

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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

**SUBJECT: REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 5TH
MARCH, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR L. PARSONS (CHAIR)

Councillors J. Hill (Vice-Chair)
M. Cross
G. A. Davies
G. L. Davies
P. Edwards
H. McCarthy
J. C. Morgan
K. Pritchard

WITH: Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
Head of Regeneration
Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities
Team Manager Connected Communities
Scrutiny Officer
Marketing Projects Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were received for Councillors K. Rowson,	

	B. Willis and M. Day.	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillors J.C. Morgan & M. Cross declared an interest in the following item:</p> <p>Item No. 7 Targeted Regeneration Investment (6 The Circle, Tredegar)</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd January, 2020 were submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p>Councillor G. Davies reported that his attendance had been omitted from the minutes.</p> <p>Councillor M. Cross referred to the third paragraph on page 14 of the minutes and stated that the 'TA Centre' should be amended to read the 'Tredegar Arms Hotel'.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET - 23RD JANUARY 2020</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd January, 2020 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Action Sheet 5th December, 2019 (Request for the Chair of the Member Leisure Review Task and Finish Group be invited to the meeting to provide feedback on the work of the Task and Finish Group).</u></p> <p>The Chair confirmed that a special meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee was held yesterday where the Chair of the Task and Finish Group provided a comprehensive report on the findings of the Group.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	

No. 6

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLAN 2020-2023

Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Connected Communities.

The Team Manager presented the report which provided an update on the development of the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan which was designed to represent the needs of the Authority, and was developed based on statistical data, strategic documents, surveys and stakeholder engagement events.

A Member said in order for the Plan to be a success, employers across the Borough needed to have confidence in the Local Authority. He expressed concern regarding a recent press release outlining the failed negotiations between the Council and a major company in Tredegar, resulting in them considering relocating outside of the Borough.

In response the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services said the Plan was very important for Blaenau Gwent and brought a leadership role focussing on building skills in the area. In relation to the issue raised, the Corporate Director confirmed that negotiations were currently ongoing with the company regarding their plans, and whilst they had chosen to take these discussions via the press, he assured that this instance was not a fair reflection of the Council's relationship with the business community across the Borough which was very good.

Another Member said he was pleased with the Plan, but would have liked a breakdown of companies that were providing in-house training to apprentices in Blaenau Gwent, and the Head of Regeneration undertook to provide a report on the apprenticeship scheme.

A discussion ensued regarding training opportunities for youngsters leaving school, and the Corporate Director explained that some companies operating within the Borough had headquarters elsewhere, and looked to the Council for their recruitment and training needs, and the Aspire scheme was a dedicated response to that need, however, there were other companies that had their own processes in place.

In response to a question raised by a Member regarding education, the Team Manager Connected Communities said one

of the priorities of the Plan was very much focussed on education and schools. It was recognised that engagement with schools needed to start at primary school level, and one of the proposals was for Tech Valleys to create stronger links between schools and the business community, particularly at primary level, to ensure that learning pathways are seamless, and looking at how businesses can work better with schools and add value to the school system.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Scrutiny Committee support the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan; and endorse approval by the Executive Committee (Option 2).

No. 7

TARGETED REGENERATION INVESTMENT

Councillors J.C. Morgan & M. Cross declared an interest in this matter, namely 6 The Circle, Tredegar.

Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.

The Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities presented the report which provided an update on the Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) funding opportunity, and sought agreement of further local projects. The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.

A Member expressed concern regarding the progress of the Llanhilleth Pithead Baths which continued to be an eyesore in the community. He said many Councillors had made efforts in the past to have the building demolished, and expressed concern that other uses for the building were now being considered, which he felt would delay progress even further.

In response the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities said Consultants had been commissioned to undertake a study to consider options for the building. A structural assessment had also been undertaken, and the outcome of the Consultant's study may be that removal of the building was the most feasible option.

The Chair reported that a meeting had been held with the Consultants, along with Ward Members and the Executive on the 5th November, 2019. He looked forward to receiving the outcome

	<p>of the study, which would hopefully and provide an indication of residents' aspirations for the building.</p> <p>A brief discussion ensued when the Officer stated that the outcome of the study would direct the source of funding. In response to a question raised, the Officer confirmed that the consultants had been asked to consider demolition costs.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member regarding the Truck Shop in Tredegar, the Corporate Director confirmed that agreement had been reached with CADW, and formal 'sign off' was awaited. The Member asked that this be included in the action sheet for the next meeting.</p> <p>The Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities confirmed that the future use of the Truck Shop site was included in the Tredegar Town Centre Masterplan.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Scrutiny Committee endorse the approach outlined in Section 2 of the report (Option 2), specifically:</p> <p>Thematic - Property Enhancement Grants; Capital Project Proposal – Boxworks; and Development – Brynmawr/Nantyglo, Pithead Baths, Tredegar Town Masterplan and Ebbw Vale Masterplan</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - 7TH MAY 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 7th May, 2020.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted.</p>	