skills and employment levels for residents.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 A baseline, aligned to the action plan will be developed to measure the medium and long term impact of the plan. An annual review and update on progress will be prepared and reported through Scrutiny, Executive and the PSB.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- *Appendix 1 – Draft Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan 2020-23*

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Blaenau Gwent

Final Draft

# Employment & Skills Plan

2020 - 2023



Blaenau Gwent  
Prosper



# FOREWORD

**Blaenau Gwent has a very rich and prosperous past, primarily linked to the Industrialisation of Wales and the World, of which this small area of land played a full and active part through its Mining, Iron and Steel heritage, helping Wales to become the first Industrialised Nation in the World.**

A skilled workforce is as vital today to the future economic success of the area as it has ever been, enabling the growth of higher value added activities and attracting new business to the County Borough. As part of achieving our objective to make sure that people benefit from growth in Blaenau Gwent and the wider region, an Employment and Skills Plan is required to maximise the impact of skills related programmes for the benefit of Blaenau Gwent businesses and residents and to enhance the local economy.

Blaenau Gwent is seeing significant investment opportunities by being part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and Tech Valleys proposals, which estimates that more than 1,500 new jobs could be created in the next five years. Improving the skills and work readiness of individuals in Blaenau Gwent is vital to ensure that local people can access the job opportunities that are created and enable those currently in employment to progress within their current job roles.

Blaenau Gwent currently has fewer people with higher level qualifications and more people with no qualifications than the national average and whilst the County Borough currently enjoys a relatively low rate of unemployment, rates of youth unemployment and residents in receipt of out of work benefits are notably higher than both regional and national averages. To maximise the benefits of new investment in the region and Blaenau Gwent, this Plan will set out how, through partnership working and increased focussed investment and social clauses, we can secure more training, employment and business opportunities for Private Investors and local people.

It is important that those who most need it can access the skills support on offer; however, the range and volume of programmes available can sometimes be confusing, making the skills landscape difficult to navigate. The plan describes how we will guide and support our community by working closely with our education and skills partners to give local people all the information they need about the range of programmes available and how to access them. We will engage with employers through focused account management activity which will ensure that our businesses are informed as to the opportunities available to upskill their workforce and grow.

Finally, in considering the amount of change to the wider skills agenda it will examine the impact of national skills and apprenticeship reforms and consider how the Council and its partners can best meet the resulting challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that are now presented for the benefit of residents, businesses and economy.



**Councillor Dai Davies**  
Executive Member for Regeneration  
and Economic Development

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The world of work is changing, with the types of jobs and the way in which they are done continually evolving as a result of changing demands and technological advances. To ensure Blaenau Gwent and its residents can capitalise, a collective approach is needed to provide access to the right support, fulfil individual potential and support economic growth. Achieving the ambition is not without challenge and a people centred approach underpinned by our economic needs is critical to delivering success.

**The plan sets out the vision:**

**Blaenau Gwent Prospers;** Providing opportunities to raise aspirations and support economic growth through partnership working.

It identifies five priority areas, from which a detailed action plan will be developed.

- 1. **Business and Enterprise**  
Facilitate growth and innovation by understanding and responding to local economic need.
- 2. **Learning and Skills**  
Ensure that the skills provision is responsive and accessible to residents.
- 3. **Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability;**  
Create a motivated and skilled community, through appropriate employment support at every stage of an individual's journey.
- 4. **Education and Schools**  
Raise awareness of opportunity and the aspirations of young people to fulfil their potential and support their pathway into work.
- 5. **Procurement and Community Benefits**  
Maximise employment and skills related opportunities through the utilisation of contract social clauses.

The priorities identified are inclusive of all business types and employers. Similarly support to individuals will encapsulate all, including enterprise and business start-up; however, a focus on specific groups will be critical to deliver change and support economic growth.

The plan though applicable to all areas of the economy, aims to position Blaenau Gwent in meeting the needs of key sectors within the region including; Advanced Material and Manufacturing, Compound Semi-Conductors, Construction, Creative, Digital and Enabling Technologies and Human Foundational Economy including, Education, Health, Social Care and Childcare, Hospitality, Retail and Tourism.

A co-ordinated approach with collective buy-in from all key stakeholders will be integral to delivering a clear pathway and programme of opportunity with minimum duplication and that is responsive to need. All partners will have a clear role in delivering and measuring success against the vision;







# INTRODUCTION

**Enhancing the skills and work readiness of individuals in Blaenau Gwent is critical to ensuring residents can capitalise on the available employment opportunities, stemming from current demands, emerging investment and growth occurring locally, regionally and beyond.**

The employment and skills plan outlines a range of priorities to ensure individuals have access to the right support, enabling them to fulfil their potential and support economic growth; this will be complementary to the priorities of the Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership. The plan will also sit alongside the Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Plan to ensure a complementary and seamless link between the support available for both business and individuals.

A strong and skilled workforce is essential to supporting both the existing and forecasted labour requirements of business and industry across a range of sectors going forward. Complementary to this is the opportunity to promote a culture of entrepreneurialism to meet current gaps and future requirements of the economy. Responding to the known challenges with a focus on areas such as upskilling in the work place, inspiring the next generation and promotion of apprenticeships and traineeships as a route to employment will be a priority.

In addition to raising aspirations of future generations, supporting residents who need it most, to maximise their opportunities in moving closer to entering or progressing in employment, is fundamental to improving the lives of local people and the economic prosperity of the area. Exploring the full breadth of opportunity from volunteering and training

through to work experience and placements will be integral to this offer. There will be a consideration to marginalised groups including those with disabilities, young people, and women in industry.

Fundamental to supporting our employment and skills aspirations is ensuring the right transport infrastructure is in place to enable people to access support, training and employment opportunities which is a current barrier for many. Improving local and regional transport networks and connectivity is critical and is being explored through regional pilot projects. This will also be a key priority within the emerging Blaenau Gwent Local Transport Strategy.

The Metro network will be a key travel hub to the area which will help deliver sustainable, economic prosperity to Blaenau Gwent and South East Wales. This will be further complemented by other initiatives, not least the ongoing dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road and consideration to improving the efficiency of local transport networks.

The plan outlines the National and Regional strategic context, Blaenau Gwent's baseline position, the vision, key priorities and outline action plan, against which we will seek to deliver over the next three years. The governance and partnership arrangements will be a key consideration during the early stages of implementation.

## ALIGNING WITH LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL STRATEGY

The plan has been developed and aligned to National and Regional policy relating to the employment and skills agenda. Aligning with the strategic position will minimise duplication whilst enabling a localised “fit for purpose” approach. The following section highlights the key policy documents and programme that are underpinning the employment and skills drive in Wales.

### National

- Welsh Government - Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan
- Welsh Government - Employability Plan
- Welsh Government - Community Benefits 2014
- Well-being for Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

### Regional

- CCR Skills Partnership - Employment and Skills Plan 2019-2022
- Valleys Task Force – Our Valleys Our Future Delivery Plan
- Tech Valleys - Strategic Plan

### Local

- Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Plan 2018 – 2022
- Wellbeing Plan 2018 – 2023
- Growth and Investment Strategy
- Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Plan

# BASELINE DATA

Understanding the challenges Blaenau Gwent as an area faces is critical to determining where support and priorities should be targeted in order to improve the economic competitiveness of the area and respond positively to existing and emerging opportunities. Within Blaenau Gwent there is an improving picture across a range of economic measures but challenges remain in continuing the upward trend and in most instances, move us closer the Welsh average.

The key statistical data has been supported by the following:

- Employment and Skills Stakeholder event
- PSB Maximising opportunities for prosperity stakeholder event
- Head Teacher STEM Survey
- Attendance at STEM Head Teacher Conference
- Representation at Tech Valleys and Head Teacher meetings
- Blaenau Gwent Skills Database participant survey
- Employability Provider survey
- STEM Inspiration Event Employer and Pupil survey
- Mapping of local employment and skills provision

This identified the main provision and support already in existence within Blaenau Gwent, including areas of best practice. From this information duplication and gaps in service were also identified.

Through the implementation of the Employment and Skills plan we would hope to see an improving picture against the key statistics outlined in Table 1. The interventions and aspirations to improve skill levels will also seek to contribute to our Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Plan and it’s vision to improve our ranking on the UK Competitiveness Index 2016.

The SWOT analysis on the following page summarises the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Blaenau Gwent and has been used alongside the baseline data to inform the vision, priorities and associated actions identified within the plan.

Table 1

Baseline Figures	Blaenau Gwent	Wales	United Kingdom
Unemployment	4.6%	4.2%	4.1%
Economic inactivity due to long term sickness	37.2%	28.6%	23.0%
18-24 year olds who are claiming benefits	7.0%	4.6%	4.0%
Earnings (by place of residence)	£457.80	£540.70	£587.00
Self Employed	6.7%	9.4%	10.7%
Skills level 0-4 (NVQ)			
NVQ 4 +	23.6%	35.4%	39.3%
NVQ 3 +	44.6%	55.1%	57.8%
NVQ 2 +	63.1%	74.0%	74.9%
NVQ 1 +	77.3%	84.9%	85.4%
No Qualifications	14.8%	8.6%	7.8%
GCSE English and Maths A*-C	44.5%*	55.1%*	-
GCSE Science A*- C	46.1%*	63.0%*	-
Young people who are NEET	1.9%**	1.6%**	-

Source: Nomis  
 \* Stats Wales (Commuter stats comparative to neighbouring authorities of a similar size)  
 \*\* Careers Wales Destination Survey 2018



# SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

### Targeted Investment Status

- Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board
- Tech Valleys
- Valleys Task Force
- Targeted regeneration investment
- WEFO
- Established enterprise zone status

### Employability

- Comprehensive provision of employment support
- Dedicated Skills and Employability team within the Local Authority
- Employment Liaison function

### Skills

- Apprenticeship provision (shared apprenticeship) meeting needs of manufacturing and engineering skills gaps
- Specific funding streams to support upskilling of individuals.

### Local Area

- Strong partnership working and close local relationships due to the size of the Local Authority.
- Well established communities
- Strong engineering and advanced manufacturing business base

## WEAKNESSES

### Unemployment

- Lower than average employment rate
- High proportion of young people 18-24 claiming benefits
- 2,900 out of work who would like a job
- High levels of economic inactivity due to long term sickness compared to the rest of Wales
- Low job density

### Employment

- Low pay comparative to Wales and UK
- Low wages for female residents
- Male £543.90 vs Female £389.70
- Ageing population and workforce – succession planning
- Low or semi-skilled jobs

### Skills

- 6,300 people with no qualifications
- Educational attainment in schools is lower than Regional and Welsh average at grades A\*-C
- Under 50% of the population have skills Level 3 and above.

### Transport

- Transport connectivity – access to employment within the borough and the region.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Funding

- Cardiff Capital Region City Deal
- Tech Valleys - £100 million over 10 years
- Links to CCR City Deal and influence within the Regional Skills Partnership

### Initiatives

- Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme expansion across Heads of the Valley
- NDEC – upskill within the digital and enabling technologies priority through collaboration between Thales and USW
- Establishment of digital/cyber clusters (Fujitsu/Admiral)
- Support and inform the development of Regional transport networks e.g. METRO
- Grow the established Enterprise culture within Blaenau Gwent

### Partnerships

- Enhance Industry and School relations to promote STEM in schools
- Link and influence the priorities within the Regional Skills Partnership and associated plan
- Development of employment progression pathways aligned to need
- Support local business growth
- To work in partnership to determine future skills

## THREATS

### Funding and Investment

- Commitment from funding bodies
- Ensuring sustainability of programmes post-funding.
- Inflexible funding timescales
- Lack of inward investment and interest
- Uncertainty around BREXIT and EU funding for continuation of employment and skills projects post 2022
- Demands on public money and diminishing budgets.

### Skills

- Inability to meet identified skills gaps
- Low level of basic skills
- Ability for HE and FE to respond in line with pace of development.
- Loss of indigenous companies due to skills shortages

### Partnerships

- Lack of community buy in
- Partners working in isolation



# BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE

Priority  
One

## Facilitate growth and innovation by understanding and responding to local economic need.

### Why is this important?

- Blaenau Gwent has an ageing population with many skilled workers approaching retirement, leaving a skills gap within existing industry.
- There are known growth sectors linked to the CCR City Deal. Ensuring that we have the capacity and skills to support this growth is key.
- To ensure initiatives for learning and continuous professional development are available and aligned to support upskilling of the existing workforce and prepare future skills requirements.
- Technological advances and the way in which we work is changing with developments in areas such as artificial intelligence and automation.
- Self-employment within Blaenau Gwent is low in comparison to rest of Wales.

### Priority areas

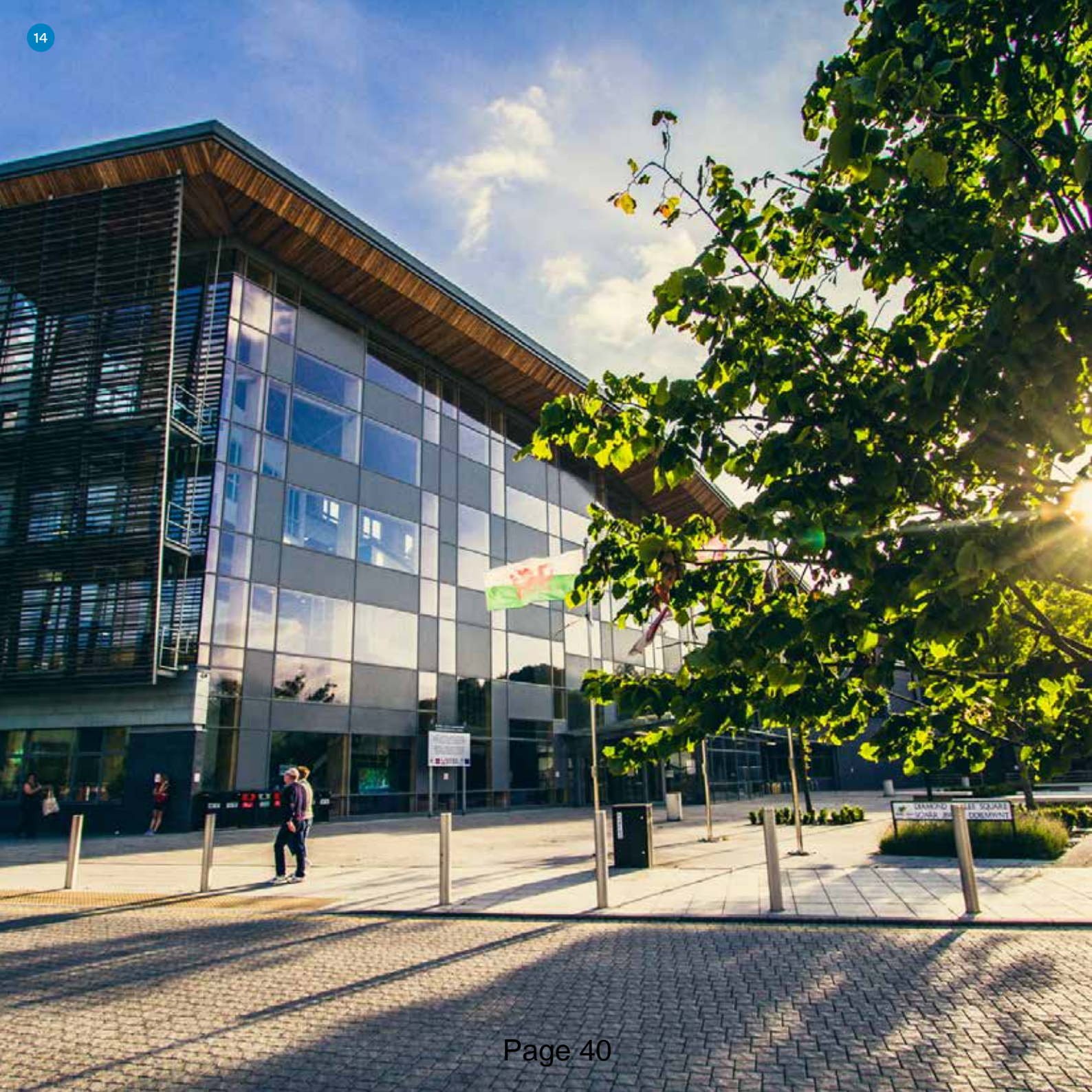
- To build and embed effective business relationships for locally significant sectors in order to;
  - Understand and define “future skills” and “jobs of the future”.
  - Identify needs and gather business intelligence (recruitment/workforce/skills)
  - Provide responsive solutions
  - Proactively inform businesses of skill related opportunities.
- To champion apprenticeships as a sustainable solution to business productivity.
- To use business intelligence and resource to inform and complement activity across other priorities within the plan.

### What are we already doing?

- The Blaenau Gwent Business Hub; a digital platform enabling local businesses and start-ups to access business support, network, connect with each other and discover local opportunities.
- A range of business support including workshops, drop in sessions, networking and grant funding opportunities for both existing and start-up businesses.
- Employability support across all sectors to promote upskilling and provide advice for recruitment, training and funding needs.
- Delivery of Shared Apprenticeship Programmes within Construction (Y Prentis) and Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (Aspire).
- Member of the Regional Skills Partnership.

### What are we going to do next?

- Commission a Blaenau Gwent skills analysis within engineering and manufacturing to determine the future skills needs of businesses.
- Determine viability and progress proposal for a Future Skills Academy.
- Promotion and growth of the apprenticeship offer to local businesses.
- Positively engage with the Regional Skills Partnership to support delivery of priorities.
- Raising the profile of opportunity for residents to start up their own business will promote innovation and economic growth.





# LEARNING AND SKILLS

## Priority Two

### Ensure that the skills provision at all levels is responsive and accessible to residents.

#### Why is this important?

- There is a need to raise the skill level in Blaenau Gwent to ensure residents are best placed to secure employment including skilled and higher paid roles.
- A high level of residents are currently skilled at level 2 or below including those with no basic skills.
- A need to align skills provision to known growth sectors within the region, particularly Advanced Materials and Manufacturing.
- A high percentage of employers expect problems in recruiting for STEM related positions moving forward.

#### Priority areas:

- Strengthen links between industry, further and higher education establishments.
- Provide innovative and responsive delivery models to facilitate specific industry requirements.
- Encouraging flexible delivery to facilitate alternative learning pathways, which provide opportunities for all.

#### What are we already doing?

- Delivery of the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme in response to local market failure.
- Utilising available funding to upskill existing workforce e.g WULF/Flexible Skills Programme.
- Exploration and introduction of new courses/learning pathways e.g composites and aeronautical.

#### What are we going to do next?

- Expand the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme where there is identified need.
- Explore future funding opportunities to further support upskilling in the work place.
- Influencing providers to pathway development responsive to employer need.
- Consideration of new further and higher education course delivery locally and within the emerging skills academy.



# SOCIAL MOBILITY, INCLUSION AND EMPLOYABILITY

**Create a motivated and skilled community, through appropriate employment support, at every stage of an individual's journey.**

## Why is this important?

- To raise the employment level to ensure Blaenau Gwent does not continue to fall behind the Wales and UK averages.
- To reduce the high percentage of economic inactivity stemming from long term sickness comparative to other areas.
- To reduce the number of young people in receipt of benefits by ensuring they are supported and equipped for the transition from education to employment.
- To challenge deep-rooted and inter-generational barriers to employment; such as workless households, which remains high in Blaenau Gwent.
- To ensure individuals are given the skills to succeed and support local labour requirements.
- Employers are communicating the need for flexible and transferable skills e.g problem solving and basic time keeping.

## Priority areas:

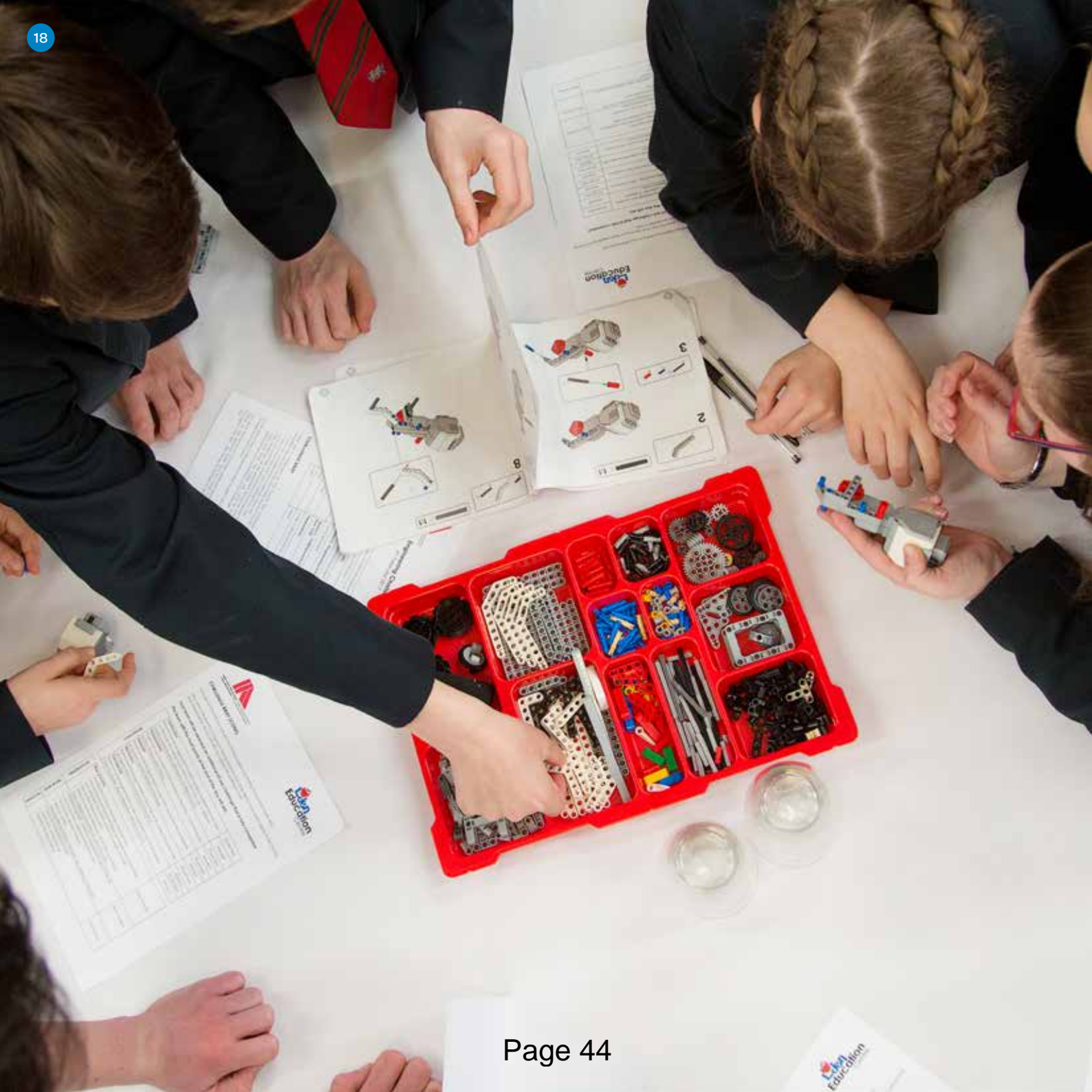
- Ensure a seamless provision of employment support that caters for the needs of all residents at every stage of their journey that is bespoke to need.
- Effective use of partner agencies to support the wider needs of individuals in securing and sustaining employment related opportunities.
- Expand the provision of in-work support available to upskill individuals.
- Promote self-employment, apprenticeships, traineeships and volunteering as alternative routes to employment.

## What are we already doing?

- Providing a comprehensive provision of employment related support for residents.
- Delivering bespoke pathways and initiatives to enhance employment related skills.
- Strategic partnerships to inform and align delivery of provision.

## What are we going to do next?

- Exploring regional opportunities and alignment through the CCR City Deal.
- Explore the requirement for an Employment Skills centre to upskill local residents looking for work, aligned with industry need.
- Increase liaison with businesses for early identification of emerging employment or enterprise opportunities.
- Ensure key organisations consider emerging employment opportunities as part of their support package.
- Ensure employability is a consideration when developing broader strategic initiatives such as transport and digital connectivity.



# EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

## Priority Four

### Raise awareness of opportunity and the aspirations of young people to fulfil their potential and support their pathway into work.

#### Why is this important?

- To raise attainment levels within schools which are currently lower than both the Wales and UK averages, especially within STEM related subject areas.
- To prepare students for advancing technology.
- To ensure retention of local talent within Blaenau Gwent to address recruitment challenges in skilled positions.
- To ensure resilience within the future workforce.
- Challenge perceptions and ensure that vocational learning has parity with traditional academic pathways.
- To address the disparity between males and females in STEM.

#### Priority areas:

- Increase links between employers and schools for an enriched learning experience.
- Ensure appropriate provision is in place for teachers and parent/guardians to support pupil learning and the new curriculum.
- To highlight the full breadth of vocational and academic pathways available to young people.
- Encourage the development of enterprise and work readiness skills in young people.

#### What are we already doing?

- STEM Inspiration Events to provide career guidance to students from local employers.
- A range of STEM related initiatives within Primary and Secondary schools including Aspire 2 Be, Interschool LEGO competitions and EESW.
- Support for pupils to improve attendance, attainment, behaviour and health and wellbeing e.g. Inspire 2 Achieve.
- Developing links between employers and schools. e.g. Careers Wales Education Business Exchange, Business Class.
- Embedded programme of support in place through Careers Wales within Secondary schools.

#### What are we going to do next?

- Develop a more coordinated programme of support within schools to ensure pupils have access to and engage with STEM provision. To include:
  - STEM focused initiatives aligned with individual school needs
  - Enhancement of business/ school interaction
  - Provision of support for parents/ guardians and teachers
  - Proactively engage with the pupils and parent/guardians to ensure that academic and vocational opportunities are promoted equally.



# PROCUREMENT AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Priority  
Five

## Maximise employment and skills related opportunities through local procurement and the utilisation of contract social clauses.

### Why is this important?

- Community Benefits provide a means to encourage a range of local benefits additional to the contract itself including employment, training, skills and community support.
- Maximising local procurement opportunities can increase local and re-occurring spend through business supply chains and local employee spend of disposable income.

### Priority areas:

- To work proactively with public, private and third sector organisations to raise awareness and give consistent consideration to the inclusion of social clauses on all contract opportunities.
- Support sustained employment through raising awareness of contract opportunities amongst local businesses.
- To utilise existing support providers, to plan and respond to employment and skills related opportunities delivered through contract social clauses.
- To encourage contract social clauses that delivers a sustainable legacy to the local area, its economy and residents.

### What are we already doing?

- Working with procurement to embed social clauses within contracts.
- Working with partners, including locally operating Registered Social Landlords, to facilitate identified opportunities.
- Creation of employment opportunities for local residents through Community Benefits.

### What are we going to do next?

- Maximise community benefits through public, private and third sector organisations.
- Raise awareness amongst all stakeholders, share knowledge and existing good practice.
- Develop a co-ordinated programme of delivery to maximise the local benefits to Blaenau Gwent.
- To ensure agreed social clauses are robustly monitored as part of contract delivery to ensure benefits are realised.

## GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY

The successful implementation of the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan will require a collaborative partnership approach building on existing structures and engagement work to date.

The PSB will give consideration to the Governance arrangements required to deliver the plan as part of their 'To Forge New Pathways to Prosperity' priority. This may include the establishment of a Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Board comprising of key partners including Tech Valleys Strategic Advisory Group, Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board and colleges, amongst others.

Sub/working groups will then be established, if a mechanism is not already in place for each of the priorities set out within the plan. These groups will consist of the most appropriate representatives who support initiatives relating to each of the priorities. Their remit will be to consider the action plan, identify lead partners for specific actions, ensure timely delivery and provide regular progress updates to the board.

The plan will complement the aspirations and priorities of our key strategic partnerships, not least Tech Valleys Strategic Advisory Group and the Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board. The plan will be delivered over a three year period (2020-2023), including an annual review of progress. As the plan enters the implementation phase, additional actions may be required and will be incorporated within the action plan, which will serve as a working document for the life of the plan.





# ACTION PLAN

Priority 1	Aims	Partners	Actions
<p><b>Business &amp; Enterprise</b></p> <p><b>Facilitate growth and innovation by understanding and responding to local economic need.</b></p>	<p>To build and embed effective business relationships for locally significant sectors in order to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand and define “future skills” and “jobs of the future”.</li> <li>- Identify needs and gather business intelligence (recruitment / workforce/ skills).</li> <li>- Provide responsive solutions.</li> <li>- Proactively inform businesses of skill related opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>To champion apprenticeships as a sustainable solution to business productivity.</p> <p>To use business intelligence and resource to inform and complement activity across other priorities within the plan.</p>	<p>BGCBC</p> <p>Tech Valleys</p> <p>Welsh Government</p> <p>CCR City Deal</p> <p>MTC</p> <p>Business Support e.g</p> <p>Business Wales</p> <p>South Wales Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Industrial Alliance</p> <p>Industry Wales</p>	<p>Commission a Future Skills Analysis for the advanced manufacturing and engineering sectors and consider the recommendation made.</p> <p>For the Tech Valleys Strategic Advisory Group and Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board to consider the Employment and Skills Plan and identify specific work packages, potential project leads and associated funding.</p> <p>To develop a business case to sustain the Aspire Blaenau Gwent Shared Apprenticeship Programme, including potential expansion to meet business need.</p> <p>To maximise the number of businesses registered on the Blaenau Gwent Business Hub, providing a single platform to access support initiatives including events, recruitment, funding, training, apprenticeships and graduate opportunities.</p> <p>To review the BG Effect model with consideration to: Enterprise and Business start-up support Delivery of the effect network Re-establishment of an Effect advisory board</p> <p>To implement the business engagement framework for consistent business account management.</p> <p>To promote and increase networking events to support marginalised groups e.g. Women In Business event.</p> <p>Active representation in Regional partnerships to ensure appropriate infrastructure (digital/ transport) is developed to meet the needs of Blaenau Gwent businesses.</p>

# ACTION PLAN

Priority 2	Aims	Partners	Actions
<p><b>Learning and Skills;</b></p> <p><b>Ensure that the skills provision at all levels is responsive and accessible to residents.</b></p>	<p>Strengthen links between industry, further and higher education establishments.</p> <p>Provide innovative and responsive delivery models to facilitate specific industry requirements.</p> <p>Encouraging flexible delivery to facilitate alternative learning pathways, which provide opportunities for all.</p>	<p>BGCBC</p> <p>HE partners</p> <p>FE partners</p> <p>RSP</p> <p>PSB</p> <p>NDEC</p>	<p>To conduct a mapping exercise of existing industry and further/ higher education partnership meetings to support future delivery mechanisms.</p> <p>Progress discussions around Centres of Excellence in key sectors, e.g. Cyber and Digital</p> <p>Progress proposal for the development of the Blaenau Gwent Future Skills Academy to facilitate identified industry and academic needs.</p> <p>Utilise the findings of the Future Skills Analysis to inform learning pathways moving forward.</p> <p>Active representation in the Regional Skills Partnership (action plan) to ensure the needs of Blaenau Gwent are appropriately represented and potential funding is aligned appropriately.</p> <p>Ensure seamless pathways from Primary and Secondary through to further and higher education.</p> <p>Highlight innovative delivery models to support skills needs e.g. CCR Graduate Scheme, Shared Apprenticeship Programmes.</p>

# ACTION PLAN

Priority 3	Aims	Partners	Actions
<p><b>Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability;</b></p> <p><b>Create a motivated and skilled community, through appropriate employment support, at every stage of an individual's journey.</b></p>	<p>Ensure a seamless provision of employment support that caters for the needs of all residents at every stage of their journey that is bespoke to need.</p> <p>Effective use of partner agencies to support the wider needs of individuals in securing and sustaining employment related opportunities.</p> <p>Expand the provision of in-work support available to upskill individuals.</p> <p>Promote self-employment, apprenticeships, traineeships, and volunteering as alternative routes to employment.</p>	<p>BGCBC</p> <p>PSB</p> <p>Employability and training providers</p> <p>RSLs</p> <p>Voluntary Sector</p> <p>Tech Valleys</p> <p>RSP</p>	<p>To consider the utilisation of existing platforms to engage and support delivery. E.g Raising Aspirations Group, Multi-Agency meeting, BG That Works.</p> <p>Annual mapping of available employment support and gaps in provision.</p> <p>Identify and pursue funding opportunities to deliver employability support responsive to gaps and known areas of growth. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effect fund for enterprise</li> <li>- Upskilling in the workplace</li> <li>- Shared apprenticeship programmes</li> <li>- Pathways to Employment</li> </ul> <p>Utilise the results from the Future Skills Analysis to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Influence training and support to individuals.</li> <li>- Determine feasibility of training space within the Future Skills Academy to support employability e.g. Gemba training room</li> </ul> <p>To promote and increase networking events to support marginalised groups e.g. Women In Business event.</p> <p>Active representation in Regional partnerships to ensure appropriate infrastructure (digital/ transport) is developed to meet the needs of Blaenau Gwent residents.</p>

# ACTION PLAN

Priority 4	Aims	Partners	Actions
<p><b>Education &amp; Schools;</b></p> <p><b>Raise awareness of opportunity and the aspirations of young people to fulfil their potential and support their pathway into work.</b></p>	<p>Increase links between employers and schools for an enriched learning experience.</p> <p>Ensure appropriate provision is in place for teachers and parent/guardians to support pupil learning and the new curriculum.</p> <p>Highlight the full breadth of vocational and academic pathways available to young people.</p> <p>Encourage the development of enterprise and work readiness skills in young people.</p>	<p>BGCBC</p> <p>Tech Valleys</p> <p>Primary Schools</p> <p>Secondary Schools</p> <p>EAS</p> <p>PSB</p> <p>Careers Wales</p>	<p>Utilise existing platforms within education to engage and support delivery. E.g Tech Valleys and Education group, Head Teacher meeting/ bulletin, Raising Aspiration Group.</p> <p>To secure Tech Valleys funding to implement a pilot STEM facilitation programme within schools aligned to identified need.</p> <p>To develop a single mechanism through which to promote the breadth of initiatives available to schools to support learning.</p> <p>To engage with the EAS to develop a complementary and enhanced programme of support to pupils and teachers.</p> <p>Continued delivery of the annual STEM Inspiration Event with exploration into the development of a wider programme, to include primary schools.</p> <p>Enhance the Enterprise offer within schools through current initiatives, e.g Young Enterprise, Big Ideas Wales Enterprise Troopers.</p> <p>Ensure seamless pathways from Primary and Secondary through to further and higher education.</p> <p>To consider new initiatives and enhance existing opportunities to link industry and education e.g. Classroom in Industry, Business Class, Education Business Exchange.</p>

# ACTION PLAN

Priority 5	Aims	Partners	Actions
<p><b>Procurement and Community Benefits;</b></p> <p><b>Maximise employment and skills related opportunities through the utilisation of contract social clauses.</b></p>	<p>To work proactively with public, private and third sector organisations to raise awareness and give consistent consideration to the inclusion of social clauses on all contract opportunities.</p> <p>Support sustained employment through raising awareness of contract opportunities amongst local businesses.</p> <p>To utilise existing support providers, to plan and respond to employment and skills related opportunities delivered through contract social clauses.</p> <p>To encourage contract social clauses that delivers a sustainable legacy to the local area, its economy and residents.</p>	<p>BGCBC</p> <p>PSB</p> <p>Employability and training providers</p> <p>RSLs</p> <p>Voluntary Sector</p> <p>Business Community</p>	<p>Develop a communications plan to raise awareness of social clauses amongst procuring organisations and delivery partners; as a mechanism to support increased local employment and skills</p> <p>Collate case studies and examples of best practice to support delivery of the communications plan.</p> <p>To encourage early consideration of social clauses within organisational contract opportunities.</p> <p>To utilise pilot projects (Welsh Government Innovation fund, Community Wealth Building) to make recommendations on best practise and future operating processes.</p> <p>Engage with delivery partners to identify needs within Blaenau Gwent that can inform social clauses within upcoming contract opportunities.</p> <p>Identify a coordinated approach to monitoring achieved outcomes and demonstrate the value added achieved through contract social clauses.</p>



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



Regeneration Connected Communities

Tel: 01495 355508 Email: TBC

# 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: **5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**  
Report Subject: **Targeted Regeneration Investment**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**  
Report Submitted by: **Amy Taylor, Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
04.04.20	11.02.20	21.02.20			05.03.20	Info Item 22.04.20		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To provide an update on the Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) funding opportunity and; seek agreement of further local projects for which TRI funding will be sought.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. A report was previously presented to the Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee (12 September 2018) outlining the criteria associated with the Targeted Regeneration Investment funding and sought agreement of local projects for which funding would be sought.
- 2.2. The TRI programme was established in 2018 and was originally intended to be a three-year programme (2018-2021).
- 2.3. For the initial three-year phase of the TRI programme a capital budget of £100million funding was made available. Allocations of the funding are dependent upon the quality of the projects, regional significant and approval of the national panel. TRI funding will not be automatically apportioned equally across each of the ten authorities.

## Thematic Projects

### 2.4. *Property Enhancement Grants*

- 2.4.1. The TRI funding has enabled the Council to work with property owners across the Borough to tackle properties held on the empty properties register, along with derelict/sub-standard properties that could encourage retail, housing and business opportunities.
- 2.4.2. A total of £920,000 has been made available for property enhancement grants and since approval the process for grant applications has been developed and agreed with internal departments. Half of this grant funding will be spent in 2019/20 with around £460,000 remaining available for potential schemes in 2020/21.
- 2.4.3. In 2019/20 financial year a total of six projects have been identified as being eligible for grant funding, with a match funding requirement of 50% total value of projects would be circa. £1 million. Prior to grant approvals being issued due diligence checks are carried out into potential grant applicants and legal charges placed upon properties prior to the release of grant.
- 2.4.4. The six properties receiving grant are:
- NCB, The Circle, Tredegar
  - 10 The Circle, Tredegar
  - The (former) Railway, Abertillery
  - Plas Aneurin, Ebbw Vale
  - 38 Church Street, Ebbw Vale
  - 6 The Circle, Tredegar
- 2.4.5. In addition, Rhondda Cynon Taf submitted a proposal to Valleys Taskforce to deliver a £5 million Valleys Taskforce Capital funding scheme to extend the Cardiff Capital Region TRI Thematic Project across the South East Wales Valleys Taskforce areas. The extension will:
- Assist with re-developing vacant, poor quality, under used or derelict buildings and premises, focused on the development of residential and commercial space within town centres;
  - Grants will be offered to business and property owners and Registered Social Landlords to a maximum of £250,000 per project;
  - Target Valley's town centres and areas including, but not limited to, the following in the Blaenau Gwent:
    - Ebbw Vale
    - Brynmawr
    - Abertillery
    - Tredegar
  - Property acquisition and commercial improvement envelope schemes will be eligible activity. This funding will not be split into individual authority



grant allocations. Instead funding will be supported once the application has been completed in full.

- 2.4.6. The funding proposal above, has been agreed by Valleys Taskforce and discussions are ongoing as to how the funds will be distributed between the Councils in the South East Wales Taskforce areas.
- 2.4.7. A pipeline of properties to be taken forward using this funding has been developed and will continue to be worked upon until the funding allocation becomes known.

#### Capital Projects

- 2.5. Boxworks – a tender process has been undertaken and a preferred contractor, Kier Construction was appointed in late 2019. The shipping containers have been purchased and works to fit out the containers have commenced off site with transportation and construction at their location on the Works Site due to start in May 2020. Construction is expected to take 4 months. Total cost of delivery is £1.5 million with £490,000 funding from the TRI programme.
- 2.6. In total 23 units are being constructed and the small scale units will support the Economic Development Team's focus in local enterprise facilitation. Also, being located near to conferencing facilities at the General Offices they offer opportunities for the General Offices to increase income through supporting meeting and conferencing arrangements.

#### *Potential Capital Projects*

- 2.7. In order to secure funds for capital projects in 2020/21, the Council needs to have a comprehensive plan for placemaking. These are already underway for the Brynmawr and Llanhilleth projects and need to be submitted to the TRI programme team in early March. As the Masterplan for Brynmawr is still under preparation some initial proposals will be submitted for sites within the study area along with some other potential projects.
- 2.8. Due to the funding condition that capital investment will only be agreed in relation to Town Centres it is unlikely that Llanhilleth Pit Head baths will be eligible to apply for funding under the programme. If a suitable development option is identified the business case will need to take account of this and alternative options for funding the development approach will need to be found.
- 2.9. It is likely that capital proposals for the Ebbw Vale and Tredegar town areas will follow completion of their master planning exercises. Subject to securing development funding and the required match funds it is expected that the masterplanning work would commence in April / May 2020. This will allow us to be in a position to submit capital bids for delivery either during 2020/21 (subject to funding availability in the programme) or 2021/22.
- 2.10. Proposals for capital projects would be aligned to the development options identified through the masterplanning work and will have member and officer engagement prior to being submitted for funding consideration. Capital projects

will be considered in line with the regeneration matrix developed to identify projects suitable to be taken forward.

### Development Work

- 2.11. As outlined within the previous report considered by the Environment, Regeneration and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee in 2018, a number of development studies have been commissioned to inform and influence future applications for TRI.
- 2.12. *Brynmawr / Nantyglo Masterplan*
  - 2.12.1. Consultants Ove Arup were appointed to undertake a master planning exercise for the Brynmawr and Nantyglo area. Key strategic sites including the former Nantyglo School Site, Stagecoach Bus Depot and the Brynmawr Boilerhouse Building.
  - 2.12.2. Initial engagement meetings have taken place with elected members in the wards of Brynmawr and Nantyglo. Engagement meetings have also been undertaken with officers and other key stakeholders including Local Development Plan Team, Housing Partners, Stagecoach and the Trustees of Brynmawr Boiler House. The commission will be completed in early 2020 and will be reported through the democratic reporting process.
  - 2.12.3. Once completed and endorsed by the Council the report can be utilised to identify and develop capital projects that can be funded through the TRI programme in year three and beyond.
- 2.13. *Llanhilleth Pit Head Baths*
- 2.14. Consultants Planning Consulting Solutions Limited have been commissioned to undertake a study of potential future uses of the Llanhilleth Pit Head Baths building. The Council has asked the consultants to consider three options (outdoor activity centre, housing or brewery/music venue and if none of these are viable the consultants are invited to offer a fourth option for consideration.
- 2.15. Like the Brynmawr and Nantyglo study, initial engagement meetings have taken place with elected members in the ward of Llanhilleth. Alongside this a public survey has been carried out with local residents and users of local facilities (Llanhilleth Institute). A structural assessment of the building has also been carried out and we anticipate the initial outcome of the consultant's study to be received in draft March 2020.
- 2.16. Further development studies to be commissioned in year three (2020-21) shall include:
  - Ebbw Vale Town Masterplan – To consider how strategic sites located near to the commercial area of the Town Centre can add to the towns' commercial offering and viability. Strategic sites to be considered through the master-planning process include:

- Ebbw Vale Town Centre;
  - Eugene Cross Park; and
  - The Works.
- Tredegar Town Centre Masterplan – To influence and inform future strategic decision making within a defined study area at the northern gateway of the town. Key strategic sites to be included within the study area include:
    - Gwent Shopping Centre;
    - Commercial Street
    - Integration with the northern gateway;
    - Tredegar Business Park
    - Grade II Listed former Tredegar Iron and Coal Company Truck Shop

#### Future of the Programme (beyond 2021-22)

- 2.17. On 27 January 2020, Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government, Hannah Blythyn announced additional investment of £90 million as part of a new Welsh Government approach to transforming town centres across the Country.
- 2.18. The Transforming Towns Package includes measures to increase footfall by making sure public sector locate services in town centre locations, tackle empty buildings and land to help bring them back into use, and greening our town centres.
- 2.19. Welsh Government will now be taking a ‘Town Centre First’ approach, which means locating services and buildings in town centres wherever possible. Utilising this approach, the public sector is also being encouraged to support towns by locating offices, facilities and services within them in order to drive footfall and create or sustain vibrancy.
- 2.20. To support this approach, the Welsh Government has announced a £90 million investment to transform Wales’ town centres. Investments include:
- £36 million for town centre regeneration projects, extending the current capital programme (TRI) for a further year;
  - £13.6 million to tackle empty and dilapidated buildings and land. This will enable local authorities to take enforcement action to bring empty buildings and land back into use;
  - £10 million of additional funding for the Town Centre Loans scheme, taking the total to £41.6 million, to bring vacant and underutilised buildings back into use in our town centres; and
  - £5 million funding for Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity within town centres. This will support greening projects which will deliver environmental benefits and make town centres more attractive places to visit.

2.21. The Regeneration Opportunities Team will continue to work with Ward Members through engagement sessions to ensure a longer term strategic plan is developed in accordance with the relevant funding stream outputs.

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

#### 3.1. Option 1

Do nothing. The current projects are completed and no further applications for funding are developed or submitted.

#### 3.2. Option 2

To endorse the approach outlined within section 2 of the report, specifically:

- Thematic, Property Enhancement Grants;
- Capital Project Proposal – Boxworks; and
- Development – Brynmawr / Nantyglo, Pithead Baths, Tredegar Town Masterplan and Ebbw Vale Masterplan.

#### 3.3. Preferred Option

The preferred option is Option 2.

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

4.1. Corporate Plan – Economic Development and Regeneration to work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future and for businesses to engage with and support us on the delivery of our priorities.

4.2. Regeneration priorities in the areas of town centres, employment and skills, housing, enterprise and innovation.

- **Town Centres** – The Property Enhancement Grants are specifically targeted at Town Centre properties and are to help tackle properties on the empty properties register, derelict/sub-standard properties that could be utilised for retail, housing and business opportunities
- **Employment and Skills** – Bringing empty properties into use and creating new business spaces will contribute towards increasing jobs within Blaenau Gwent
- **Housing** – The development studies being undertaken for Brynmawr and Llanhilleth Pit Baths together with the proposed studies for Ebbw Vale and Tredegar will consider alternative uses for land or properties within or around town centres including potential for residential development.
- **Enterprise and Innovation** – The new box units are space created to foster small scale enterprise and innovation businesses. They are well

suitable to start-up businesses and are a good stepping stone into larger units within the borough

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

### **5.1. Cost**

- 5.1.1. The maximum Welsh Government intervention rate per project is 70%. All projects seeking investment must provide a minimum financial contribution of 30% to the project from non-Welsh Government sources.
- 5.1.2. In addition to the capital funding, a total allocation of £200k per region is available on an annual basis, for an initial 3 year period to support project development costs (i.e. feasibility studies), at a 50% intervention rate.
- 5.1.3. At present there is no identified fund to cover the match funding costs required for the capital and development studies. Funding shall be sourced from a range of sources including internal and external funding sources where possible.
- 5.1.4. The level of capital funding for the future projects is currently unknown due to the ongoing masterplanning work, however it is intended that the £500,000 of capital funds identified for regeneration activity is utilised to cover this.
- 5.1.5. Where possible other sources of external funding will be sourced to cover potential match funding requirements. We will also seek partners who have private investment that they can put forward to enable projects to be taken forward.

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

- 5.2.1. There is a risk of significant reputational damage with Option one. This could affect the Council's reputation with Welsh Government, other Local Authorities, other funding bodies and the Community.
- 5.2.2. With property enhancement grants there is a risk that projects fail prior to completion and money already drawn down could be lost. To mitigate against this, risk discussions have been undertaken with the Property Solicitor to establish a process whereby legal charges are placed upon properties to cover the value of funding drawn down. This will provide security against potential loss of funding.
- 5.2.3. With no capital funding pot currently identified for the TRI programme, there is a risk that proceeding with Option two and securing funds for the development studies (50% match funding required) and capital project funding (30% match funding required) the Council does not have a match funding source identified. This places the spend within financial year at risk and could cause reputational damage should the project or study not proceed.

### **5.3. Legal**

- 5.3.1. In order to administer the grants, considerable work has been undertaken with the Council's property solicitor to establish a process for grant application, due

diligence and terms and conditions to enable a full audit trail of funds to be put in place.

- 5.3.2. Also in order to mitigate against potential risks of loss of funding, research has been undertaken into potential options around property security arrangements e.g. land / property charges.

5.4. *Personnel*

- 5.4.1. The projects are currently being progressed within the Regeneration Opportunities Team.

- 5.4.2. The Council will continue to be eligible to secure some revenue funding for project management to undertake the project management roles for the projects identified through the TRI programme.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1. *Performance Information and Data*

In order to secure the funding through TRI projects will be required to identify how it will contribute towards meeting the outputs identified through the TRI programme. Such outputs include: jobs accommodated, investment induced, residential/non-residential land developed.

6.2. *Expected outcome for the public*

The thematic priorities and funding opportunities available through TRI will contribute towards the overall regeneration of Blaenau Gwent in the areas of:

- Improving and enhancing the physical and built environment;
- Employment and training opportunities;
- Support the culture of entrepreneurship and business start-ups; and
- Contribute towards improving the viability of our town centres.

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

- 6.3.1. Consultation and engagement activity was undertaken at the outset of the TRI programme. Member engagement will continue as and when project opportunities are identified.

- 6.3.2. For the masterplanning activities, each of the consultants have provided engagement strategies. Types of engagement activity undertaken will include:

- Internal Officer Workshops (planning, regeneration, strategic housing and estates)
- Elected Member Workshops (Ward Members)
- Options Generation
- Public Consultation (Event in locality within the study area)
- Review Workshop

- Revision of Options

6.3.3. Other approaches have also been undertaken doorstep questionnaires, online survey promoted through social media (Facebook, Twitter).

6.3.4. Once the masterplans are received from the Consultants, it is intended that internal review and engagement on the proposals and recommendations will be undertaken. This will include Elected Member, Internal Officer groups and the Council's reporting process.

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

6.4.1. The projects and work carried out through the TRI programme is aimed at improving and upgrading our physical infrastructure that will help us to meet requirements in terms of accessibility and use.

6.4.2. The programme will also assist in improving the long term viability of our town centres. It will enable us to bring derelict / vacant buildings and land back in to use for the benefit of our businesses, residents and visitors.

#### 6.5. *Preventative focus*

Derelict / vacant buildings left to further deteriorate will require greater works to bring them back into use and in cases of listed buildings the liabilities for building owners will only increase more and more until works are undertaken.

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

6.6.1. Where possible collaborative opportunities will be pursued. Development studies will require collaboration across partners to identify suitable development options for the sites and premises being assessed.

6.6.2. Capital projects to bring sites and premises back into use may require substantial funding to enable them to proceed. The Council needs to work with partners to identify suitable uses for such sites and premises along with those who have the potential to co-invest in delivery of projects. This is especially important where TRI is the only funding source available.

6.6.3. By way of example, with a maximum grant intervention rate of 70% a capital project with a value of £1million would require £300,000 of match funding to be available in order to secure TRI capital funding.

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

The projects being delivered shall cut across a number of service areas and as they are developed appropriate governance and project management arrangements across the multi-disciplinary teams required will be established.

## 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1. A number of monitoring arrangements are in place to monitor performance of the projects. These include:

- Member briefing sessions (Executive Member, Ward Member);
- Quarterly performance reporting (Blaenau Gwent Business Plan internal reporting); and
- Six monthly monitoring reports to Welsh Government.

## 8. **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- *Environment, Economic Development and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Report, 12 September 2018*



# 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 Committee**  
Date of meeting: **5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**  
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 7<sup>th</sup> May 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				05.03.20			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
  - 1.1 To present to Members the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May 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 7<sup>th</sup> May 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 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020, as presented.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

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

**Scrutiny Meeting Date:** Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Scrutiny Deadline to receive reports:** Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Report	Method/ Expert Witness/Exec Member	CLT Sign Off	Executive Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Community Benefits	Bethan McPherson /	<b>Monitoring</b> Members to consider community benefit outcomes delivered (19/20) through BGCBC contracts and wider partner opportunities.	Agenda Item	21.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A
Performance Information on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	Ellie Fry	<b>Monitoring</b> Members to consider the activity of Blaenau Gwent Council as part of the overall CCRCDC.	Agenda Item	21.04.20	N/A	21.05.20
Destination Management – Annual Review	Moe Forouzan / Alyson Tippings	<b>Monitoring</b> To monitor the priorities and activities being delivered and what outcomes have been achieved.	Agenda Item	21.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A
Housing Strategy Review 2018/19 and 2019/20	Bethan McPherson	<b>Strategy Review</b> To consider the review.	Agenda Item	21.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A
Consultation on the Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy	Lynda Healy	<b>Policy Development</b> Members to consider the report.	Agenda Item	21.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A
Trinity Chapel Update	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	<b>Monitoring</b> To receive an update on Trinity Chapel, Abertillery.	Agenda Item	21.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A
Civic Crowd Funding	Bethan McPherson	<b>Service Delivery</b> To seek endorsement to engage and be the lead authority for a regional crowd	Agenda Item	21.04.20	FWP – 2020/21	N/A

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Report	Method/ Expert Witness/Exec Member	CLT Sign Off	Executive Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
		funding platform, providing funding for community based projects.				
Task and Finish Group – Local Transport Strategy	Ellie Fry	<b>Task and Finish Group</b> To establish and request nominations for a Local Transport Strategy –Task and Finish Group	Agenda Item	11.02.20	N/A	N/A