

T: 01495 356011 **Ext./Est:** 6011

E: committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Gwasanaethau Democraidaidd



MAE HWN YN GYFARFOD Y MAE GAN Y CYHOEDD HAWL EI FYNYCHU

Dydd Mercher, 4 Mawrth 2020

Annwyl Syr/Madam

PWYLLGOR GWAITH

Cynhelir cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Gwaith yn Ystafell y Weithrediaeth, Canolfan Ddinesig, Glynebwy on Dydd Mercher, 11eg Mawrth, 2020 am 10.00 am.

Yn gywir

Michelle Morris
Rheolwr Gyfarwyddwr

AGENDA

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. .

2. YMDDIHEURIADAU

Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

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

3. DATGANIADAU BUDDIANT A GODDEFEBAU

Derbyn unrhyw ddatganiadau buddiant a goddefebau.

COFNODION

4. PWYLLGOR GWEITHREDOL 7 - 18

Ystyried cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 29 Ionawr 2020.

MATERION CYFFREDINOL

5. CYRSIAU, CYNADLEDDAU, DIGWYDDIADAU A GWAHODDIADAU 19 - 20

Ystyried yr adroddiad ar gyrsiau, cynadleddau, digwyddiadau a gwahoddiadau.

EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION GWASANAETHAU CORFFORAETHOL

6. BLAENRAGLEN GWAITH – 22 EBRILL 2020 21 - 26

Derbyn yr adroddiad.

7. GRANTIAU I SEFYDLIADAU 27 - 30

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

8. CYNLLUN CYDRADDOLDEB STRATEGOL 2020 I 2024 31 - 110

9. STRATEGAETH FASNACHOL 111 - 126

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Masnachol.

10. STRATEGAETH CYFATHREBU CORFFORAETHOL 127 - 144

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Masnachol

EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION ADFYWIO A DATBLYGU ECONOMAIDD

11. CYNLLUN CYFLOGAETH A SGILIAU 2020-2023 145 - 178

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION YR AMGYLCHEDD

12. **DYNODIAD A DATGANIAD GWARCHODFA NATUR LEOL** 179 - 202

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

13. **ADOLYGU GWASANAETH GOLEUADAU STRYD** 203 - 216

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

EITEMAU MONITRO - GWASANAETHAU CORFFORAETHOL

14. **MONITRO'R GYLLIDEB REFENIW – 2019/20, RHAGOLWG ALLDRO I 31 MAWRTH 2020** 217 - 252

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

15. **MONITRO'R GYLLIDEB GYFALAF, RHAGOLWG AR GYFER BLWYDDYN ARIANNOL 2019/2020** 253 - 272

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

16. **DEFNYDD CRONFEYDD WRTH GEFN CYFFREDINOL AC WEDI'U CLUSTNODI 2019/2020** 273 - 286

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

17. **DATGANIAD SAFLEOLIAD AR SYSTEM CCTV Y CYNGOR** 287 - 294

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Masnachol, Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cymunedol a Phennaeth Llywodraethiant a Phartneriaethau.

18. **PERFFORMIAD ABSENOLDEB GWEITHLU GWASANAETHAU CORFFORAETHOL** 295 - 304

Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Gyfarwyddwr.

EITEMAU MONITRO - ADFYWIO A DATBLYGU ECONOMAIDD

19. **CYMOEDD TECHNOLEG** 305 - 310

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

20. PERFFORMIAD ABSENOLDEB SALWCH GWEITHLU ADFYWIO 311 - 318

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

EITEMAU MONITRO - YR AMGYLCHEDD

21. ARCHWILIAD GYDA FFOCWS CYNLLUN SGORIO HYLENDID BWYD 319 - 332

Ystyried adroddiad Rheolwr Gwasanaeth Diogelu'r Cyhoedd.

22. ADRODDIAD GWEITHGAREDDAU – GWASANAETH TRINIAETH RHEOLI PLA 333 - 342

Ystyried adroddiad Rheolwr Gwasanaeth Diogelu'r Cyhoedd.

23. PERFFORMIAD ABSENOLDEB SALWCH GWEITHLU CYMUNEDOL 343 - 350

Ystyried adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

EITEMAU MONITRO - GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL

24. STRATEGAETH BYW'N ANNIBYNNOL YN Y 21AIN GANRIF – DIWEDDARIAD CYNNYDD BLYNYDDOL 2019/20 351 - 388

Ystyried adroddiad Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Oedolion.

25. PERFFORMIAD ABSENOLDEB SALWCH GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL 389 - 396

Ystyried adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol.

EITEM(AU) EITHREDIG

Derbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiad(au) dilynol sydd ym marn y swyddog eithriadol yn eitem(au) eithredig gan roi ystyriaeth i'r prawf cyhoeddus ac y dylai'r wasg a'r cyhoedd gael eu heithrio o'r cyfarfod (mae'r rheswm dros y penderfyniad am yr eithriad are gael ar restr a gedwir gan y swyddog priodol.

EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION YR AMGYLCHEDD

26. ADOLYGIAD GWASANAETH 397 - 434

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Masnachol.

27. CAPASITI CLADDEDIGAETHAU MYNWENTYDD 435 - 452

Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Tîm Hamdden a Golwg Strydoedd.

At: Cyngorwyr N. Daniels (Cadeirydd)
G. Collier
J. Collins
D. Davies
J. Mason

Pob Aelod arall (er gwybodaeth)
Rheolwr Gyfarwyddwr
Prif Swyddogion

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 29th JANUARY, 2020

REPORT OF: LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

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

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

**Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins**

**Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason**

**WITH: Corporate Director Education
Corporate Director Social Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial
Service Manager Public Protection
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Press Officer**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

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

<p>No. 2</p>	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received for:</p> <p>Councillor G. Collier, Deputy Leader/Executive Member for Environment Managing Director Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services</p> <p>The Leader reported that Councillor S. Thomas had been invited to the meeting to present the views of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee in relation to Item No. 10 (Progress Report – Social Services Assisted Transport Provision). However, he was unable to attend and Councillor K. Rowson, the Vice-Chair was in attendance on his behalf.</p>	
<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 18th November, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<p><u>GENERAL MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>CONFERENCES/COURSES</u></p> <p>To consider invitations to attend the following:-</p> <p>Reception and Briefing by The Army Engagement Team at Coleg Gwent - Thursday, 13th February, 2020</p>	

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor B. Thomas, Armed Forces Champion, to attend.

Social Services Policy Group (SSPG) Learning Workshop and Meeting - 19th and 20th February, 2020

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor J. Mason, Executive Member Social Services, to attend.

The Leader of the Council reported that since the preparation of the report, the following invitations had also been received. He confirmed that no costs would be incurred for the events:-

Inaugural Concert of the British Legion Band in Wales – 9th February, 2020 – Monmouthshire

Lord Lieutenant of Gwent Award – 12th March, 2020 – Raglan Barracks, Newport

RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor Brian Thomas, Armed Forces Champion to attend.

DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS

No. 6 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 11th MARCH, 2020

Consideration was given to the report of the Leader/Executive Member for Corporate Services.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the forward work programme for 11th March, 2020 be noted.

ORDER OF AGENDA

It was agreed that Item No. 10 (Progress Report – Social Services Assisted Transport) would be considered next on the agenda, and that Item No. 7 (Revenue Budget 2020/2021 to 2024/2025) would be considered last.

DECISION ITEMS – SOCIAL SERVICES MATTERS

No. 10 **PROGRESS REPORT – SOCIAL SERVICES ASSISTED TRANSPORT PROVISION**

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Social Services.

At the invitation of the Leader, the Corporate Director of Social Services presented the report which provided an analysis of current demand, and outlined recommendations for future potential charges for citizens accessing transport based on comparable public transport costs. The report followed the introduction of the Assisted Transport Policy from April 2019, with the undertaking of eligibility assessments for new and existing citizens. It was agreed that following completion of these assessments, feedback would be provided to the Executive.

In terms of the background, he reported that in January 2019 Social Services transported 190 citizens ‘to and from’ community options venues, on average 120 citizens a day. Historically, assisted transport was provided to citizens attending community options without any formal assessment of need to use such transport, i.e. there has been automatic entitlement regardless of an individual’s situation.

The Corporate Director said one of the key aims of the Directorate was to maximise citizens’ independence and minimise dependency to enable individuals to live and travel independently within their communities. Social Services does not have a statutory duty to provide transport, but does have a duty to meet that need if the need cannot be met by an individual’s own resources or community resource. Further, in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 we adopted the principle of undertaking a strength based assessment which considered the resources of citizens, including access to their own mobility vehicle, bus pass or benefit entitlement.

The Corporate Director referred to sections 2.4 and 2.5 of the report which stated that in April 2019 demand had reduced, and the Department were able to relinquish 1 vehicle, making the current budget allocation for community options transport £321k.

He said Members will also note that 149 assessments have been undertaken by Social Workers to determine eligibility, and the details of these were outlined in section 7 of the report. However, since the preparation of the report the figures have changed, and there were now 101 individuals accessing community options independently. 24 individuals have been deemed eligible and would have free transport; and 14 originally were deemed as exceptional circumstances, but this had unfortunately recently reduced to 11 due to three people passing away, and it was these 11 individuals we are asking to charge for the use of community options transport.

The Corporate Director referred Members to section 4.3 of the report which captured some of the views of citizens currently accessing the service independently. He confirmed that in order to accommodate this and support parents the opening hours have been extended either side of the day, to make the service more flexible.

He then referred to the options outlined in the report, and recommended Option 1. This was in line with the Council's Income Policy 2014 which recommended full cost recovery where appropriate. He said Option 2 sought to charge a cost equivalent to public transport costs for accessing the vehicles. Both these Options would enable the Directorate to reduce the current fleet from 8 to 4 vehicles and ensure a more sustainable model for the future. However, Option 3 which recommended the 'status quo' prior to April 2019 could result in an estimated additional cost to the budget of approximately £90k should every citizen currently accessing the service through alternative means return to using community option assisted transport.

The Corporate Director concluded that if a charge for the 11 individuals using community options assisted transport was not introduced, then it would be unfair to the other 135 individuals either eligible under the policy for free transport or those currently making their own way to and from community options independently.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor K. Rowson, Vice-Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee reported the reasons for the alternative recommendation presented by the Scrutiny Committee.

He said those of the Committee who voted for the alternative recommendation did so because they felt that the previous decision on Home to School and Home to College Transport had set a

precedent for the administration.

They argued that by voting for Option 1 or 2 they would be unfairly penalising some of the most vulnerable people in our community. They also claimed that the good work undertaken by the Department in compiling the information was not the only side of the story, and that huge pressure would be brought upon some of the families of service users.

Finally, they argued that given the Council's much better financial settlement with a £4 million uplift in funding, the proposed saving of approximately £100,000 could not be sufficiently justified in this instance, as there was the potential for users to stop attending community options completely, and this could affect their wellbeing.

The Executive Member for Social Services said this was a very comprehensive report and was evidence of the level of engagement undertaken by the Senior Management Team in Adult Services. He had followed progress and the discussions undertaken on the Policy since 2017, to ensure that all service users had been treated fairly, and with all questions in relation to safeguarding, isolation and loneliness being answered.

He then referred to the Options outlined in the report, and said whilst Option 1 followed the Council's Income Policy, i.e. full cost recovery, he felt this Option could cause unnecessary financial hardship, and as a result could not support this Option.

In relation to Option 3, the Executive Member said whilst he had taken the views of the Scrutiny Committee on board, he could not support the alternative recommendation, and he said he was surprised that since 2015, there had been no reference at any meetings to revert to the status quo.

He said Option 2 reflected the Council's policy to ensure that our citizens retain their independence, and would assist the most vulnerable people who access our services to travel in a method of their own choosing. As a result, he concluded that Option 2 was his preferred Option, and believed it was a reasonable compromise and recognised the level of engagement and consultation that had been undertaken, and the positive feedback received by the Department.

The Leader commended the Department on presenting a clear and

understandable report. In relation to the comments of the Scrutiny Committee he said it was difficult to compare this with the Home to School and Home to College Transport. In January 2019 discussions were around potential budget cuts and savings that were being submitted year on year for consideration. Following in-depth consultation and lengthy discussions of the outcomes of that consultation, along with other mitigating factors, it was decided that the Home to School/College Transport would no longer be put before Council for potential savings as part of the budget setting process. This decision provided piece of mind to parents and grandparents, but would also save Officer time in having to compile the data in preparation for the budget setting process.

The Leader then sought clarification that in January 2019 when the review of social services assisted transport was undertaken, whether the potential for a charging policy was always intended.

In response the Corporate Director confirmed that when the Social Services Assisted Transport Policy was approved in January 2019, it was also agreed that Officers would look at potential costings for the service on a full cost recovery basis or alternatively costs comparable to public transport, in order to develop charges for those citizens eligible to continue to access transport. If Members did not want to implement a charging system, then the decision could have been taken to not proceed with the review at that time.

The Executive Member for Regeneration & Economic Development commended the way in which the review had been managed. He said the key issue moving forward was to ensure access to the service for the benefit of the community, and he was confident that this would continue.

The Executive Member for Education supported the comments made and said the amount of engagement that had been undertaken was very pleasing, and supported Option 2.

The Vice-Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee confirmed that he also supported Option 2.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive note the progress made in assessing the needs of citizens in line with the

	<p>Assisted Transport Policy, including the outcomes of the assessments. The Executive recommend that only those citizens who remain eligible for assisted transport continue to receive support free of charge. Those citizens who are deemed ineligible but have exceptional circumstances continue to receive support but at a charge based on similar costs illustrated earlier in the report, reflecting public transport rates. The charges would be based on the future configuration of transport required to deliver the future model of Community Options services (Option 2).</p>	
	<p><u>DECISIONS – ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>REVIEW OF BLAENAU GWENT HOMES ALLOCATION POLICY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Housing Solutions and Compliance.</p> <p>The Service Manager Public Protection presented the report which outlined the proposed policy and operational changes to the Blaenau Gwent Homes Allocation Scheme, following the recent review of the scheme and consultation process. The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein, the proposed changes to the Policy were detailed in Appendix 3.</p> <p>In relation to the consultation exercise undertaken, a query was raised regarding Member engagement, and the Officer apologised that all Members had not been directly consulted on the proposals. However, the report had been considered by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and they fully supported the proposed changes to the Scheme.</p> <p>The Leader confirmed that the Executive Member for Environment was also fully supportive of the proposals.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive approve the proposed policy changes to the Blaenau Gwent Homes Housing Allocation Scheme for implementation on the 1st April, 2020 (Option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>	

<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.</p> <p>The Executive Member Regeneration & Economic Development presented the report which outlined the key principles and requirements of the guidance from Welsh Government in preparing a Local Housing Strategy, and also highlighted the potential opportunity for collaborative working with other Local Authorities on a regional basis.</p> <p>The Local Housing Strategy set out the Council's long term housing vision in terms of the type of housing we are looking to build over the next 5 years. He said housing was currently at the top of the political agenda, impacting across all Portfolios, and the Local Housing Strategy was a very important document for the Council. Looking at the longer term there was opportunity to pursue a more regional approach and section 2.12 of the report outlined the opportunities for collaborative working. However, in moving towards a collaborative approach, the Executive Member stressed the importance of ensuring local needs are met.</p> <p>The Executive Member concluded that the Scrutiny Committee had considered the report and endorsed the preferred Option 2.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive endorse BGCBC to work collaboratively with Gwent wide Local Authorities to investigate the possibility of producing a Regional Housing Strategy and local (Blaenau Gwent) action plan (Option 2).</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>At the invitation of the Leader the Chief Officer Resources presented the report which provided an update on the positive provisional local government settlement for 2020/21 and its impact on the Council's budget; proposed the detailed budget for 2020/21 and indicative budget for 2021/22; and proposed the level of Council Tax increase</p>	

for the 2020/21 financial year in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein. The positive provisional settlement combined with the opportunities identified in the Bridging the Gap programme meant the Council would be able to invest in key priorities, avoid cuts to services and enhance its financial resilience. Further details of the specific grants for Local Government would be published alongside the final RSG settlement in February 2020.

In response to a question raised by the Leader, the Officer said there were significant financial challenges in the latter years of the MTFs, therefore it would be prudent to establish a Transformation Budget which could be utilised to invest in projects and investigate potential options for savings in future years, and bridge the significant gaps in funding.

The Leader sought assurance that the grants being transferred into the RSG would become un-hypothecated, and the Officer confirmed that they would become un-hypothecated, and it would be for the Council to decide where this funding would be allocated.

The Leader said he was confident that the Council would make the right decision. He thereupon recommended that the Executive note the report at this stage, and that a formal decision be made at Council on the 6th February, 2020.

RESOLVED accordingly.

MONITORING ITEMS - SOCIAL SERVICES

No. 11 REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director of Social Services.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board be supported (Option 1).

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Agenda Item 5

Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Executive**

Date of meeting: **11th March, 2020**

Report Subject: **Conferences, Courses, Events and Invitation Report**

Report Submitted by: **Democratic Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	29.01.2020	N/A	

1. **Purpose of the Report**

To present a list of Conferences/Courses for consideration and determination by the Executive.

2. **Scope of the Report**

2.1 Launch of the Capital Ambition 2.0 Thursday, 6th February, 2020 Cardiff and Vale College, Cardiff

To approve the attendance of Councillor Dai Davies, Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development.

2.2 Overseas Trip to Turkey 10th – 12th February, 2020

To approve for Councillors G. Davies and J. Hill to attend, along with Steve Smith, Head of Planning, Ellie Fry, Head of Regeneration and Rob Davies, Environmental Health.

2.3 St. David's Concert, St Michael's Church, Abertillery Sunday, 1st March, 2020

To approve the attendance of Councillor M. Moore, Chair of the Council.

- 2.4 Gwent High Sherriff Community Fund Event
Llanhilleth Institute, Llanhilleth
Saturday, 29th February, 2020

To approve the attendance of Councillor M. Moore, Chair of the Council.

3. **Options for Consideration**

- 3.1 To seek approval for attendance at the above.

Agenda Item 6

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme – 22nd April 2020**
Portfolio Holder: **All Portfolios**
Report Submitted by: **Cllr Nigel Daniels, Leader of the Council / Executive Member Corporate Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	✓	26.02.20				11.03.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Executive Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 22nd April 2020 for discussion and to update the Committee on any changes.

2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Executive Work Programme is a key aspect of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and supports the requirements of the Constitution.
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 the Executive makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
 - 2.2 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in July 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 Performance and Democratic Team under the direction of the Leader and Executive Members.
 - 2.3 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 work programme; 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 Executive Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting on 22nd April 2020, and:
 - Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;

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

Option 2: The Executive Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting on 22nd April 2020, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme - Meeting on 22nd April 2020

Executive Committee
Forward Work Programme

Executive Meeting Date: Wednesday 22nd April 2020

Report Deadline Date to Liz Thomas: Monday 30th March 2020

*Reports received after this date will be included on the next agenda of Executive

Decision: 9 Items Monitoring: 11 items Information: 3 items

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of report	CLT Sign Off Date	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
DECISION ITEMS					
Portfolio: Leader / Corporate Services					
Grants to Organisations	Rhian Daly	Approval To agree the Grants to Organisations.	24.03.20	N/A	N/A
Portfolio: Social Services					
Assistive Technology	Alyson Hoskins	Approval Members to agree the findings of review.	17.03.20	Social Services – 02.04.20	N/A
Portfolio: Education					
School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education Statutory deadline for the policy to be agreed and published by the 15 th April each year.	Lynn Phillips / Claire Gardner	Approval Members to approve the revised policy.	11.02.20	Education and Learning – 26.02.20	N/A
EAS Business Plan 2020/21	Michelle Jones	Approval Members to endorse the EAS Business Plan for 2020/21.	11.02.20	Education and Learning – 26.02.20	N/A
Penycwm Capacity Review	Clair Gardner	Approval To agree consultation.	14.01.20	Education and Learning – TBC	N/A
Attendance Policy	Lynette Jones	Approval To approve the policy.	14.01.20	Education and Learning – TBC	N/A
On line safety – 360* Safe – ICT policy for Schools	Sarah Dixon	Approval To adopt the ICT policy prior to distribution to school Governing bodies.	03.03.20	Joint Safeguarding – 23.03.20	N/A

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of report	CLT Sign Off Date	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Education Neglect Policy	Lynette Jones	Approval To approve the policy	03.03.20	Joint Safeguarding – 23.03.20	N/A
Blaenau Gwent Education Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan	Lynn Phillips / Claire Gardner	Approval Members to approve the strategy and associated action plan.	17.12.19	Education and Learning – 23.02.20	N/A
MONITORING ITEMS					
Portfolio: Social Services					
Children Looked After Update	Tanya Evans	Monitoring To update members on the current situation in relation to the numbers of children who are looked after and the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Safe reduction of Looked After Children Strategy.	17.03.20	Social Services – 02.04.20	N/A
Safeguarding Performance Information Social Services and Education (Quarters 2 & 3 and Autumn Term)	Damien McCann/ Lynette Jones	Monitoring To provide members with Safeguarding Performance and Self-Evaluation information.	03.03.20	Joint Safeguarding – 23.03.20	N/A
Adult Safeguarding Performance Information	Alyson Hoskins / Andrew Day	Monitoring To receive Safeguarding Performance information relating to Adult Services.	03.03.20	Joint Safeguarding – 23.03.20	N/A
Portfolio: Regeneration and Economic Development					
Targeted Regeneration Funding (TRI) Update	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	Monitoring Members to receive an update on TRI funding.	11.02.20	Regeneration – 05.03.20	N/A
Portfolio: Education					
Children Looked After Provision and Progress	Catherine Edwards / Gavin Metherringham	Monitoring To consider the information provided in the report and identify opportunities to further improve.	14.01.20	Special Education and Learning – TBC	N/A
Final School Performance	Michelle Jones	Monitoring To provide members with a summary of performance in line with accountability	11.02.20	Education and Learning – 26.02.20	N/A

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of report	CLT Sign Off Date	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
		changes to ensure that children and young people are provided with the best start in life. (KS4 final)			
Draft Self evaluation	Lynette Jones	Monitoring Members to endorse the development of the self-evaluation report for Local Government Education Services and agree that the actions arising from the SER are appropriate and aligned to the service needs for children and young people.	11.02.20	Education and Learning – 26.02.20	N/A
Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) <i>Please note the report and Plan will need to be translated to Welsh by the Directorate.</i>	Lynn Phillips / Claire Gardner	Monitoring Members to review performance annually, and monitor outcomes associated with the WESP in line with the vision, goals, targets and objectives; whilst ensuring that this process informs key strategic priorities from a Welsh-medium perspective.	14.01.20	Special Education and Learning – TBC	N/A
School Categorisation	Michelle Jones	Monitoring To inform Members of the new national school categorisation system and Blaenau Gwent school categorisation profile for 2020.	11.02.20	Education and Learning – 26.02.20	N/A
Safer Schools - A contextual safeguarding approach	Michelle Jones / Sarah Dixon	Monitoring Respect and resilience action plan, corporate security review - secure and shelter.	03.03.20	Joint Safeguarding – 23.03.20	N/A
Corporate Services – Sickness Absence Performance	Michelle Morris	Monitoring Member to consider and challenge relevant Portfolio sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement.	20.02.20	Corporate Overview – 12.02.20	N/A
INFORMATION ITEMS					
Regional Partnership Board - Quarterly	Damien McCann	Information To provide Members with quarterly updates from the work of the Regional Partnership Board developed as part of the Social	17.03.20	Social Services – 02.04.20	N/A

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of report	CLT Sign Off Date	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
		Services and Well-being Act, Part 9, integration and partnership.			
Annual Independent Reviewing Officer report	Tanya Evans	Information Statutory responsibility.	17.03.20	Social Services – 02.04.20	N/A
Inspire to Achieve / Work Performance	Lynn Phillips / Joanne Sims	Information Members to receive information on performance in line with targets and spend.	11.02.20	Education and Learning – 26.02.20	N/A

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

REPORT SUBJECT: **GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS – 11th March 2020**

REPORT AUTHOR: **RHIAN HAYDEN**

**LEAD OFFICER/
DEPARTMENT** **CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES,
RESOURCES**

ABERTILLERY

Cwmtillery Ward – Councillor M. Day

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | One Life Autism Support Group | £50 |
|----|-------------------------------|-----|

Cwmtillery Ward – Councillor T. Sharrem

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Abertillery Excelsiors | £105 |
| 2. | Old Tylerians RFC | £105 |
| 3. | Bourneville Community Centre | £105 |

Llanhilleth Ward – Councillors J. Collins & L. Parsons

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Blaenau Gwent Foster Carers Association | £50 |
| 2. | Llanhilleth & District Bowls Club | £200 |

Six Bells Ward – Councillors D. Hancock

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Friends of Six Bells Park | £300 |
| 2. | Six Bells Community Centre | £200 |
| 3. | Six Bells Communities First Walking Group | £200 |

Six Bells Ward – Councillor M. Holland

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Abertillery Business & Professional Ladies Association | £50 |
| 2. | Six Bells Bowls Club | £150 |

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Nantyglo Ward – Councillor G. Collier

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|------|
| 1. | Ystruth Primary School PTA | £125 |
|----|----------------------------|------|

Nantyglo Ward – Councillor L. Winnett

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Nantyglo FC | £200 |
| 2. | Blaina Bowls Club | £200 |
| 3. | Blaina Community Sports Club | £100 |
| 4. | Blaina Community Centre | £135 |
| 5. | Nantyglo & Blaina Air Training Corps | £150 |
| 6. | Aberystroth History & Archaeology Society | £100 |
| 7. | Monday Night Dance Club | £50 |
| 8. | Ystruth Ladies Hut | £50 |
| 9. | Riverside Flats | £50 |
| 10. | Ystruth Primary School PTA | £250 |

BRYNMAWR

Brynmawr Ward – Councillor J. Hill

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|------|
| 1. | Coed Cae Interact Club | £100 |
|----|------------------------|------|

EBBW VALE

Badminton Ward – Councillor G. Paulsen

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Ebbw Vale Cricket Club | £100 |
| 2. | Badminton OAP Group | £100 |
| 3. | Blaenau Gwent Foster Carers Association | £100 |

Badminton Ward – Councillor C. Meredith

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|------|
| 1. | Ebbw Vale Cricket Club | £100 |
|----|------------------------|------|

Ebbw Vale South Ward – Councillor J. Millard & K. Pritchard

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|------|
| 1. | Ebbw Valley Brass | £200 |
| 2. | Tyllwyn OAP | £300 |

Rassau Ward – Councillor D. Wilkshire

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Ebbw Vale Works Museum | £75 |
| 2. | Beaufort Male Voice Choir | £75 |
| 3. | Rassua & Beaufort Bowls | £75 |
| 4. | Rassau OAP | £100 |
| 5. | Reliance Bus Preservation Group | £25 |
| 6. | Ebbw Vale Male Voice Choir | £50 |
| 7. | Beaufort RFC | £75 |
| 8. | Blaenau Gwent Young Stars | £75 |
| 9. | Ebbw Vale Indoor Bowls | £75 |
| 10. | Ebbw Vale Netball | £75 |
| 11. | Puddleducks | £100 |
| 12. | Ebbw Vale Christmas Lights | £50 |
| 13. | Rhos y Fedwyn Primary School | £100 |
| 14. | Ysbyti Tri Chwm | £75 |
| 15. | Hospice of the Valleys | £75 |
| 16. | Penycwm School | £50 |
| 17. | Rock Chapel | £75 |

CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES

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Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

Report Subject: **Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias (Head of Governance and Partnerships); Andrew Parker (Service Manager: Policy and Partnerships); Emma Scherptong (Professional Lead for Engagement, Equality & Welsh Language)**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	18.02.20	26.02.20			03.03.20	11.03.20	26.03.20	

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To present the Council's proposed Strategic Equality Plan for 2020-24.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the 'Act' from here on in) came into operation on the 6th April 2011. The Council, as a public body in Wales, has a requirement under the Act to meet a set of general and specific duties.

2.2 The general duties are that in exercising its functions the Council must have due regard to:

- i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other inappropriate conduct;
- ii) advance equality of opportunity; and
- iii) foster good relations.

2.3 There are nine 'protected characteristics' covered by the Act which are: Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Age; Sex; Sexual Orientation; and Marriage and Civil Partnership.

2.4 In Wales there are also specific duties which were set by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. These include:

- i) Equality objectives set within an equality plan
- ii) Engaging the community
- iii) Assessing impact
- iv) Providing accessible information
- v) Collecting employment and pay information
- vi) Public procurement

- 2.5 Additionally, the Welsh Government is looking to commence a new Public Sector Equality Duty named the 'socio-economic duty' from April 2020. This will place a statutory duty on relevant public bodies to give consideration to the need to reduce the inequality that result from socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions.
- 2.6 To ensure the Council was prepared to meet these duties, a project plan was put in place as part of the Policy and Partnership Team's Business Plan for 2019/20. This contained all the key elements necessary to develop an effective equality plan such as engagement, drafting strategic objectives, formal consultation, adoption, and monitoring and review.
- 2.7 Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee set up a 'Member's Working Group' made up of five committee members (including the Chair and Council's Equality Champion) as part of their Forward Work Programme for 2019/20. This enabled effective elected member involvement in the development of the equality objectives and plan.
- 2.8 Research and engagement has been instrumental in developing this plan to ensure it is based on a good understanding of the equality issues in Blaenau Gwent. Key phases have included a public engagement programme called 'Let's Talk about Fairness and Equalities' (Aug to Sept 2019) and a formal consultation process from Dec 2019 to Jan 2020.
- 2.8 Following formal consultation, the Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024 has been developed. The plan contains Our Equality Objectives which are:
- We will be an organisation who ensures fairness and equality is in everything that we do;
 - We will be an equal opportunity employer with a workforce that values equality and diversity;
 - We will support children and young people, particularly those with protected characteristics, to achieve their learning ambitions;
 - We will promote and support safe, friendly and cohesive communities;
 - We will ensure there is meaningful involvement with people who have protected characteristics and key stakeholders that represent their interests;
 - We will strive to tackle inequality caused by poverty for people who have protected characteristics;

The plan and supporting documents can be found at Appendix 1.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

CLT considered the proposed plan and recommended for approval on 18 February 2020.

The report will be considered by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on 3rd March 2020, and any comments will be presented verbally to the Executive Committee.

Option 1 - That Executive Committee considers and endorses the proposed Strategic Equality Plan prior to approval by Council.

Option 2 - That Executive Committee considers the proposed Strategic Equality Plan and make specific recommendations prior to approval by Council.

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

The report relates to the Council meeting the specific duties identified under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 in relation to setting equality objectives within a plan.

This duty aligns with both the Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan, and also the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which set a National well-being objective to create “a more equal Wales”.

The proposed equality objective relating to strive to tackle inequality caused by poverty for people who have protected characteristics will also put the Council in a strong position to be able to meet the new Public Sector Equality Duty named the ‘socio-economic duty’ from April 2020.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There are no direct financial implications as a consequence of this report. The publication and translation of the report, on behalf of the Council, is met within existing budget of the Governance and Partnerships Section.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Failure to develop and publish a new Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives by 31st March 2020 would result in the Council failing to comply with its statutory requirements and specific duties of the Equality Act 2010.

This risk has been mitigated by effective project planning to develop equality objectives and the supporting plan, and by ensuring timely professional and political approval.

5.3 ***Legal***

The Council has a legal requirement to develop and publish a Strategic Equality Plan & Equality Objectives by 31st March 2020.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There is a duty across the organisation to comply with the Act and proactively support the implementation of the Strategic Equality Plan. The Policy and Partnerships Team will oversee this responsibility via the Professional Lead for Engagement, Equality & Welsh Language.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Underpinning the development of the Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives is intelligence and research including:

- Understanding each of the protected characteristic and gathering local statistical information - where available;
- Information, data and statistics considered at a local, regional and national level;
- National Research undertaken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission: *Is Wales Fairer?* (2015) and *Is Wales Fairer?* (2018);
- Feedback received from interested parties through our formal consultation and engagement work.

The plan (Appendix 1) summarises this information via the supporting documents, which includes data and statistics aligned to the nine protected characteristics including an overview of the Blaenau Gwent area (see page 31) and a profile of the Council (see page 24)

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

A more equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

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

An initial phase of engagement work called 'Talk to us about Fairness and Equalities' was carried out during July to the end of September 2019 to give people the opportunity to share their views. The phase saw 120 people participate.

A second phase of engagement called 'Tell us what you think about equalities' was carried out as part of the formal consultation period delivered during December 2019 and January 2020. It gave interested parties the opportunity to comment on the draft Strategic Equality Plan and Objectives. The phase provided 96 survey responses.

During both engagement phases the Children's Grand Council, Youth Forum, 50+ Forum, and Blaenau Gwent People First Group were engaged and shoppers were surveyed across each of our town centres.

There was effective elected member involvement via the Corporate Overview Working Group, which met in September and November 2019 as part of the project plan. Additionally, a special Members Session, led by the Chair of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee, was held in January 2020 to give all elected members the opportunity to consult on the draft equality objectives.

Corporate Leadership Team have signed off both the draft equality objectives for consultation and this proposed plan. Furthermore, the draft plan and proposed equality objectives were discussed at the Wider Corporate Leadership Team in January 2020.

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

The objectives will be in operation until 2024 and will be monitored annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and considers future trends and needs.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The plan works to ensure that no person is discriminated against now or in the future.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The plan has been developed with the involvement of key stakeholders and partners and this activity will continue, as part of the delivery of the plan.

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

The plan is to be linked to the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act to ensure alignments and avoid duplication. The plan will be integrated into the Business Planning process of the Council to ensure all service areas are effectively taking into consideration the requirements of the Act and our identified equality objectives.

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

A part of the development of the proposed plan an on-going Equality Impact Assessment process has been carried out which has taken into consideration key issues. The EQIA is summarised in Appendix 1 (see page 58). It is considered that the approval of this plan will have positive impacts to those covered by the Protected Characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Council is obliged to carry out an annual reporting process to outlined how progress has been made against the plan. The report is published on the Council's website and sent to the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Additionally, the annual report is taken through democratic processes via the Corporate Overview Scrutiny and Executive Committees.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix 1 – Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan 2020 to 2024*

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Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan

2020 - 2024

“A more equal Wales”



Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan

2020-24

This document (including Easy Read version) is available electronically at the Council's website:

<https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/council/equalities-welsh-language/equality-information-advice/>

Hard copies are available at each of Blaenau Gwent's local libraries.

If you require this document in a different format, e.g. large print, Braille, audio version, etc. please contact:

Policy and Partnerships

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Municipal Offices

Civic Centre

Ebbw Vale

Blaenau Gwent

NP23 6XB

Phone: 01495 355935

Email: pps@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



*Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg
This document is available in Welsh*



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A Welcome

We are pleased to present Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's third **Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24**. A plan which sets out how we will meet our duties under the Equality (Wales) Act 2010.

Putting fairness and equality at the heart of everything we do is central to maximising well-being outcomes for our residents, local communities, staff and visitors, now and in the future.

We recognise as public service providers we have a key role to play in making a real difference to people's lives. Therefore, we will continue to strive to be a 'fair and equitable' organisation as outlined in our **Corporate Plan 2018-22**.

To achieve this, our plan sets out the key steps we will take over the next four years to strengthen and advance equality across Blaenau Gwent. The steps build on the progress we have already made and will continue to support in order to enable meaningful change.

We wish to thank everyone who has been actively involved in the engagement processes to develop this plan and look forward to working together with you to make it a success.



Councillor Nigel Daniels
Leader of the Council



Michelle Morris
Managing Director

Summary of Our Equality Objectives

We will be an organisation who ensures fairness and equality is in everything that we do.

We will be an equal opportunity employer with a workforce that values equality and diversity.

We will support children and young people, particularly those with protected characteristics, to achieve their learning ambitions.

We will promote and support safe, friendly and cohesive communities.

We will ensure there is meaningful involvement with people who have protected characteristics and key stakeholders that represent their interests.

We will strive to tackle inequality caused by poverty for people who have protected characteristics.

Introduction

Meeting the Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) the Council has a statutory duty to prepare and publish a Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives every four years. During the plans development we also have a duty to involve people, including those protected by the Act, who have an interest in Council functions.

The Act aims to put fairness at the heart of society and is a law which protects people because of:

Age - A person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability – For example, a physical, or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment - For example, transgender. People who were born into their body and feel it is not right for them. This might mean that they want to change from being a woman to a man, or a man to a woman.

Marriage and civil partnerships - Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Civil partnerships are legally recognising 'same-sex couples' relationships. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. The Act applies to this characteristic, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

Pregnancy and maternity – The condition of being pregnant, or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity, or paternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks' after giving birth, and includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race - This refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief (including non-belief) - Religion and belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices, or the way you live, for it to be included in the definition.

Sex - A man or a woman.

Sexual orientation - Being heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Our third Strategic Equality Plan

This is the Council's third Strategic Equality Plan which sets out our [equality objectives](#). It aims to strengthen and advance equality across all of our service areas and achieve meaningful outcomes for local residents, communities, staff and visitors.

It also outlines our intended steps for meetings our general **Public Sector Equality Duties** which are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations.

Further information on our specific duties can be found within our [Supporting Documents](#) on page 27.

We recognise as a Council that the successful delivery of this plan will require us to have an effective framework in place that has:

- Strong political and professional leadership;
- A 'One Council' approach for delivering equality across the organisation;
- Clear aims, objectives and actions;
- A meaningful involvement and engagement programme; and
- Effective monitoring and performance arrangements.

Further information on how we developed our plan can be found in our [Supporting Documents](#) from page 43.

Introducing our equality objectives

Outlined below are our equality objectives which are all of equal status and are to be delivered across the four years of the plan:

- We will be an organisation who ensures fairness and equality is in everything that we do.
- We will be an equal opportunity employer with a workforce that values equality and diversity.
- We will support children and young people, particularly those with protected characteristics, to achieve their learning ambitions.
- We will promote and support safe, friendly and cohesive communities.
- We will ensure there is meaningful involvement with people who have protected characteristics and key stakeholders that represent their interests.
- We will strive to tackle inequality caused by poverty for people who have protected characteristics.

Framing our equality objectives

Our equality objectives are 'themed' as we recognise that many of the key equality issues we have identified are not isolated to one specific 'protected characteristic'. The steps we take to deliver the objectives will also deliver positive equality outcomes for people covered by one, or more of the protected characteristics.

Further information on how we intend to meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act can be found within our [Supporting Documents](#) on page 40.

Monitoring our plan

Monitoring the plan through our corporate business planning arrangements will be an important step to ensure equality is mainstreamed and embedded across our working practices and service delivery. Through this process we will give careful consideration to how effective progress is made, and as part of our annual review arrangements will consider whether our objectives remain appropriate.

How we intend to [monitor and review our plan](#) can be found on page 22.

Section Overview

Information about each of our six equality objectives can be found from pages 8 to 21. Each objective includes the following sub-sections:

- Overview
- What people have told us?
- Why is this equality objective important?
- What good work are we building on?
- Some of the key steps we will take to meet this equality objective
- What difference do we want to make?

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE: We will be an organisation who ensures fairness and equality is in everything that we do

Overview

We recognise the important role of the Council as a public service provider to strengthen and advance equality across Blaenau Gwent.

In order to deliver meaningful outcomes for our staff, citizens, local communities, and stakeholders we must put fairness and equality at the heart of everything we do. Therefore, delivering on our equality duties must be 'business as usual'. We emphasise this in our Corporate Plan 2018-22 through our core value of being fair and equitable.

Achieving this will require good political and professional leadership, as well as an effective framework for delivery, alongside a 'One Council' approach.

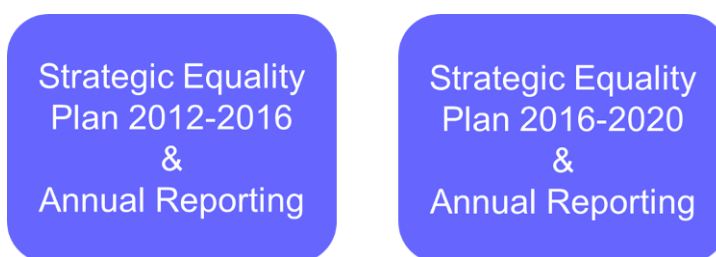
What people have told us?

During our '**Tell us what you think about equalities**', our formal involvement and engagement programme, respondents generally agreed that this objective is important. For example, they recognised this objective as being vital in supporting the delivery of our plan as a whole, over the next four years. Respondents also told us that this objective needs to be more than just words and that the '**Council needs to clearly demonstrate**' its delivery through meaningful action which leads to positive equality outcomes being achieved. Furthermore, respondents felt that this objective would assist the Council in getting to know and understand its residents better and also suggested that more work needs to be done to promote examples of the good work already happening across Blaenau Gwent to support the equality agenda.

Why is this equality objective important?

Strengthening our existing internal and external practices is vital to make sure equality is embedded in everything we do and delivered as 'business as usual'.

What good work are we building on?



Some of the key steps we will take to meet this equality objective...

- Political and professional leadership teams accountable for owning and supporting the effective delivery of the plan;
- Effectively integrate equality and diversity within our corporate and strategic decision-making, through an updated Equality Impact Assessment process;
- Progress against the delivery of our equality objectives undertaken via the Council's business planning arrangements;
- Undertake research to identify appropriate data and intelligence in relation to equality and diversity to support service delivery and decision-making;
- Publish our equality information using an open source format.

What difference do we want to make?

We want to raise the profile of the equality agenda and ensure it is effectively mainstreamed across the organisation in order to maximise the equality outcomes we achieve.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE: We will be an equal opportunity employer with a workforce that values equality and diversity

Overview

We recognise the value of being an equal opportunity employer and being identified as an employer of choice. We want to take the necessary steps to create and maintain a diverse workforce as we acknowledge the real benefits this can bring to the organisation as well as the local people and communities we serve.

We recognise that having a '*workforce that values equality and diversity*' is vital if we want to embed equality as 'business as usual', across all of our working practices. It is also central in supporting the delivery of our core organisational value of being a '*fair and equitable*' organisation.

Achieving this objective will require us to review the current diversity of our workforce and working together with our staff we will look to identify how and where improvements can be made.

In delivering this objective, we aim to ensure that new and existing staff are provided with the appropriate training, guidance and support and that the key principles of the Strategic Equality Plan is integrated with other key strategies such as the Workforce Development Strategy.

The engagement and involvement of staff will be key in supporting the delivery of this well-being objective. Therefore, we will look to use our established communication methods, such as staff engagement sessions, management briefing events and conferences. We will also look to re-establish an equality and diversity working group to sit alongside our staff well-being group.

What people have told us?

During our ‘**Tell us what you think about equalities**’, our formal involvement and engagement programme, respondents generally agreed that this objective is important. Respondents told us that equality, diversity and inclusion training for staff is ‘**very important**’ and that staff should at least receive basic awareness training in order to support a positive workplace environment, and also to ensure equality sits at the heart of how we deliver our services. Furthermore, respondents highlighted that specialised training should be ‘**appropriate to need**’, and also include access to ‘**support and advice**’ to ensure staff are equipped to deal with equality issues competently, efficiently and effectively.

Why is this equality objective important?

This equality objective will help us in our journey towards becoming an equality opportunity employer, who is representative of the local people and communities we serve and therefore better able to support local need and deliver meaningful outcomes.

Furthermore, having a workforce which ‘values equality and diversity’ will be key in supporting the creation of positive working environments which promote a good working culture whereby all staff feel valued and supported.

What good work are we building on?

Blaenau Gwent &
Caerphilly
Workforce
Development
Programme

Provide bespoke
training such as
mental health
awareness

Supporting
National equalities
campaigns such
as International
Women’s Day

Some of the key steps we will take to meet this equality objective...

- Assess what our current position is an 'equal opportunity employer' by reviewing the diversity of our workforce and identify key steps to support improvement;
- Test to what degree our workforce values equality and diversity through staff engagement and involvement and identify key steps to support improvement;
- Identify staff who require equality, diversity and inclusion training (including induction, general and specialised) and ensure training opportunities are accessible;
- Operate a Staff Well-being Network, with representation from across the whole organisation.

What difference do we want to make?

We want to celebrate and recognise the value of being a diverse organisation and have a workforce who recognises the importance of the equality agenda for the local people and communities it serves.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE: We will support children and young people, particularly those with protected characteristics, to achieve their learning ambitions

Overview

Education is identified as a key priority within our [Corporate Plan 2018-22](#) and we are committed to *'improving pupil outcomes, progress and well-being, particularly for our most able and vulnerable pupils'*.

We believe that everyone should have appropriate access to learning opportunities and the support required to enable them to achieve their learning ambitions. Recognising that learning provides the foundation for better life prospects. However, the specific focus of this objective will be to ensure we are maximising the learning outcomes of pupils who are covered by one, or more of the protected characteristics as identified within the Act, particularly where gaps in educational attainment are identified.

To help us achieve this we will consider findings from the Equality and Human Rights Commission's *'Is Wales Fairer?'* National Report regarding gaps in learning outcomes for learners protected by the Act and will undertake research to determine whether these findings apply to Blaenau Gwent learners and if so, what steps need to be taken to support improvements.

Another key aim of our Corporate Plan 2018-22 is to provide *'access to skills development'*. Working together with our partners we also aim to support the learning of parents and carers. Our holistic approach seeks to maximise opportunities for prosperity for all as part of our Cardiff City Regional deal commitments.

What people have told us?

During our **'Tell us what you think about equalities'**, our formal involvement and engagement programme, respondents agreed that this objective is very important.

Respondents told us that equality, diversity and inclusion training for school-based staff is **'important'** and also having adequate educational provision to **'support learners with learning difficulties'** as being key to supporting pupils through all stages of development. Furthermore, respondents emphasised the importance of continuing to raise awareness and understanding about equality within educational provision, alongside the importance of **'integration'** in that **'children and young people shouldn't be singled out'** because they have one, or more protected characteristic.

Why is this equality objective important?

This equality objective is important because it focuses on ensuring that children and young people are fully supported to fulfil their learning ambitions. We recognise the impact learning can have on a child, or young person in terms of their life prospects and well-being, now and into the future.

Focusing on improving the educational attainment of **'vulnerable learners'** and those covered by the Act is key to ensuring children and young people are not disadvantaged, and that opportunities to fulfill their learning ambitions are created.

This equality objective is important as providing quality learning opportunities for children and young people needs is key in creating the right learning environments which enables everyone to achieve well, enjoy learning and feel safe.

What good work are we building on?

Schools
Strategic
Equalities
Plans

Safer Schools
Partnership

Additional
Learning Needs –
Provision
Improvement Plan

How will we deliver?

- Provide advice and guidance to support the development and delivery of School's Strategic Equality Plans and annually review progress;
- Undertake local research to determine if children and young people covered by the Act are successfully achieving their learning ambitions and scope appropriate steps where areas for improvement have been identified;
- Advise and guide School based staff on equality issues as required.

What difference do we want to make?

We want to create safe learning environments which enable children and young people, particularly those with protected characteristics, to successfully achieve their learning ambitions.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE: We will promote and support safe, friendly and cohesive communities

Overview

As a member of Blaenau Gwent's Public Services Board we are committed to supporting 'fair and safe communities'. Working with our partners, through the local Community Safety Hub we actively support the development of cohesive communities.

As part of Welsh Government's commitment towards Community Cohesion we are members of West Gwent's Cohesion Steering Group and will continue to support the delivery of this important programme.

Working with our partners we will deliver key activities and projects which look to strengthen community spirits, bring communities together and supports resilience across Blaenau Gwent.

What people have told us?

During our '**Tell us what you think about equalities**', our formal involvement and engagement programme, respondents agreed that this objective is very important.

Respondents told us that creating safe and friendly communities '**is important for everyone**' and more work to '**promote respect and help improve community spirit**' was viewed as positive. Furthermore, respondents told us that we should continue to build on the work already happening in schools and promote events such as the 'Voices of Valleys' which brings people from different communities from Blaenau Gwent together.

Why is this equality objective important?

Creating a safe and friendly Blaenau Gwent is vital if we want to create a place where everyone feels they belong and can play an active role in society. Undertaking work to develop strong and vibrant communities is vital if we want to create good places to live where everyone gets on together. This equality objective is important for developing mutual respect and understanding between people which supports increased community spirit and togetherness.

What good work are we building on?



How will we deliver?

- Work with partners to support the delivery of the West Gwent Community Cohesion programme in Blaenau Gwent;
- Support projects which promotes increased awareness and understanding and encourage people to get on together;
- Delivery of effective social media campaigns to mitigates community tensions and dispels myths.

What difference do we want to make?

We want to create attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE: We will ensure there is meaningful involvement with people who have protected characteristics and key stakeholders that represent their interests

Overview

Our approach for undertaking meaningful involvement is set out within the Council's Engagement Strategy 2018-23. We recognise the importance of meaningful involvement which enables people, communities and stakeholders to have a voice, and have genuine opportunities to work together with us to help improve the delivery of our services.

In-line with the National Principles for Public Engagement and the National Principles for Children and Young People's Participation we will ensure that people covered by one, or more of the protected characteristics are given meaningful opportunities to influence key decisions which affect them.

What people have told us?

During our '**Tell us what you think about equalities**', our formal involvement and engagement programme, respondents agreed that this objective is very important. Respondents told us that ensuring people's voices are heard and listened to will help the Council better understand need which will lead to better decision-making. Respondents told us that the Council should engage and involve local people and communities in ways which encourage greater participation, with examples given such as '*visit groups*' across Blaenau Gwent. Respondents also felt more could be done to understand people's '*lived experiences*'.

Why is this equality objective important?

People's viewpoints, stories and insights are powerful and can help lead to positive change. This objective is important as it seeks to ensure we proactively involve local people and communities in the work that we do and ensure people with protected characteristics get to influence the decisions we make which can have the greatest impact on them.

What good work are we building on?



How will we deliver?

- Establish a 'Voices of the Valleys' Equality Forum;
- Strengthen Blaenau Gwent Council's Citizen Panel;
- Demonstrate our commitment towards Children & Young People's Participation by working in partnership with Children in Wales;
- Actively promote engagement opportunities aimed at members of the public who share protected characteristics.

What difference do we want to make?

We want to deliver the best possible services for our customers and by creating meaningful opportunities to work together with local people and communities we will be able to better respond to need.

EQUALITY OBJECTIVE: We will strive to tackle inequality caused by poverty for people who have protected characteristics

Overview

Welsh Government is set to launch a new Public Sector Equality Duty, called the 'socio-economic duty' which will be placed on named public bodies, such as Local Authorities, in-line with the requirements of the Act.

Following its commencement, which is planned to be in April 2020, the Council will be required to demonstrate how it will look to tackle inequality caused by poverty, specifically when the Council makes big decisions about the way it plans and delivers its services, particularly in areas such as education, health and housing.

Further information about the new duty can be found in '[Meeting Welsh Government's New Public Sector Equality Duty – The Socio-economic duty](#)' on page 42.

What people have told us?

During our '**Tell us what you think about equalities**', our formal involvement and engagement programme, respondents agreed that this objective was a very important topic. However, respondents felt that our proposed draft objective, which was 'We will strive to reduce poverty', was too broad and needed to have a greater focus on tackling inequality caused by poverty. There was a concern that the objective would not be achievable and so in response to feedback we amended the wording of this objective accordingly to make it more specific. Respondents also feedback the term '**poverty**' is unclear and is difficult to measure, but suggested '**looking at the causes of poverty**' as being key to taking this work forward.

Why is this equality objective important?

As a public service provider it is vital that the big decisions we make are fair and that we provide local people and communities with life chances and opportunities regardless of their socio-economic background. This objective will enable us to take steps towards developing a greater understanding of inequality caused by poverty and to be able to better support those most at risk of disadvantage.

What good work are we building on?

Blaenau Gwent
Well-being
Assessment

Anti-poverty
programmes
such as
Families First,
Flying Start

How will we deliver?

- Work alongside Welsh Government in preparing to meet the requirements of the new 'socio-economic duty';
- Undertake research and analysis to understand Blaenau Gwent's socio-economic position;
- Work with regional partners on key programmes to reduce inequality caused by poverty;
- Work with partners on key projects to support those most vulnerable in our communities.

What difference do we want to make?

We want to ensure that decisions we take are fair and are based on quality evidence to ensure local people and communities have life chances and opportunities regardless of their socio-economic background.

Monitoring and reviewing our plan

Throughout the life cycle of the plan we will monitor and review our progress against the intended steps, or areas for delivery we have identified, which will enable us to achieve our equality objectives.

To enable us to embed and mainstream our equality work across all our service delivery, our progress will be reported in-line with our corporate performance management arrangements and effectiveness and equality outcomes will be measured through our business planning arrangements.

The Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 will also be subject to regular reporting and monitoring through the Council's democratic processes, with the annual report submitted for oversight through the Council's Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee.

Throughout this process, we will also consider how progress is being achieved for each of the protected characteristics. Furthermore, as part of our annual review arrangements, which will be supported by the Council's Political and Profession Leadership Team, we will consider whether our objectives remain appropriate.

In-line with our equality duties we will also publish an annual report on the Council's Website, but also make it available to appropriate key partners, stakeholders and citizens.

Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan

Supporting Documents

“A more equal Wales”



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is one of 22 unitary authorities in Wales, which were formed in 1996 following the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994. The area was formerly part of Gwent County Council.

Blaenau Gwent is made up of 16 electoral wards which are represented by 42 members (councillors) who are elected every four years by the people of Blaenau Gwent. The Council operates a Cabinet system, which is led by the Leader of the Council. The cabinet is made up of five executive portfolios and five main scrutiny committees, and three joint scrutiny committees.

A Corporate Leadership Team, consisting of the Managing Director; three Corporate Directors covering Social Services, Education, and Regeneration and Community Services; and two Chief Officers covering Finance, and Commercial services. The Team are responsible for the strategic management of the Council's business.

As of February 2020, there were 2,887 paid employees of the Council. Of these, 683 (23.6%) were male and 2,204 (76.3%) were female. This makes the Council the largest employer in Blaenau Gwent.

The latest Staff Opinion Survey carried out in 2019, which was completed by 726 staff, showed that of those completing the question, 20% were male and 72% were female; 2% were 16 to 24; 16% were 25 to 34; 51% were 35 to 54; 20% were 55 and over and 11% preferred not to say.

Out of the total number of respondents 34 (5%) told us that they have a disability according to the Equality Act 2010's definition and 625 (87%) said they did not, and 59 (8%) preferred not to say.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2018-22 sets out the organisations vision, core values and priorities and is reviewed and adapted on an annual basis. It also refers to a 'One Council' approach which emphasises the important role the whole organisation has on working towards the commitments set out within this plan.

Our Core Vision

Proud Heritage, Strong Communities, Brighter Future

Our Core Values



- Proud & Ambitious
- Trust & Integrity
- Working Together
- Raising Aspirations
- Fair & Equitable

Our Council Priorities



Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities

Economic Development & Regeneration

Education

Social Services

Efficient Council

Our Strategic Equality Plan is not a standalone plan, it links closely to a number of key Council and Partnership strategies, plans, policies and frameworks, such as the:

- Blaenau Gwent's local well-being plan 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want, 2018-2023';
- Age Friendly Blaenau Gwent;
- Welsh Language Promotion Strategy;
- Corporate Performance Framework;
- Human Resource Policies, Procedures and Protocols.

Understanding our Equality Act 2010 specific duties

As well as our general duties, the Council has a number of specific duties which it must take account of. In Wales, the specific duties are set by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 as follows:

- Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans
- Engagement
- Assessment of impact
- Equality information
- Employment information, pay differences and staff training
- Procurement
- Reporting and Publishing

Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans

The purpose of the objectives and plans is to enable the delivery of measurable equality outcomes which improve the lives of individuals and communities. The Council is required to review, develop and publish Equality Objectives and a Strategic Equality Plan every four years.

Engagement

Understanding the diversity of the Blaenau Gwent population will allow the Council to shape service provision in the best way. The Council must carry out meaningful engagement, gathering relevant information when engaging people, and involve people who represent the interests of those who share one or more of the protected characteristics and have an interest in the way that the Council carries out its functions.

Assessment of impact

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is carried out when a policy or practice is proposed or being reviewed, and looks for evidence of adverse impact against people or groups from the nine protected characteristics. The Council must carry out Equality Impact Assessments on policies, procedures, functions, service delivery and financial savings proposals.

A copy of this plans EQIA can be found in the [Support Documents](#) from page 53.

Equality information

Strategic Equality Plans, Equality Objectives and Equality Impact Assessment, as prescribed by the Equality Act 2010, must be based on robust evidence. This would include use of research, information, data and statistics at a local, regional and national level. Alongside qualitative data through meaningful and timely engagement, particularly engagement with people covered by the protected characteristics so that decision making can be influenced.

Employment information, pay differences and staff training

The Council must collect extensive employment information which includes data on recruitment and retention, promotion, training opportunities, and grievance and disciplinary actions on an annual basis. This information must be collected for each of the protected characteristics. Data is also required with regard to male and female employees on job roles, pay and grading, contract type and working pattern. It is important to note that the Council cannot require an employee to disclose information in relation to the protected characteristics and should provide an 'unknown' or 'prefer not to say' category.

Equal pay

Following the completion of the Equal Pay project (associated to the Strategic Equality Plan 2012 to 2016), a new pay and grading structure was developed, using a country wide consistent job evaluation and pay modelling criteria. This also aligned the salaries of male and female dominated roles in order to remove any historical discrimination that may have been. New and amended roles continue to be Job Evaluated to maintain fairness.

Gender Pay

The gender pay gap is an equality measure that shows the difference in average earnings between women and men. The UK gender pay gap is just over 18% (2018). At Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, we are confident that men and women are paid equally for doing equivalent jobs across the business. The gender pay gap at Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council shows that the workforce is predominantly female with women occupying a high percentage of jobs across all four pay quartiles. The pay gap in Blaenau Gwent is significantly lower than the national average and has further improved reducing from 7.06% at the lower (mean). The Gender Pay Gap information required under the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 is presented and published through the Council's Pay Policy Statement 2019/20.

Procurement

This specific duty applies when Councils are procuring works, goods or services from other organisations on the basis of a 'relevant agreement'. Relevant agreements include the award of a 'public contract' or the conclusion of a 'framework agreement' which are regulated by Public Sector Directive (Directive 2004/18/EC) / Public Contracts Regulations (2006).

The specific duty requires Council's to consider whether it would be appropriate to include specific stipulations relating to the general duty, in the award criteria and / or in conditions relating to the performance of a contract of this type.

Reporting and Publishing

Every year the Council must publish an Annual Report outlining how it met the three aims of the general duty. The report will outline the progress the Council has made in achieving its equality objectives and High-level Action Plan.

The report will also include a statement on the effectiveness of the authority's arrangements for identifying and collecting information relating to its workforce and the reasons why any identified information has not been collected.

An Overview of Blaenau Gwent

Blaenau Gwent is located in South-East Wales. It is approximately 20 miles from Newport, and 30 miles from Cardiff, and directly south of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The area is relatively small geographically, being at most 15 miles long, and 8 miles wide, and is the smallest of the Welsh local authorities in terms of land area, at about 10,900 hectares. The area is physically defined by high hillsides dividing the three main valleys. These valleys are home to towns and villages which seem to merge together into one. However, each community proudly maintains its own character and traditions. The five main towns and settlements are seen as Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, Nantyglo & Blaina, and Tredegar.

Providing an accurate statistical picture

It is widely recognised that there are significant challenges when it comes to collecting accurate information relating to equality and diversity, particularly for some protected characteristics e.g. Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment. The remainder of this section will present some relevant statistics to help establish an overall picture of equality and diversity in Blaenau Gwent. The information will be presented in such a way that it links closely to the **Protected Characteristics** defined by the Equality Act 2010.

People¹

Blaenau Gwent is estimated to be home to around 69,700 people in 2019, making it the second smallest Welsh local authority in terms of population numbers. Even so, due to its relatively small geographical size, it has the 6th highest population density behind Cardiff, Newport, Torfaen, Caerphilly and Swansea.

¹ Stats Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Density/populationdensity-by-localauthority-year>

Population projections from the Office of National Statistics (mid-2014 based) suggest that compared to 2019 the population of Blaenau Gwent is projected to decrease by 1.4% over 10 years (by 1,000 residents) and 4.5% over 20 years, although projections become less reliable over more extensive time periods. The projected population decrease in Blaenau Gwent along with three other local authorities is in contrast to a picture of projected increases in general across other regions of Wales. The population of Wales as a whole is projected to increase in population by 2.6% over the next 10 years and 4.0% over 20 years².

Although life expectancy is increasing in Blaenau Gwent, reduced birth rates and increased mortality rates contribute to the projected downward trend over the next 20 years.

Gender³

As is the case across Wales and the rest of the UK, the 2018 mid-year estimates show that there are slightly more females (51%) than males (49%) in Blaenau Gwent. There is also little difference from the Welsh average when considering gender split across each of the key age bands, varying by no more than 2%.

² Stats Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Projections/Local-Authority/2014-based/populationprojectioncomponentsofchange-by-localauthority-year>

³ Stats Wales: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Distributions/agedistributionofpopulation-by-gender-year>

Age⁴

Table 1 shows the population of Blaenau Gwent and Wales broken down into key age bands. Analysis of the population by age band shows no significant differences from that of the Welsh average.

**Table 1: Blaenau Gwent and Wales Mid-Year 2018 population
Estimates by key bands**

	Blaenau Gwent			Wales		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
0 to 15	6,245	5,944	12,189	288,218	274,491	562,709
16 to 24	3,454	3,503	6,957	181,268	165,369	346,637
25 to 44	8,585	8,764	17,349	373,211	374,359	747,570
45 to 54	9,540	9,746	19,286	404,347	425,375	829,722
55 to 64	3,889	3,921	7,810	174,528	185,007	359,535
65 to 84	2,084	2,508	4,592	95,735	114,305	210,040
85 and over	570	960	1,530	30,002	52,416	82,418
Total	34,367	35,346	69,713	1,547,309	1,591,322	3,138,631

Disability⁵

The 2011, Census showed that 27% of all people who live within Blaenau Gwent stated they had a limiting long-term health problem or illnesses, where day-to-day activities were limited. This was higher than the Wales average (23%), and was the 2nd highest level (behind Neath Port Talbot with 28%) in Wales.

⁴ Stats Wales: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Distributions/agedistributionofpopulation-by-gender-localauthority>

Stats Wales: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Estimates/Local-Authority/populationestimates-by-localauthority-age>

⁵ Stats Wales: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Census/2011/LimitingLongTermIllnessDisability-by-LocalAuthority>

Nomis: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/submit.asp?forward=yes&menuopt=201&subcomp=>

In 2011, the Annual Population Survey showed that of Blaenau Gwent's population of working age (males aged 16-64 and females aged 16-59) an estimate of 3,100 people had a Physical Disability, 2,600 with Respiratory or Heart Problems and 1,400 with Long Standing or Progressive Illness. As well as this, 4,000 people had 'other' health problems such as Sensory Impairments and Learning Difficulties.

More recent statistics from the Annual Population Survey year ending 30 June 2016 showed that Blaenau Gwent continues to have above average levels of disability with a total of 25.8% of working age people being defined as disabled compared to 24.4% for Wales overall.

The latest available disability-related figures from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council show the following⁶:

- Just over 100 children known to have a disability;
- Just over 100 people known to have a sensory impairment; (this includes visual impairment) (2018/19)
- Just over 350 people known to have a learning disability;
- Almost 5,000 people were registered for Blue Badges

These comparably high levels of disability in Blaenau Gwent means there are a high proportion of people claiming disability-related benefits, as shown below:

- 12.0% of working aged people in Blaenau Gwent claimed EAS or Incapacity Benefit, compared to 8.4% across Wales (Nov 2016).

⁶ Stats Wales: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services/Disability-Registers/physicallysensorydisabledpersons-by-localauthority-disability-agerange>
<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services/Disability-Registers/personswithlearningdisabilities-by-localauthority-service-agerange>

Nomis <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Nomis (Labour Market Profile November 2019) file:///C:/Users/Jones_P5/Downloads/report.pdf

- 8.0% of all people in Blaenau Gwent claimed Disability Living Allowance, compared to 6.1% across Wales (Nov 2018).

Race⁷

The 2011 Census statistics showed Blaenau Gwent's Black and Ethnic Minority population to be just under 1,900. This equates to 2.6% of the total population and well below the Welsh average of 6.7%. In 2001 the percentage of people in Blaenau Gwent from minority ethnic groups was 1.8%, approximately 1,300 people, therefore, a notable increase from 2001 to 2011. Even so, Blaenau Gwent still has one of the lowest levels of people from minority ethnic groups in Wales, being one of the least ethnic diverse local authorities in England and Wales with only 4 other areas having a smaller percentage of ethnic minority population.

Long term international migration statistics provide estimates of the number of usual residents moving in or out of the UK. This set of statistics is probably the one most quoted when discussing international migration. They include only those intending to change their place of usual residence for 12 months or more.

Figures from ONS reveal a relatively modest level of net International migration per 1,000 resident population in Blaenau Gwent since 2010. Small increments had been experienced with a 0.8 per 1,000 residents' inflow in 2010 up to 1.8 for the same period in 2015. However, this upward trend has since reversed, down to 1.5 per 1,000 residents' inflow in 2018. This equates to an annual average international inflow of 1.4 per 1,000 residents locally compared to 5.0 per 1,000 residents across Wales. This

⁷ Stats Wales: <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Components-of-Change/componentsofpopulationchange-by-timeperiod-component>

Source: DWP <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/tableView/tableView.xhtml#>

inflow has been offset by a local average annual international outflow of 1.0 per 1,000 residents.

Over a longer term period of 10 years Blaenau Gwent has experienced an international inflow of 1,013 people and outflow 702 people. This is a net international inflow of 311, or an average of 31 people each year.

Over the same 10-year period there were 1,302 National Insurance Number (NINo) Registrations in Blaenau Gwent from adult overseas nationals aged 16-64

This relates to adult overseas nationals entering the UK and allocated a National Insurance Number (NINo). A NINo is generally required by any overseas national looking to work or claim benefits / tax credits in the UK, including the self-employed or students working part time.

Figures are based on recorded registration date on the HMRC National Insurance Recording and Pay as you Earn System, i.e. after the NINo application process has been completed. This may be a number of weeks or months (or in some cases years) after arriving in the UK.

All Adult overseas nationals allocated a NINo are included regardless of their length of stay in the UK.

According to the Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count conducted by local authorities in Wales, as of July 2019 there were three authorised gypsy traveller site in Blaenau Gwent and 16 residential occupied pitches.

However, Census 2011 figures suggest a wider spread of occupancy throughout the borough in varying accommodation types as there were 72 Gypsy or Irish Travellers living throughout the borough in 27 different output areas within 11 wards.

Religion and Belief⁸

The 2011 Census showed that half of people in Blaenau Gwent stated their religion to be Christian (50%), below the Welsh average of 59%. This has shown a notable decrease since the 2001 Census, with respective levels of 64.0% and 71.0%

Just over 1% of people in Blaenau Gwent stated that they were of another religion such as Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh.

Just over 41% of the Blaenau Gwent population stated they have no religion, above the Welsh average of 37%. This is a notable increase compared to 2001, with respective levels of 25% and 19%. A further 8% of people in Blaenau Gwent did not state their religion. Table 2 provides details.

Table 2: Religion in Blaenau Gwent, Census 2011

	People	Percentage
Christian	34,805	49.9%
Buddhist	112	0.2%
Hindu	72	0.1%
Jewish	8	0.0% (<i>less than 0.049%</i>)
Muslim	179	0.3%
Sikh	39	0.1%
Any other religion	253	0.4%
No religion	28,676	41.1%
Religion not stated	5,670	8.1%
All People	69,814	

Further analysis showed that people under 24 (56%) and people aged 25 to 49 (51%), were more likely to state they had 'no religion' than people aged 50 and over (20%).

⁸ Nomis <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/submit.asp?forward=yes&menuopt=201&subcomp=>

Sexual Orientation⁹

Statistics on sexual orientation for Blaenau Gwent are not available with any level of accuracy. However, the Annual Population Survey includes data on sexual identity for Wales on a calendar year basis. In 2017, this survey shows that in Wales 95.0% of people identified as heterosexual, 1.3% as gay/lesbian, 0.7% as bisexual, and 0.5% as 'other' while 2.5% of people did not answer this question.

Marriage and Civil Partnership¹⁰

In Wales, in 2018 there were 34 civil partnerships. The highest levels in Wales were in 2006 - the year following the law changes, when there were 560 civil partnerships.

In Blaenau Gwent in 2016 there were 173 marriages. There have been no civil partnerships in Blaenau Gwent between 2013 and 2018.

Gender Reassignment¹¹

As was the case in 2012, statistics on gender reassignment for Blaenau Gwent are not available. However, the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) does suggest estimates for gender dysphoria, which is the medical term for the condition with which a person who has been assigned one gender (usually at birth on the basis of their sex), identifies as belonging to another gender, or does not conform with the

⁹ Stats Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity/Sexual-Orientation/sexualidentity-by-year-identitystatus>

¹⁰ ONS: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/datasets/marriagesinenglandandwales2013>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/datasets/civilpartnershipstatisticsunitedkingdomcivilpartnershipformations>

¹¹ <https://www.gires.org.uk/>

gender role their respective society prescribes to them.

GIRES outline that a low estimate for the UK would be 8 people per 100,000, and a high estimate would be 21 people per 100,000. Taking this into account Blaenau Gwent would expect to have between **5 to 14 people** with Gender Dysphoria.

Other Relevant Statistics

As well as the above equality specific statistics, compared to an all Wales level Blaenau Gwent also experiences:

- Higher levels of unemployment and economic inactivity;
- Higher percentage workless households
- Lower levels of new businesses starting up;
- Higher levels of people depending on benefits;
- Lower levels of qualifications;
- Lower than average life expectancy; and
- Higher levels of poor health (economically inactive long term sick).

Nomis Labour Market Profile

ONS

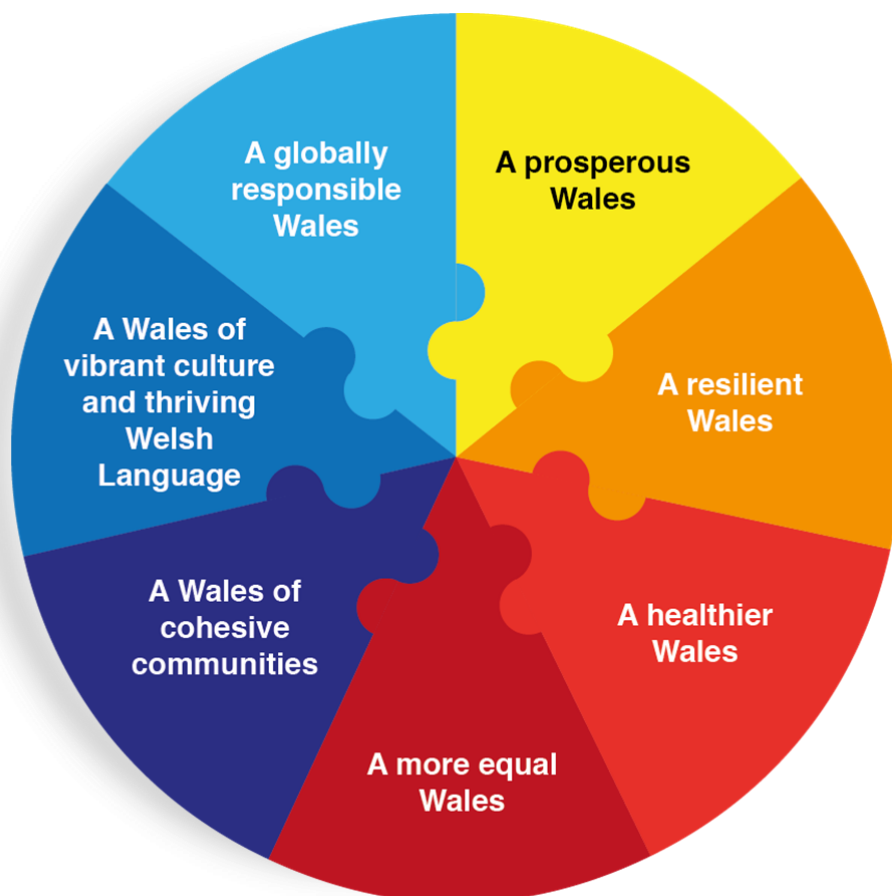
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/datasets/businessdemographyreferencetable>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/datasets/lifeexpectancyatbirthandage65bylocalareasinenglandandwalesreferencetable1>

Meeting the Well-being of Future Generations Act

We are aware of the strong links between strengthening equality and improving the well-being of our area. Recognising delivery of our Strategic Equality Plan will be key in contributing towards achieving Blaenau Gwent's local Well-being Plan, [‘The Blaenau Gwent We Want, 2018-23’](#) and meeting our duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

For example, our strategic equality plan will be key in contributing towards achieving the National Well-being Goals—specifically ‘*A more equal Wales*’, ‘*A Wales of cohesive communities*’, ‘*A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language*’ and ‘*A more prosperous Wales*’.



Furthermore, throughout our delivery we will ensure to apply the five ways of working, as well as give consideration to the current and future needs of the area:



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

Meeting the new socio-economic duty

Welsh Government is planning to commence a new Public Sector Equality Duty in April 2020 called the 'socio-economic duty'. The duty looks to make sure that public bodies, such as Local Authorities, think about how to reduce poverty and inequality when they make big decisions.

Poverty is defined as not having enough money to live well, or not being able to get services easily like health care and education. Research suggests that people with protected characteristics are likely to face greater levels of inequality because they are living in poverty and therefore the duty looks to ensure that those people are treated equally and fairly.

During November 2019 and January 2020 Welsh Government consulted on the proposed public sector equality duty – the socio-economic duty. As a Council we took the opportunity to share our views as we will be subject to the duty.

In general, we fully support the aims of the duty and have included this as part of our plan. Further information can be found in the section '[Equality Objective Six](#)' on page 20.

During the first two years of this plan, we will work closely with Welsh Government who are offering all public bodies, subject to the new duty, interim support, until the launch of statutory guidance.

Developing our equality objectives and plan

To ensure the Council was prepared to meet its general and specific duties relating to equality objectives and a strategic equality plan, a time-aligned project plan was created. The project plan outlined all the key elements necessary for supporting the development of our equality objectives and plan from inception, through to publication.

June 2019 – March 2020

- Gathering intelligence and undertaking research;
- Involvement and engagement of key stakeholders, including all Council Elected Members to identify key equality issues and priorities;
- Drafting our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 approach and equality objectives for formal consultation;
- Formal Consultation of our Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 approach and equality objectives;
- Review of feedback received;
- Final draft of Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 and equality objectives developed;
- Professional and Political engagement - route for adoption by Council (including Scrutiny and Executive);
- Publication & promotion;
- Implementation;
- Monitoring and review.

Gathering intelligence and undertaken research

Underpinning the development of our plan is intelligence and research such as desktop research into the Equality Act 2010 and each of the protected characteristics, and a review of advice and guidance from relevant regional and national organisations such as the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

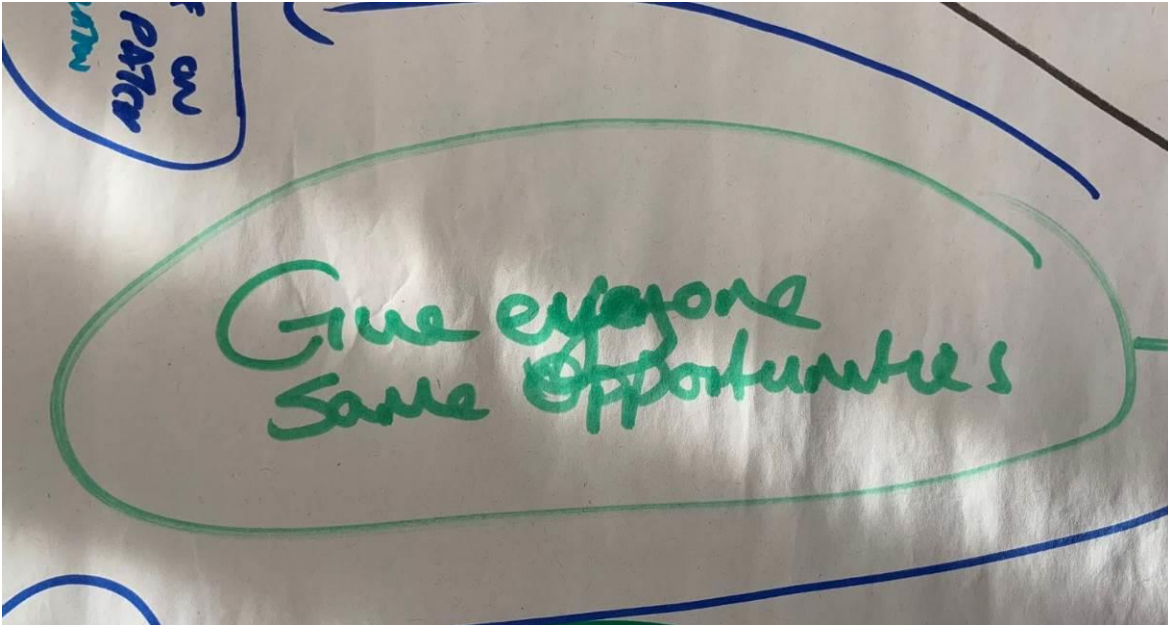
This included:

- Gathering and reviewing guidance on the Equality Act 2010;
- Understanding each of the protected characteristic and gathering local statistical information - where available;
- Information, data and statistics considered at a local, regional and national level;
- National Research undertaken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission: *Is Wales Fairer?* (2015) and *Is Wales Fairer?* (2018);
- Welsh Government's recent consultation on their proposed Equality objectives for 2020 to 2024, specifically the Equality Act 2010: *Commencing the socio-economic duty* (issued in November 2019);
- Consideration of local plans such as Blaenau Gwent Council's Corporate Plan 2018-22 and Blaenau Gwent's local well-being plan *The Blaenau Gwent We Want*, 2018-23 as well as our previous Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20;
- Attendance at the National Equality Conference;

Support from our Professional and Political Leadership Teams

- An elected member working group was set up by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee as part of their forward work programme for 2019/20. The Council's Equality and Diversity Champion is part of the group, which met in September and November to help shape the approach and objectives;
- A special session was held in January 2020 for Members on our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 approach and draft equality objectives, led by the Chair of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee;
- Sessions were held with each of the Departmental Management Teams and also the Wider Corporate Leadership Team to support the development of an 'effective framework for delivery' and to inform strategic managers of the general and specific duties for public bodies as a consequence of the Equality Act 2010 and to consider the draft Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 approach and equality objectives.

Engagement and Involvement



To support the development of our plan, in-line with our duty to ‘involve’ people with an interest in Council functions we delivered an engagement programme, over two stages, which gave staff, local people, communities and staff the opportunity to talk with us about equality and to inform us what they felt were the main equality issues in Blaenau Gwent and what suggestions they had for tackling them.

Our engagement and involvement phases:

- **Stage 1 – Let’s Talk about Fairness and Equalities!**
- **Stage 2 – Tell us what you think about equalities!**

Our engagement was guided by both the National Principles for Public Participation in Wales and Children and Young People’s National Participation Standards and was also available in Welsh and English. Further to this, we also made all our engagement materials available in Easy Read to ensure our engagement was as accessible as possible.

Options for requesting the materials in alternative formats was also offered, such as braille.

We encouraged respondents to take part in a variety of different ways such as through our online survey, writing to us, visiting us, chatting to us over the phone, or even by submitting drawings, poems and stories. Recognising that people can often feel more comfortable providing views in their preferred formats.

During both stages we widely promoted the opportunities to engage with us through the Council's website and social media platforms, as well as distributing it through our partnerships networks and sending it to relevant groups, clubs and organisations in the area.

Below is a summary of each stage of the engagement programme:

Stage 1: August to September 2019

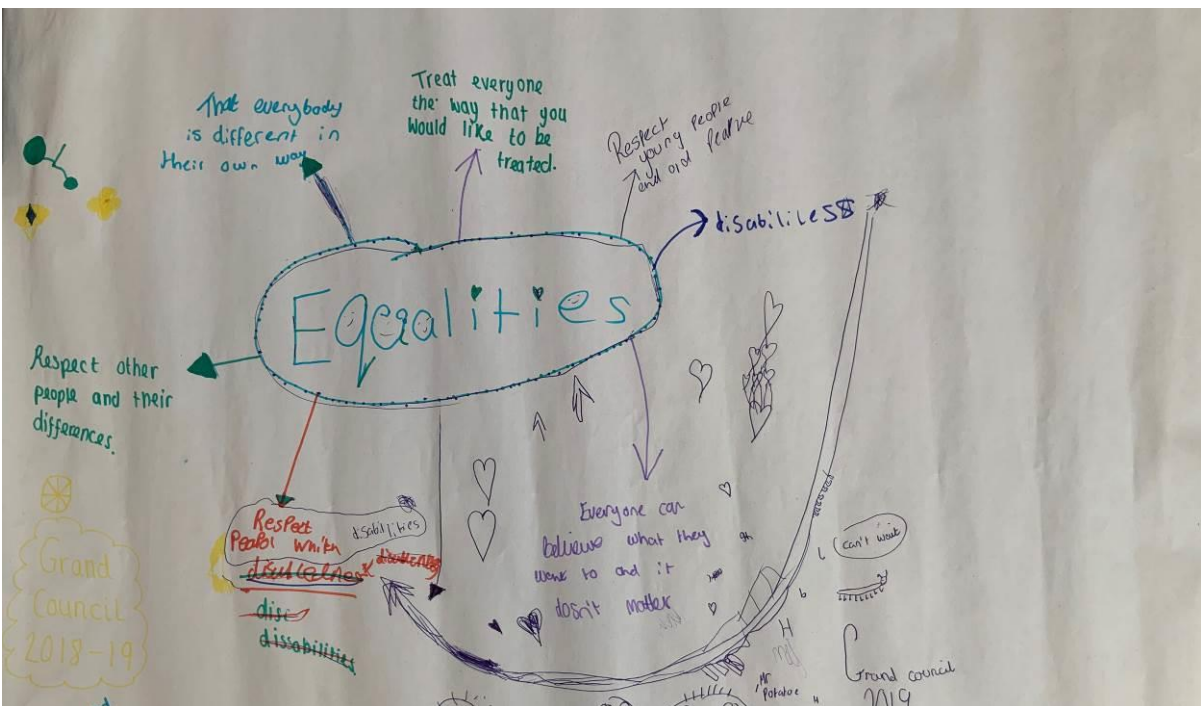
This stage took place before we began to draft the plan. We asked:

- 1. What is the most important thing to you about equalities?**
- 2. What are the key equalities priorities that the Council needs to focus on?**

At this stage, in addition to the methods outlined above, we also held dedicated engagement sessions with our Children's Grand Council, Youth Forum, and also a group of adults with physical and learning disabilities at Vision House Day Centre, Ebbw Vale.



An example of feedback from our session at Vision House



An example of picture feedback from the Children's Grand Council

Some of the key themes that emerged from our first engagement stage were;

- Respecting and celebrating difference and diversity;
- Accessibility within the community;

- Employment opportunities for those with disabilities.

A total of 120 participants took part during stage 1.

Stage 2: December 2019 to January 2020

The feedback from stage 1, combined with key statistics and demographic data, was used to help us draft our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 approach and equality objectives.

During stage 2 of our engagement programme we presented our draft Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 approach and equality objectives and asked:

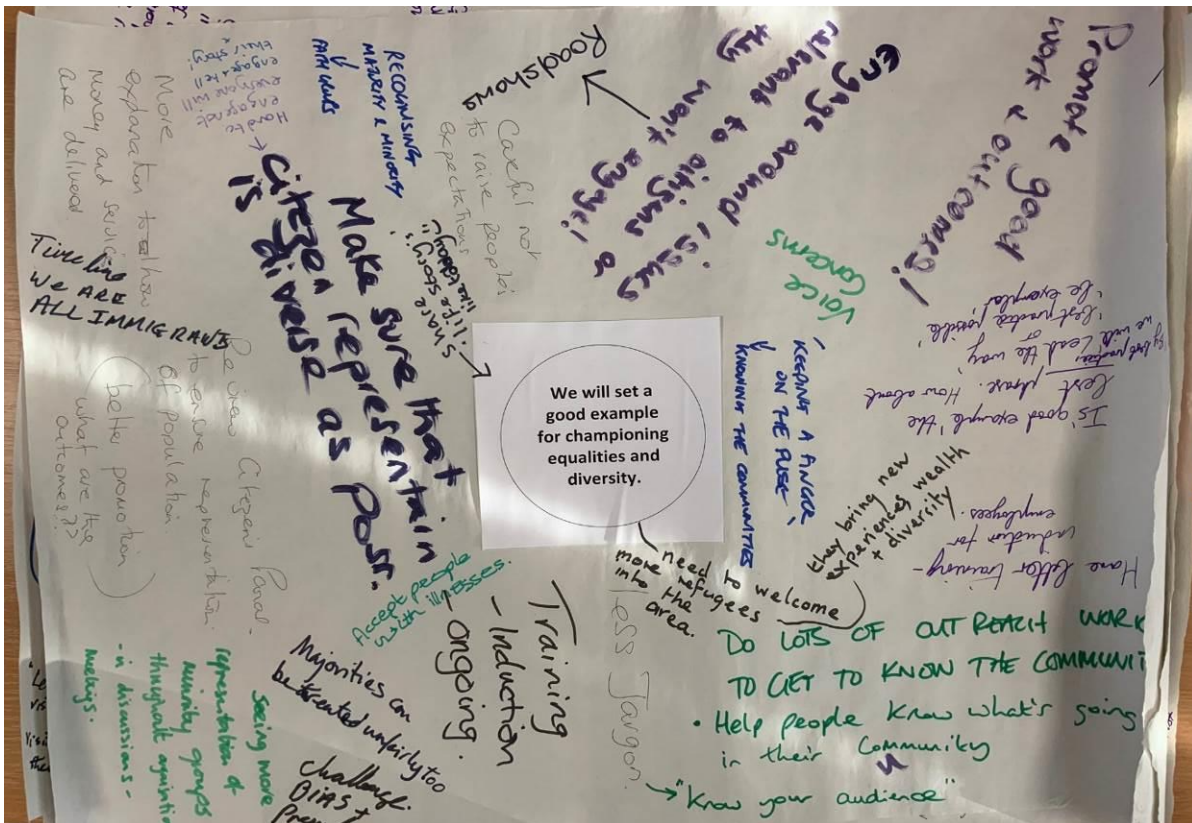
- 1. To what level do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach for equalities?*
- 2. To what level do you agree or disagree with our six equality objectives?*
- 3. Do you have any comments on our plan or equality objectives?*

Reach of our engagement during Stage 2

During stage 2 we used a range of methods and activities to support engagement. This included:

- Workshops held at Vision House Day Centre, a centre for people with disabilities, such as learning disabilities and physical disabilities;
- A special session was held in January 2020 for Members on our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 approach and draft equality objectives, led by the Chair of Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee;

- Surveyed shoppers across our key town centre using iPads with preloaded questionnaires;
- Held a special equality event called 'Voices of our Valleys' which brought different groups of local people and communities together from across Blaenau Gwent, including key organisations with an interest in equality and diversity. With 50 in attendance, the event was successfully launched by Cllr Moore our Equality Champion and Chair of the Council and included a range of talks, such as Blaenau Gwent People's First, Deighton Primary School, Bahá'í Faith Group. The event showcased the positive work already happening within our area to support the equality agenda and allowed attendees to participate in interactive workshops where they were able to share their views and discuss equality matters. This resulted in us being provided with a rich source of information which was used to inform the development of the final draft plan;
- We also extensively shared our survey with key forums and networks such as our Youth Forum, Older People's Forum and PSB Engagement Sub-group and also promoted the opportunity with key organisations which represent people and communities who are covered by one, or more of the protected characteristics.



Example of feedback from the 'Voices of our Valleys' Event

A total of 96 responses were received to the online questionnaire:

- 90% of respondents agreed (65%) or strongly agreed (25%) with our proposed approach. Just 4% disagreed (2%) or strongly disagreed (2%), with the remaining 7% stating that they 'didn't know'.
- 86% of respondents agreed (71%) or strongly agreed (15%) with our six equality objectives. Just 2% disagreed. No respondents strongly disagreed. 12% were unsure.

Drafting the Equality Plan

Feedback from stage 2 of the engagement programme was used to inform the final draft Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 and equality objectives.

Overall people provided very positive feedback about our approach and objectives and overall there were no significant changes made to the Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 or draft equality objectives. However, where we received significant feedback and suggestions to change the phrasing, or language of our equality objectives the appropriate amendments were made. For example, our draft objective 'We will strive to tackle poverty' was changed to 'We will strive to tackle inequality caused by poverty for people with protected characteristics' as a significant number of people felt this would be more tangible and realistic to achieve.

Equality Impact Assessment – Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24

Q.1. Please outline the purpose of the policy or practice: (include the aims, objectives, expected outcomes and any key emerging themes from the policy; you may want to outline any key priorities / objectives outlined in the policy or practice)

Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has a statutory duty to prepare and publish a Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives every four years. To meet this duty, a project plan was put in place as part of the Governance and Partnerships Business Plan for 2019/20.

Additionally, Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a 'member's working group' made up of five committee members (including the Chair and Council's Equality Champion) as part of their Forward Work Programme for 2019/20 to ensure active involvement in developing of equality objectives and supporting plan.

There are six proposed equality objectives. The proposed objectives respond to: Welsh Government's proposed objectives and their current consultation on the **commencement of the socio-economic duty**; the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) **Is Wales Fairer? 2018 report**; and local involvement work carried out in Blaenau Gwent between July and September 2019 called 'Let's talk about Fairness and Equalities'

The six proposed Equality Objectives are:

1. We will be an organisation who ensures fairness and equality is in everything that we do.
2. We will be an equal opportunity employer with a workforce that values equality and diversity.
3. We will support children and young people, particularly those with protected characteristics, to achieve their learning ambitions.
4. We will promote and support safe, friendly and cohesive communities.
5. We will ensure there is meaningful involvement with people who have protected characteristics and key stakeholders that represent their interests.
6. We will strive to tackle inequality caused by poverty for people who have protected characteristics

Formal consultation on the proposed objectives is being delivered from 16th December 2019 to 22nd January 2020, before being presented through political and democratic processes as an overall plan in February and March 2020 (the strategy must be agreed at Council). There will be support and events to help stimulate response to the consultation.

A summary document is being used to support consultation and provides information on each proposed objective (available in Welsh and English). An easy read version has also been made available.

<p>Q.2. Is the policy or practice new, existing, or under review:</p>	<p>Q.2.1. Is this policy or practice subject to any of the following processes:</p> <p>1. <i>A Financial Efficiency Saving</i> 2. <i>A Policy</i> 3. <i>A Report</i> 4. <i>Decision Making Process</i> 4. <i>Business or service plan</i></p>
<p>The public sector equality duties placed on Local Authorities have been in place for 8 years. Every 4 years we are required to review our existing Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives.</p> <p>The Council is taking steps to renew its equality objectives in-line with Welsh Government’s and Equality Human Rights Commissioners new approach of setting more specific and tangible objectives in order to maximise and advance the equality agenda.</p> <p>This assessment began from the first stages of policy development and reflects on its development through to publication. It takes account of key equality issues identified during the process.</p> <p>Furthermore, Welsh Government intends on commencing a new socio-economic duty on Local Authorities from April 2020, under the Equality (Wales) Act 2010. The new duty will require Local Authorities to reflect how it will approach and deliver its statutory requirements within the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24.</p>	<p>A Policy, the Strategic Equality Plan will be subject to professional and political reporting and decision making processes throughout its life cycle.</p> <p>This assessment includes all relevant professional and political processes undertaken prior to publishing.</p>

Q.3. Potential Positive, Adverse or Neutral effects on Protected Characteristics:

<u>Protected Characteristic</u>	<u>Positive, Negative, Neutral</u>	<u>Relevance of the Policy or Practice</u>
Age	Positive	<p>The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives intends to deliver a positive impact on those covering protected characteristics relating to age. For example, different age groups, such as children and young people and older people have been able to contribute towards the development of the plan and will be able to be involved in any future development relating to the delivery of this plan and its objectives.</p> <p>Furthermore, this plans sets out intended steps which has the potential to support positive effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess what our current position is an ‘equal opportunity employer’ by reviewing the diversity of our workforce and identify key steps to support improvement; • Ensure there is alignment between the Council’s Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Development Strategy; • Actively promote engagement opportunities aimed at members of public who share protected characteristics; • Work with partners on key projects to support those most vulnerable in our communities • Provide advice and guidance to support the development and delivery of Schools Strategic Equality Plans and annually review progress • Advise and guide School based staff on equality issues as required

<p><i>Disability</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives intends to deliver a positive impact on those covering protected characteristics relating to disability. For example, people with disabilities have been able to contribute towards the development of the plan and will be able to be involved in any future development relating to the delivery of this plan and its objectives.</p> <p>Furthermore, this plans sets out intended steps which has the potential to support positive effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess what our current position is an ‘equal opportunity employer’ by reviewing the diversity of our workforce and identify key steps to support improvement; • Ensure there is alignment between the Council’s Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Development Strategy; • Actively promote engagement opportunities aimed at members of public who share protected characteristics; • Work with partners on key projects to support those most vulnerable in our communities • Provide advice and guidance to support the development and delivery of Schools Strategic Equality Plans and annually review progress • Advise and guide School based staff on equality issues as required
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<i>Gender Reassignment</i>	Positive	<p>The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives intends to deliver a positive impact on those covering protected characteristics relating to gender reassignment. The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives will be shared with key partners and organisations who represent the needs of people covered by this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Furthermore, this plans sets out intended steps which has the potential to support positive effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess what our current position is an ‘equal opportunity employer’ by reviewing the diversity of our workforce and identify key steps to support improvement; • Ensure there is alignment between the Council’s Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Development Strategy; • Actively promote engagement opportunities aimed at members of public who share protected characteristics; • Work with partners on key projects to support those most vulnerable in our communities • Provide advice and guidance to support the development and delivery of Schools Strategic Equality Plans and annually review progress • Advise and guide School based staff on equality issues as required
<i>Marriage & Civil Partnership</i>	Positive	<p>The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives intends to deliver a positive impact on those covering protected characteristics relating to marriage and civil partnership.</p>

<p><i>Pregnancy & Maternity</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives intends to deliver a positive impact on those covering protected characteristics relating to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Furthermore, this plans sets out intended steps which has the potential to support positive effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is alignment between the Council’s Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Development Strategy; • Actively promote engagement opportunities aimed at members of public who share protected characteristics.
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Race

Positive

The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives intends to deliver a positive impact on those covering protected characteristics relating to race. For example, we have actively engaged people covered by this protected characteristic to contribute towards the development of the plan and we will continue to support any future involvement in any future development relating to the delivery of this plan and its objectives.

Furthermore, this plans sets out intended steps which has the potential to support positive effects:

- Assess what our current position is an 'equal opportunity employer' by reviewing the diversity of our workforce and identify key steps to support improvement;
- Ensure there is alignment between the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Development Strategy;
- Actively promote engagement opportunities aimed at members of public who share protected characteristics;
- Work with partners on key projects to support those most vulnerable in our communities
- Provide advice and guidance to support the development and delivery of Schools Strategic Equality Plans and annually review progress;
- Advise and guide School based staff on equality issues as required.

<i>Religion & Belief</i>	Positive	<p>The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives intends to deliver a positive impact on those covering protected characteristics relating to religion & belief. For example, we have actively engaged people covered by this protected characteristic to contribute towards the development of the plan and we will continue to support any future involvement in any future development relating to the delivery of this plan and its objectives.</p> <p>Furthermore, this plans sets out intended steps which has the potential to support positive effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess what our current position is an ‘equal opportunity employer’ by reviewing the diversity of our workforce and identify key steps to support improvement; • Ensure there is alignment between the Council’s Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Development Strategy; • Actively promote engagement opportunities aimed at members of public who share protected characteristics; • Work with partners on key projects to support those most vulnerable in our communities • Provide advice and guidance to support the development and delivery of Schools Strategic Equality Plans and annually review progress; • Advise and guide School based staff on equality issues as required.
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Sex	Positive	<p>The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives intends to deliver a positive impact on those covering protected characteristics relating to sex.</p> <p>Furthermore, this plans sets out intended steps which has the potential to support positive effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess what our current position is an ‘equal opportunity employer’ by reviewing the diversity of our workforce and identify key steps to support improvement; • Actively promote engagement opportunities aimed at members of public who share protected characteristics.
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	Positive	<p>The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives intends to deliver a positive impact on those covering protected characteristics relating to sexual orientation.</p> <p>Furthermore, this plans sets out intended steps which has the potential to support positive effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess what our current position is an ‘equal opportunity employer’ by reviewing the diversity of our workforce and identify key steps to support improvement; • Ensure there is alignment between the Council’s Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Development Strategy; • Actively promote engagement opportunities aimed at members of public who share protected characteristics; • Work with partners on key projects to support those most vulnerable in our communities • Provide advice and guidance to support the development and delivery of Schools Strategic Equality Plans and annually review progress; • Participate in National Campaigns such as ‘Proud Council’s’ which promotes and celebrates LGBTQ+

<p><i>Welsh Language</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The Strategic Equality Plan and objectives intends to deliver a positive impact on those covering protected characteristics. However, whilst the Welsh Language is not a specific protected characteristic identified within the Equality (Wales) 2010 Act the Council still has a duty to meet its requirements under the Welsh Language Standards requirements as well as demonstrate its commitments towards the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's National Goal 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'. Therefore, the Council has a duty not to treat the Welsh Language less favourably.</p> <p>Welsh speakers have been able to contribute to the development of the plan and will be able to be involved in any future development relating to the delivery of this plan and its objectives.</p>
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Q.3.1. Overall evaluation on the potential impact on each protected characteristic:

Blaenau Gwent's Strategic Equality plan intends to benefit a range of stakeholders including residents, staff, community groups, people who work or visit the area.

Consideration of the potential impacts on protected groups has been embedded in the planning and consultation process, and although improvements have been identified as a result of this engagement and planning process, the overall process has allowed the policy to demonstrate the positive impacts on each protected characteristic. The development of the Strategic Equality Plan has been developed using qualitative and quantitative research methods such as good stakeholder engagement, alongside use of National, Regional and Local data.

These are initial observations which will require further regular assessment and monitoring during its implementation phase as it only provides an overview of our current understanding of potential impacts and benefits for protected groups. One significant factor to emerge from the above initial assessment process highlights potential issues around the lack of information available relating to people and groups with protected characteristics, how they access services and what are their support needs.

Q.4. Please outline the key stakeholders of this policy and identify who the policy is intended to benefit:

The key stakeholders included in the Strategic Equality Plan are: -

- Residents (children & young people; older people)
- BG Council Staff
- People who work in Blaenau Gwent
- People who visit Blaenau Gwent

In relation to the above categories it is intended to benefit all, but particularly those covered by one, or more of the protected characteristics.

Further information on any identified positive, neutral or adverse effects that the plan will have on people with protected characteristics can be found in the initial assessment (screening) section of this assessment.

Q.5. Please outline any evidence and / or research you have collected which supports this policy or practice (*please consider both primary and secondary data sources such as quantitative data [Census] and qualitative data [journals and research reports]*):

- Strategic Equality Plan, 2016-20
- Strategic Equality Plan, Annual Report 2017-18
- Blaenau Gwent Public Services Boards, Well-being Assessment;
- Equality and Human Rights Commission: Is Wales Fairer? Report 2018
- Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- Census information
- BG Council Staff Survey Results

Q.6. Please outline the consultation / engagement process: (*to include method of consultation, objectives and target audience*)

Initial engagement:

- Corporate Overview Scrutiny Working Group (June 2019)
- Let's Talk about Fairness & Equality Involvement Programme (August – September 2019) (120 participants engaged)

Target: All stakeholders

Objective: To find out why equality is important, identify any issues and what is really important.

Method: A mix of events/workshops and formal survey. With materials provided in Welsh\English and Easy Read

Formal consultation:

- Tell us what you think about Equalities! – (December – January 2020)

Target: All stakeholders

Objectives: To receive views on our draft equality objectives and approach for delivery

Method: A mix of events/workshops/public engagement sessions/mail outs to key organisations and formal survey. With materials provided in Welsh\English and Easy Read. For example, Voices of our Valleys event (22 Jan 2020) which promoted the positive work being delivered to support the equality agenda and gave people to provide feedback on our six draft objectives.

Q.7. Please outline any key responses and significant outcomes as a result of the consultation and engagement process:

A summary of significant changes to be added after the consultation period closes (22 Jan, 2020).

Q.8. Please outline how this policy or practice will be communicated to the wider community and / or it's intended target group:

The policy has been communicated with stakeholders through a variety of engagement\involvement mechanisms:

- Stakeholder engagement workshops;
- Partnership meetings;
- Formal consultation (6 weeks' consultation process);
- Via Corporate Communications – social media\staff messages\BG Council web pages
- Learning Action Centres
- Libraries
- Wider partnership forums and networks (older people's forum, youth forum; children's grand council; PSB Engagement sub-group)

Q.9. What are your standard methods of communicating with service users (information must be available in a range of formats including Easy Read, Braille, Audio / Video Tape, BSL, Different Languages):

<u>Communication Methods</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Face-to-Face Verbal Communication	*	
Telephone	*	
Printed Information (e.g., posters, leaflets, flyers etc.)	*	
Written Correspondence	*	
Email	*	
Other (Please specify):	We have also provided the options for people to participate using any methods they choose. E.g. stories, photographs, poems.	

Q.10. Please list the possible positive impacts this policy is expected to have on people with protected characteristics (*initial descriptions of the expected impact on protected groups can be found in the initial assessment (screening) section – see guidance notes for examples of positive impacts*):

A number of positive impacts are expected:

- Promoting equal opportunities and equality through implementing each objective
- Improving relations between different targeted groups
- Increased opportunities to engage with local services to inform decision making processes
- Providing targeted services to highlighted groups

Q.11 Please detail the expected adverse impact of this policy on people with protected characteristics (*initial descriptions of the expected impact on protected groups can be found in the initial assessment ‘screening’ section*):

There are no anticipated adverse impacts, nor have there been any adverse impacts throughout the development of the strategic equality plan. However, the next phase of the Plan is ‘implementation’, which will be monitored to ensure any potential adverse impacts are managed appropriately and mitigating actions are embedded within the process. There is confidence that the consultation and engagement process has aimed to collect the views of the community as a whole and this information has been used to inform the development of the strategic equality plan.

Q.12. If any adverse impact has been identified, please outline any mitigation actions:

There are no adverse impacts at this point and the plan inherently looks to mitigate any negative impacts on people, or groups covered by one or more of the protected characteristics.

Delivery of the strategic equality plan will include the development of a new EQIA process which also considers socio-economic impact and looks to strengthen existing mechanisms to identify adverse impacts and appropriate mitigations.

Q. 13. Does the policy or practice support the Council in achieving its statutory duty to:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Please explain:</u>
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	*		The process of development, particularly through the consultation and engagement process, has maintained an inclusive approach and has taken the views of a diverse range of stakeholders and has allowed groups to come together to share their experiences, thoughts and ideas in the development of the strategic equality plan.
Advance quality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	*		This development process has encouraged all people, regardless of their background and status, to input their ideas and thoughts for the strategic equality plan.
Eliminate unlawful discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the act	*		This development process has encouraged all people, regardless of their background and status, to input their ideas and thoughts for the strategic equality plan.

Q.14. Are there any specific resource implications linked to this policy:

Yes, BG Council has a duty to effectively resource the development and implementation of the Strategic Equality Plan. Certain areas of the plan will be delivered collectively in collaboration with key partners.

Q.15. Have any changes to the policy been implemented as a result of the assessment process, please detail (*take in to consideration the results of the consultation process, trends in primary and secondary data, as well as other themes identified within the policy assessment process*):

To be included following closure of the formal consultation process.

Q.16. Having taken in to consideration all elements of the above Equality Impact Assessment, please indicate your decision in relation to the policy implementation:	
Reject the Proposed Changes (you must have an objective justification to do this)	
Accept the Proposed Changes and Make Relevant Changes	
Continue the policy with minimal Changes	
No Changes needed; the policy has no potential for discrimination	*
Stop the policy as it has potential for unlawful discrimination	
Q.16.1. Please provide any relevant details on your decision:	
<p>The policy was subject to a thorough consultation and engagement process, and has used a range of research and data to inform the development of the plan. The development of the Strategic Equality Plan takes in to account the views of relevant stakeholders and the implementation of the plan looks to advance and promote the equality agenda. Delivery of the plan looks to have a positive impact on people, or groups covered by one, or more of the protected characteristics.</p> <p>We are satisfied that no further changes are required to contribute to the reduction of discrimination as there is no possibility that its publishing and implementation will cause unlawful discrimination.</p>	

Q.17. Overall evaluation / summary of the assessment (include significant findings and actions taken as part of the process)
<p>The development of the strategic equality plan satisfies the requirements of the Equality (Wales) Act to prepare a strategic equality plan and objectives every four years, and for the development of the plan to be informed by consultation feedback provided by stakeholders who have an interest in the delivery of BG Council's services and functions.</p> <p>This can be seen through the comprehensive engagement and involvement programme which has supported its development.</p> <p>By default, the strategic equality plan looks to positively advance and promote the equality agenda. Furthermore, its delivery will be used good mechanisms for monitoring and review and includes plans to develop a strengthened EQIA process which looks to identifying any potential positive/negative adverse impact on people, or groups covered by one or more of the protected characteristics as well as the new socio-economic duty being placed on Local Authorities with effect from April 2020.</p>

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Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

Report Subject: **Commercial Strategy**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member**

Report Submitted by: **Anne-Louise Clark, Chief Officer Commercial**

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	22/01/2020	26.06.20			12/02/2010	11/03/2020	26/03/2020	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Blaenau Gwent Commercial Strategy for the period 2020 – 2025. This strategy is aligned to the Council's priority 'Efficient Council' however it is designed to cover all services and be a document that all staff, suppliers and partners can see their role in delivering.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Council's Commercial Strategy 2020 – 2025 was developed over the summer of 2019 with input from senior leaders in October 2019. It brings together themes that will contribute to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council being a commercially minded council. It covers the development of commercial activities and also highlights the conditions required for the Council to behave as a commercial organisation. This is within the context of maintaining the Council's core purpose to provide public services delivering social value.

- 2.2 Critical themes to being like a commercial organisation are:

- Focussing on the customer experience for existing and new services;
- Understanding our investments including return on investment (benefits), profits and losses;
- Building a trusted brand known for delivering quality services;
- Controlling our costs;
- Using data, technology and insights wisely;
- Having an agile workforce aligned to opportunities

- 2.3 There are a number of related strategies and programmes that contribute to the delivery of our Commercial Strategy and ambitions. These are:

- A Communications Strategy, 2020 – 2025;
- A Digital and Customer transformation programme;
- The Workforce Strategy.

- 2.4 These will also go through the full decision making process separately to ensure there is every opportunity for member engagement and scrutiny.

- 2.4 In addition to the supporting strategies and programmes highlighted above there are 5 specifically commercial ambitions. These will be driven by the Commercial Services team but clearly involve all services, suppliers and partners. These are:
- Commissioning and Procurement;
 - Developing an investment Portfolio;
 - Creating true commercial activities – profit and loss;
 - Commercial and Entrepreneurial Culture;
 - Contract and Supplier Management.
- 2.5 These ambitions will be governed through a newly created Strategic Commercial Board. This will replace the Strategic Procurement Board. The Procurement and Commissioning cycle will be strengthened to support the Strategic Commercial Board which will also have a role reviewing the delivery of our Service Level Agreements to schools, monitoring the commercial viability of our traded services and in governing investment options using an investment framework.
- 2.6 Each of the 5 commercial ambitions has a set of actions that make up a programme of work. This programme of work will be scrutinised over the next five years. The actions are detailed in Appendix 1 'Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council – Commercial Strategy 2020 - 2025'. Reporting on the delivery of the work programme will be through Corporate Leadership Team quarterly, Executive Committee quarterly and Corporate Overview Scrutiny on an annual basis.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 **Option 1:** That Executive Committee considers and agrees the Commercial Strategy and associated work programme.
- 3.2 **Option 2:** That Executive Committee provides comment and challenges the Commercial Strategy and associated work programme.

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

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Section 15), places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. As part of this, the Council is required to develop a Corporate Plan. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also places individual duties on public bodies. The legislation is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and creating a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

The Commercial Strategy supports these objectives and the Corporate Plan priority 'Efficient Council'. It is a critical organisational strategy for the future sustainability of the organisation. It is designed to secure the best use of our resources and to create ways of working that are fit for the 21st Century.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

It is intended that this strategy complements and supports the Medium Term Financial Strategy and key aspects of its delivery are included in the Bridging the Gap Programme.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The features of the Commercial Strategy are to be built into the performance management framework so that they are embedded into Directorate Plans and individual objectives. The risks associated with underperformance against the strategy will be mitigated through a whole Council adoption of the ways of working.

5.3 ***Legal***

Changes in service delivery that might emerge through the deployment of the strategy will be reviewed from a legal perspective. Where alternative delivery models are explored due diligence will be undertaken before any decisions are made. This will include legal and financial reviews of any business cases.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

Where changes in service delivery or role are identified normal human resources processes and policies will be applied including consultation with the Trade Unions.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Key performance information and data will include:

- Delivery of the associated strategies and programmes;
- Transparency and challenge for all third party expenditure;
- Visibility of all commercial activities and publication of profit and loss accounts;
- Business cases and business plans for all new commercial activities;
- Leadership Development activities including entrepreneurial thinking; commissioning and negotiations skills plus contract management;
- Programme of supplier relationship meetings and a clear timeline for contract re-negotiations

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

Through the delivery of the strategy the Council will become more effective in the deployment of its resources to ensure value for money is achieved and investments are made in activities that deliver the best outcomes for the public. This strategy will also contribute to the financial resilience and sustainability of the organisation therefore protecting front line services.

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

User research will be a key part of the commissioning cycle to ensure service specifications take account of the needs of service users. Any changes to service delivery models will be consulted on in the usual way.

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

This strategy is at the heart of the medium and long term planning for Blaenau Gwent and recognises not only where the Council needs to seek new income streams but also where it needs to review how it deploys its current expenditure.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

This strategy is designed to support the needs of the Council now and in the future. It is designed to build financial resilience and to prevent the need to seek service cuts.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

There are opportunities through this strategy to consider commercially advantageous ways of working across local authorities and the Public Service Board. This strategy seeks to identify commercial opportunities to work with suppliers across public sector organisations and to spend the Blaenau Gwent pound wisely.

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

This strategy takes a whole council approach and promotes transparency across the organisation, learning from each other, building best practice outside of directorate silos and sharing skills. Through the supplier relationship element of the strategy benefits will be seen across services.

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

All service changes arising for this strategy will be screen to ensure there is no adverse impact on any protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The Commercial Strategy will be monitored through the Performance Management Framework at directorate level and all activities will be monitored through Corporate Leadership Team and Executive Committee quarterly. Regular updates on impact will be discussed with the Executive Member. An annual performance report will be presented to Council having previously been through Corporate Overview Scrutiny.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 - Commercial Strategy and work programme 2020 - 2025



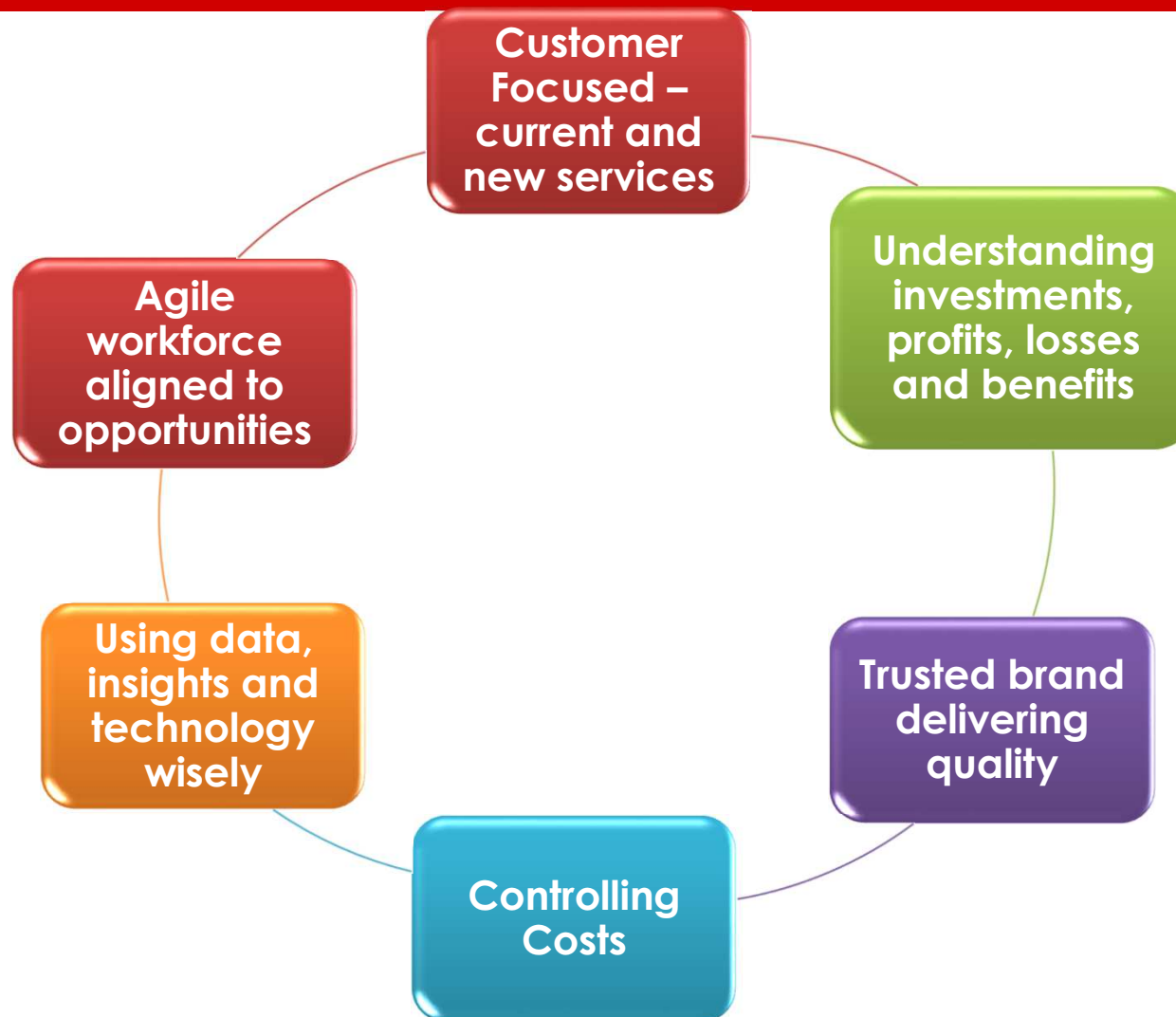
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Commercial Strategy and Work Programme

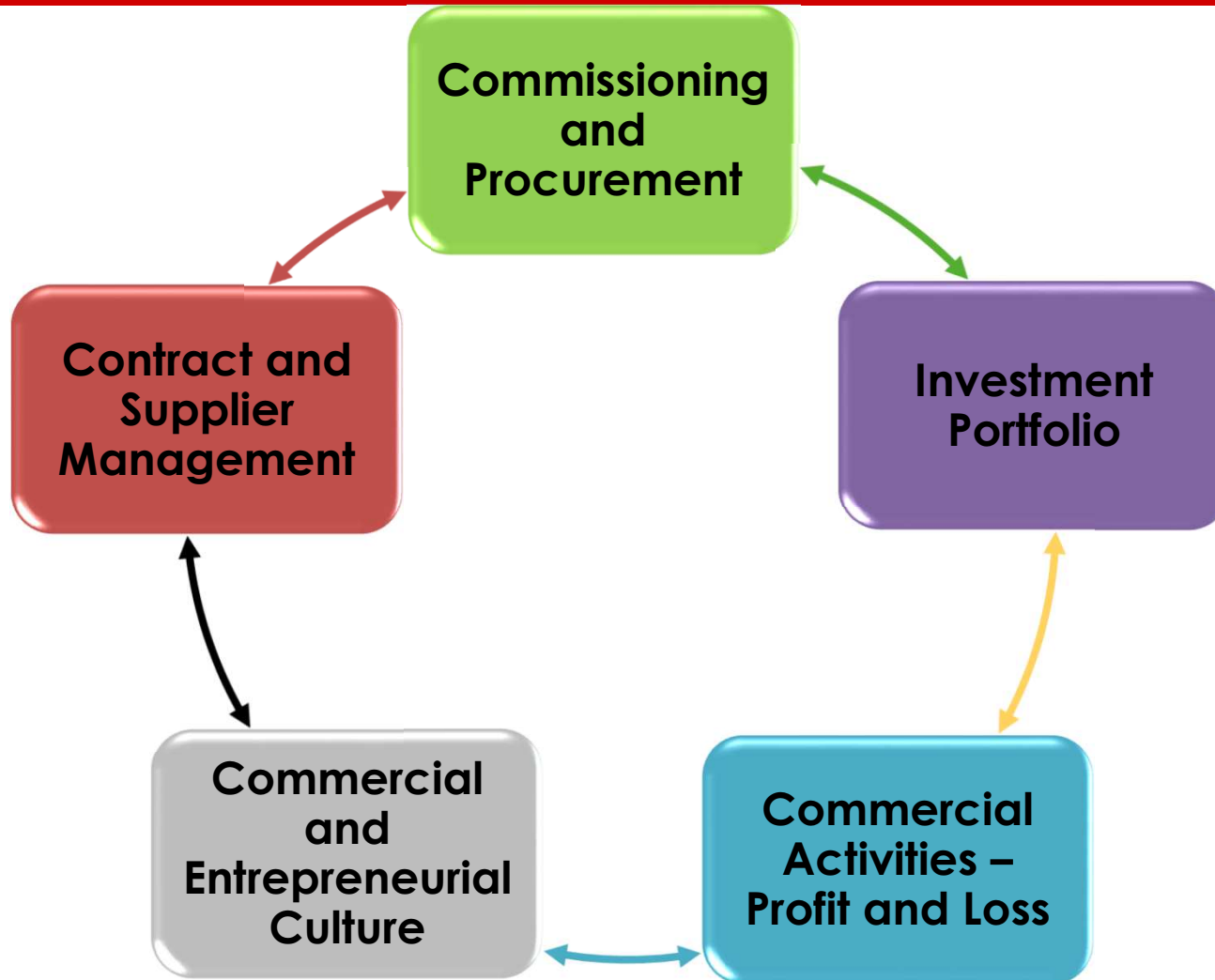
Commercial ambitions for Blaenau Gwent

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Thinking like a commercial organisation



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Commercial Ambitions



Blaenau Gwent's Commercial Ambitions

- **Commissioning and Procurement**

Commissioning the right services in the right way to ensure value for money and delivering better outcomes

- **Investment Portfolio**

Shaping the investment options based on robust business cases, risk assessment and market intelligence

- **Commercial Activities – Profit and loss**

Identification of truly commercial opportunities based on market intelligence, assessment of business opportunities and strong profit and loss accounting

- **Commercial and Entrepreneurial Culture**

Involvement of staff and partners in identifying opportunities along side the ability to create robust business cases, seek investment and have capacity to scale operations

- **Contract and Supplier Management**

Improved contract management and negotiation skills working with our suppliers to control costs, achieve value for money and deliver innovative solutions

Ambition 1 – Commissioning and Procurement

Commissioning the right services in the right way to ensure value for money and delivering better outcomes

Commissioning and Procurement



Ambition 2 – Investment Portfolio

Shaping the investment options based on robust business cases, risk assessment and market intelligence

Investment Portfolio

Agreeing options for investments linked to our investment strategy

Year 1

Agreeing our risk and reward yields

Year 1

Exploring investment vehicles

Year 2

Strong governance for investment management

Year 2

Ambition 3 – Income

Identification of truly commercial opportunities based on market intelligence, assessment of business opportunities and strong profit and loss accounting

**Commercial
Activities
Profit and
Loss**

- Review of current commercial activities Year 1
- Create business plans to support existing commercial activities Year 1
- Agree a vehicle for identifying commercial opportunities Year 2
- Agree appropriate business case development Year 2
- Agree triggers to end commercial activities that are not profitable Year 2
- Agree further investments to scale and grow successful commercial activities Year 3

Ambition 4 – Commercial and Entrepreneurial Culture

Involvement of staff and partners in identifying opportunities along side the ability to create robust business cases, seek investment and have capacity to scale operations

Commercial and Entrepreneurial Culture

- Create a vehicle for capturing ideas for commercial activities Year 1
- Identify roles that have the freedoms to be entrepreneurial Year 1
- Build the skills to assess market opportunities Year 2
- Build the skills to assess best commissioning options Year 2
- Identify the organisational barriers Year 2
- Agree investment routes to build new commercial activities Year 3
- Agree governance arrangements to ensure quality is achieved and risks mitigated Year 3

Ambition 5 – Contract and supplier management

Improved contract management and negotiation skills working with our suppliers to control costs, achieve value for money and deliver innovative solutions

Contract and supplier management



Commercial Governance

CLT

Strategic Commercial Board

Commissioning and Procurement base on strategic imperatives

Commercial and Entrepreneurial opportunities

Investment Strategy Programme

Monitor Commercial Activities and projections

Other Inputs: Senior Managers from Service Areas - Legal, Procurement, Finance, Communications etc.



Commercial Strategy

Feedback

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Agenda Item 10

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

Report Subject: **Corporate Communications Strategy**

Portfolio Holder: **Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Anne-Louise Clark, Chief Officer Commercial
Sean Scannell – Communications and Marketing Manager**

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	22/01/2020	26.02.20			12/02/2010	11/03/2020	26/03/2020	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report to present a Corporate Communications Strategy for the period 2020 – 2025. This strategy is aligned to the Council's Commercial Strategy and is designed to support the delivery of the Council's priorities, vision and values.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Council's Commercial Strategy states that thinking like a commercial organisation means being seen as a trusted brand that is delivering quality services. This Corporate Communications Strategy is designed to deliver that ambition.
- 2.2 The communications landscape has changed dramatically over recent years and is constantly evolving. The era of the internet has changed expectations and it is even more critical that our strategy reflects those expectations. Whilst these changes provide multiple channels through which we can reach our audiences it also brings with it challenges. Digital and social media need to be serviced through a constant flow of information, opinion and education. They provide a tool for two way communication however the speed and frequency of changing content is a challenge meaning that regulation and our ability to respond is difficult.
- 2.3 In this dynamic environment and due to the pace of change in the public sector the Communications team need to be proactive, provide impetus and anticipate the impact of change for our residents, businesses and visitors. The speed of change means the Communication team need to act as trusted advisors for the Council and individual services so that opportunities are maximise to support a positive reputation, anticipating good news stories and manage reputational risks. Members of the team will attend all forward planning meetings for Scrutiny Committees and Executive Committees so that agenda items can be reviewed ahead of publication. Advice can be provided to maximise the positive impact of communication opportunities.
- 2.4 The overall objective of the strategy is to deliver excellent, innovative and cost effective two-way communications, building a positive reputation and increasing trust and confidence that the Council is delivering services that meet resident, businesses and visitor's needs. Regular attendance at Directorate Management Team meetings will

also ensure that there is early engagement with services on managing communication campaigns and opportunities.

- 2.5 The plan also aims to support elected members and staff by promoting the impact of the Council's vision, priorities and core values.
- 2.6 There are 6 ambitions or themes which will drive the communications delivery led by the Corporate Communications team:
 - Build and maintain a strong reputation.
 - Residents know how we are delivering council priorities.
 - Informed and engaged staff.
 - Ensure marketing campaigns are well planned, targeted and provide value for money.
 - Promote the use of digital communications channels and encourage self-service where appropriate.
 - Make sure residents are informed in advance of and at times of emergency.
- 2.7 Each of 6 ambitions has a set of actions that make up a programme of work. This programme of work will be scrutinised over the next five years. The actions are detailed in Appendix 1 'Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council – Communications Strategy 2020-2025'. Reporting on the delivery of the work programme will be through Corporate Leadership Team and Executive Committee quarterly and Corporate Overview Scrutiny on an annual basis.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 **Option 1:** That Executive Committee considers and agrees the Communications Strategy and associated work programme.
- 3.2 **Option 2:** That Executive Committee provides comments and challenges the Communications Strategy and associated work programme prior to approval.

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

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Section 15), places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. As part of this, the Council is required to develop a Corporate Plan. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also places individual duties on public bodies. The legislation is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales and creating a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

The Corporate Communications Strategy supports these objectives by delivering timely and informative communications to residents and staff.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There is no direct impact on budgets.

The majority of Council communications uses digital channels. Individual marketing campaigns are often externally funded by partners (eg WRAP).

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The Corporate Communications team will work with colleagues and partners to ensure communications plans are delivered in a timely manner.

5.3 ***Legal***

All internal and external communications activities will take account of any legal issues that may arise from publications and potential challenge. Communication activities reflect the decision making of the Council and any exempt items will be treated in confidence. Communications relating to individuals will also protect their privacy rights.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no human resource implications.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Key measures will include:

- Accurate and balanced media coverage.
- Increased specialist and national media coverage.
- Increasing number of visitors to the Council website.
- More social media followers.
- Staff feel well informed and understand priorities measured by staff survey feedback.

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

Increased transparency and openness regarding the delivery of public services.
Increased levels of trust in the quality of service provision and the use of public funds.
Improved access to relevant information delivered in a timely manner utilising multiple channels.

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

Research will be carried out with residents on a regular basis to check the impact of our external communications activities. Internal communication will also be measured for impact through regular staff engagement activities.

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

The role of the Council in building the reputation of the area and shaping Blaenau Gwent the place is significant. The Communication Strategy articulates the approach the Council will take to ensure the longer term objectives of the Corporate Plan and The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and represented and the impact of the Council's work is promoted positively.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

It is anticipated that effective and proactive communications will contribute to education and information campaigns designed to influence behaviour. Campaigns relating to littering, recycling and fly tipping and fostering are examples of this however across the life of the Communications Strategy there will be many other areas of behavioural change that will be significant.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The Council works with other local authorities, partners and Welsh Government on a regular basis to deliver local, regional and national campaigns.

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

Opportunities for promoting cross cutting service impact will be identified as part of the communication campaigns and particularly in relation to integrated marketing. Developing our reputation as a trusted brand will include demonstrating how our services collectively impact in positive ways for our households and businesses.

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

All communication activities will be screened to ensure there is no adverse impact on protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The Communications Strategy will be monitored as part of the Directorate Performance Management arrangements and all activities will be monitored through Corporate Leadership Team and Executive Committee quarterly. Regular updates on impact will be discussed with the Executive Member.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 - Corporate Communications Strategy 2020-2025



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

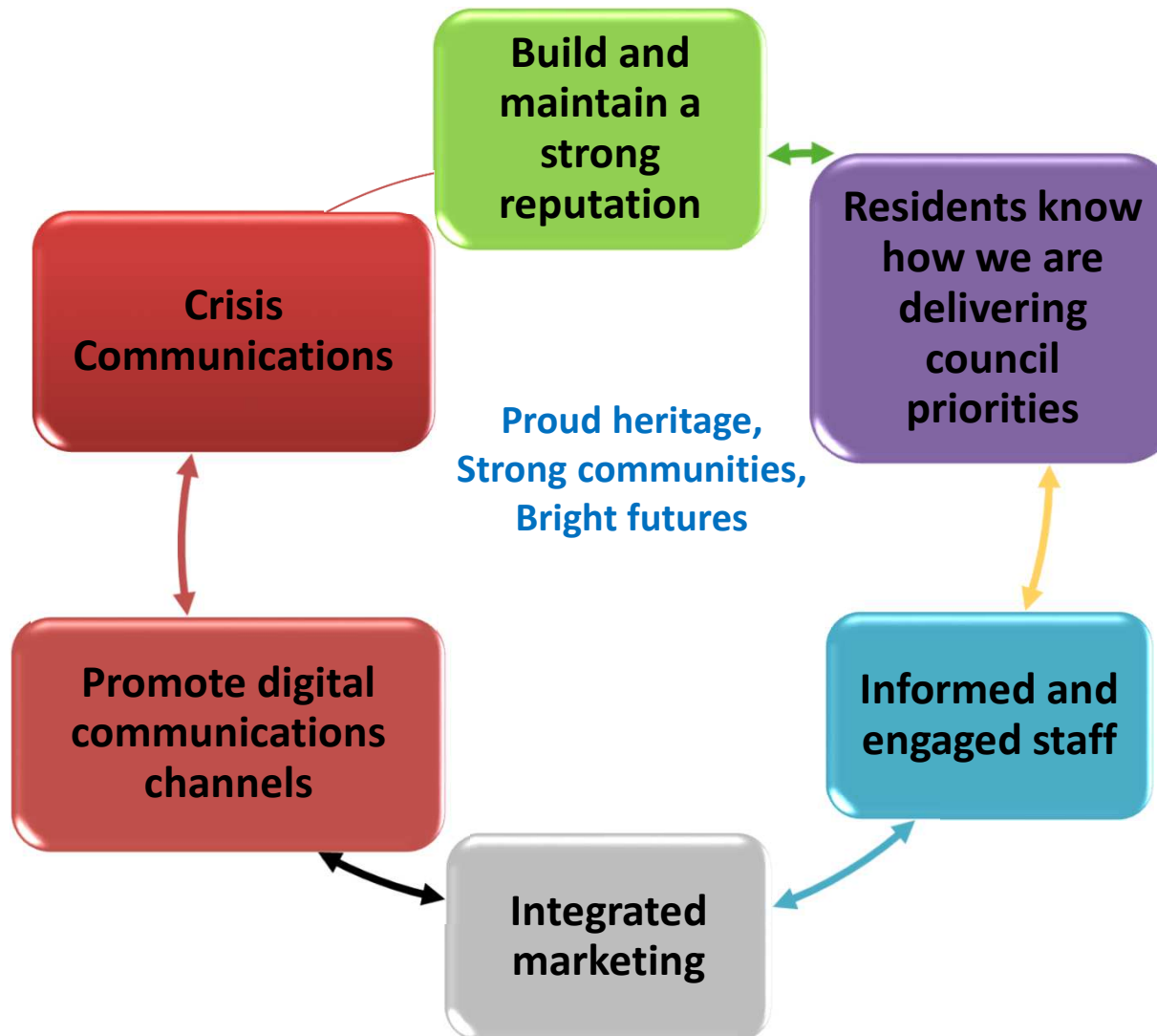
Communications Strategy
Putting Blaenau Gwent on the map

Communications Objectives

Deliver excellent, innovative and cost effective two-way communications, building a positive reputation and increasing trust and confidence that the Council is delivering services that meet resident, businesses and visitors needs

Support elected members and staff by promoting the impact of the Council's vision, priorities and core values.

Blaenau Gwent's Communication Ambitions



Blaenau Gwent's Communication Ambitions

Build and maintain a strong reputation

- *Be proactive to promote key council achievements and initiatives and if needed defend the council against unfair criticism.*

Residents understand council priorities and how we are doing

- *Ensure residents are kept informed of council decisions and service standards to increase understanding of the impact of our work and improve levels of satisfaction.*

Informed and engaged staff

- *Delivery innovative Internal communications and engagement activities so staff identify their contribution in delivering council priorities and celebrate achievements.*

Integrated marketing

- *Marketing activity will support service delivery and campaigns will be centrally planned using customer insight and delivered to the target audience through appropriate channels.*
- *Campaigns monitored to ensure value for money*

Promote digital channels

- *Capitalise on the opportunity that digital and social media offers to reach our local community and use of these channels to support customer service delivery strategy.*

Crisis Communications

- *Effective warning and informing communications delivery*
- *Effective and timely communications are essential in any emergency.*

Build and maintain a strong reputation

Be proactive to promote key council achievements and initiatives and if needed defend the council against unfair criticism

**Build and
maintain a strong
reputation**

Regular media releases.

Regular sharing of collaborative and partnership working

Proactive digital content including images and video to promote services using digital channels.

Anticipate any unfair criticism in the media and provide a counter balanced position

Consistent Messages to promote Council priorities.

Ensure residents are kept informed of council decisions and service standards to increase understanding of the impact of our work and improve levels of satisfaction

**Residents know
how we are
delivering
council priorities**

Promote success in education.

Promote economic development and regeneration.

Promote social services priorities.

Campaigns to support strong and environmentally smart communities

Efficient Council. Inform residents about service changes and encourage self service where appropriate

Informed and engaged staff

Delivery innovative Internal communications and engagement activities so staff identify their contribution in delivering council priorities and celebrate achievements.

Informed and engaged staff

Promote regular staff engagement sessions

Regular staff newsletter

Regular Managing Director Message

Regular manager brief

Intranet and internal social media for 2 way communications

Integrated Marketing

Marketing activity will support service delivery and campaigns will be centrally planned using customer insight and delivered to the target audience through appropriate channels. Ensure that campaigns deliver value for money.

Integrated Marketing

Support Council priorities with integrated marketing campaigns.

Aim messages at the right target audience. Use customer insight to target key audiences when developing campaigns

Take advantage of digital media as this offers speed to market and lower costs than traditional media. Use traditional media where appropriate.

Support marketing with high quality graphic design to ensure consistent branding and visual identity for Council communications.

Promote digital communications channels

Capitalise on the opportunity that digital and social media offers to reach our local community and use of these channels to support customer service delivery strategy

Promote digital communications channels

Support the Council's digital ambitions

Lower cost communications with well targeted campaigns

Trackable and measurable results (web analytics, social media reach)

Personalised campaigns reducing waste

Crisis Communications

Deliver effective warning and informing communications
Effective and timely communications are essential in any emergency.

Crisis Communications

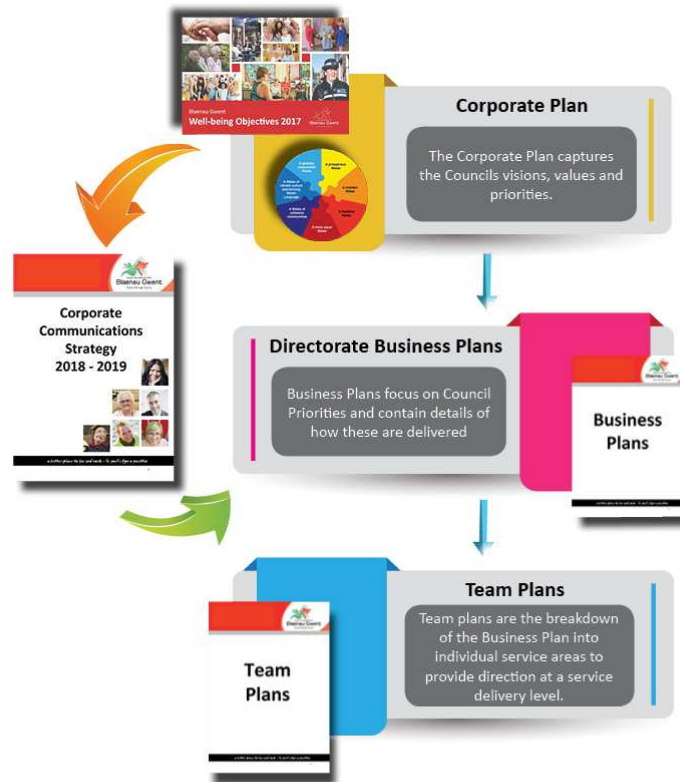
Review and update communications in all major incident and off-site business continuity plans.

Take part in learning, training and de-brief sessions

Support the lead partner (or lead) in delivering communications plans during major incidents and during recovery.

Hierarchy of Plans

Heirachy of plans



Measures and Evaluation

Area	Measure
Media relations	Accurate and balanced media coverage for the Council.
Internal Communications	Staff feel involved and able to use their skills to deliver our priorities (pulse events and staff survey)
Council website	Increased number of visitors. Increased in the volume and proportion of online transactions.
Social media	Increased followers. Positive feedback on Council posts.



Communications Strategy

Feedback

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Agenda Item 11

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th 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	26.02.20			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) and to seek for approval by the Executive Committee.

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 The report will be considered by the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5th March 2020 and any comments will be presented verbally to the Executive Committee.
- 3.2 **Option 1:** Consider the plan and make specific recommendations prior to approval.
- Option 2 (Preferred option):** Consider and approve the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan.

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.

To mitigate this risk, there has been a range of consultation and engagement activities to ensure a co-ordinated approach, reflective of need.

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.

To mitigate this risk, relationships would be maintain through a less co-ordinated approach such as partner meetings.

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

The plan is aimed at ensuring Blaenau Gwent Prospers, this is inclusive of all 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*

Employment & Skills Plan

2020 - 2023



Blaenau Gwent
Prosperes

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

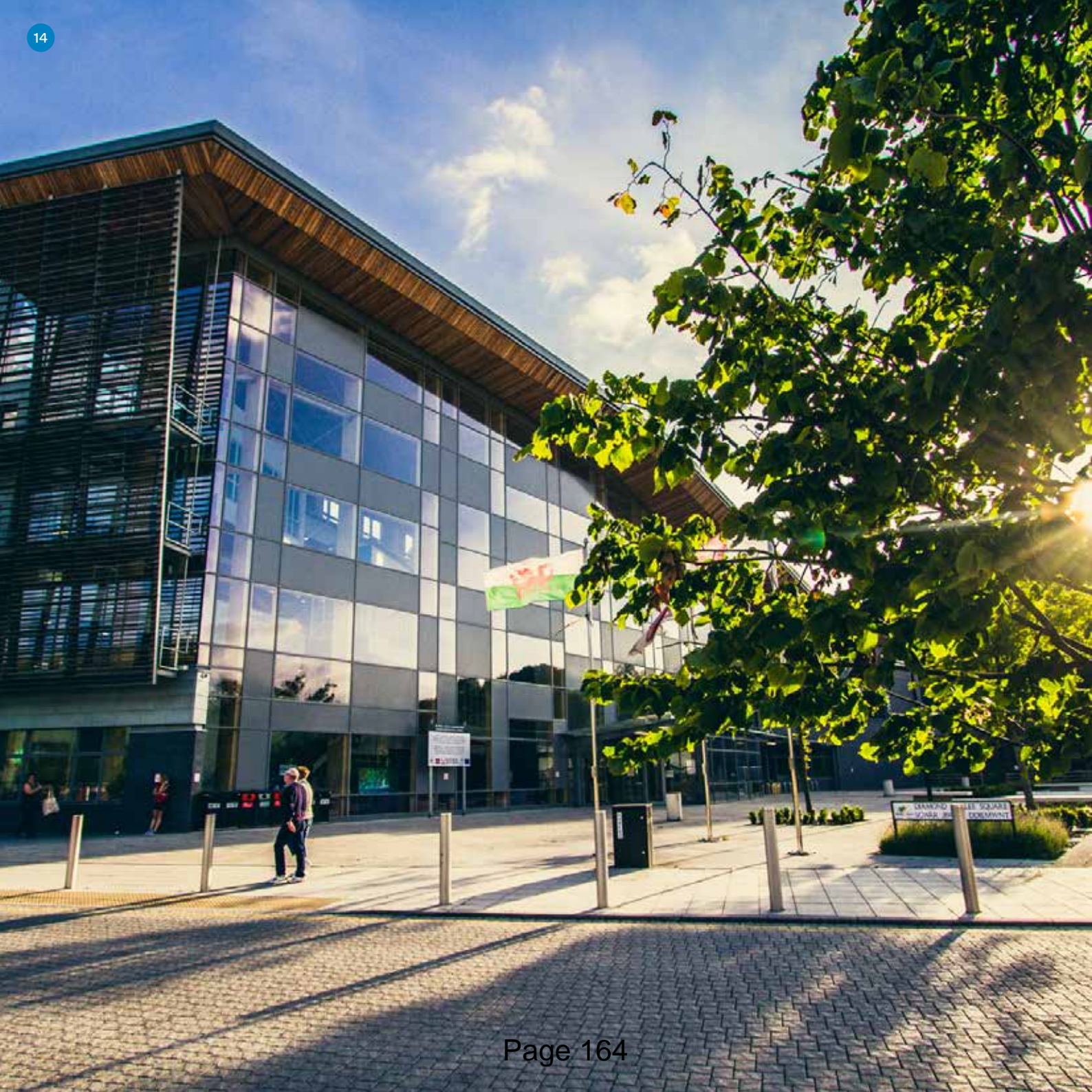
- To build and embed effective business relationships for locally significant sectors in order to;
 - Understand and define “future skills” and “jobs of the future”.
 - Identify needs and gather business intelligence (recruitment/workforce/skills)
 - Provide responsive solutions
 - Proactively inform 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:

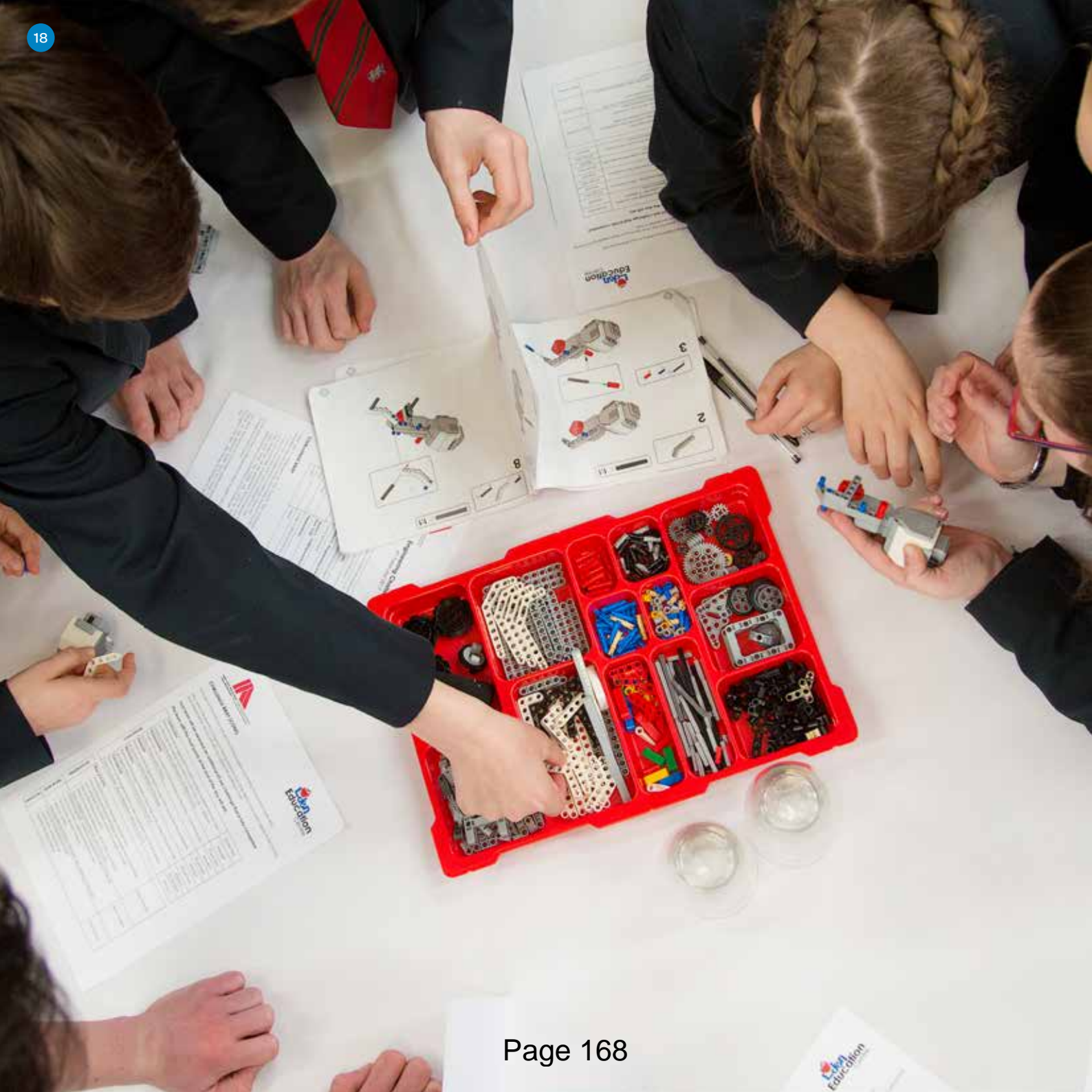
- Ensure a seamless provision of employment support that caters for the needs of all residents at every stage of their journey that is bespoke to need.
- Effective use of partner agencies to support the wider needs of individuals in securing and sustaining employment related opportunities.
- Expand the 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>Business & Enterprise</p> <p>Facilitate growth and innovation by understanding and responding to local economic need.</p>	<p>To build and embed effective business relationships for locally significant sectors in order to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. <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>Learning and Skills;</p> <p>Ensure that the skills provision at all levels is responsive and accessible to residents.</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>Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability;</p> <p>Create a motivated and skilled community, through appropriate employment support, at every stage of an individual's journey.</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"> - Effect fund for enterprise - Upskilling in the workplace - Shared apprenticeship programmes - Pathways to Employment <p>Utilise the results from the Future Skills Analysis to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influence training and support to individuals. - Determine feasibility of training space within the Future Skills Academy to support employability e.g. Gemba training room <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>Education & Schools;</p> <p>Raise awareness of opportunity and the aspirations of young people to fulfil their potential and support their pathway into work.</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>Procurement and Community Benefits;</p> <p>Maximise employment and skills related opportunities through the utilisation of contract social clauses.</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



Agenda Item 12

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

Report Subject: **Local Nature Reserve Designation & Declaration**

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

Report Submitted by: **Clive Rogers, Head of Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
10/12/19	17/12/19	26.02.20			16/01/20	11/03/20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend the approval of the designation and declaration of five Local Nature Reserves; Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland, Central Valley, Garden City, Parc Bryn Bach and Sirhowy Hill Woodlands.
- 1.2 Local Nature Reserves are important for both people and nature.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 says that “For a site to become a Local Nature Reserve it must have natural features of special interest to the local area, and the authority must either have a legal interest in the land or have an agreement with the owner to manage the land as a reserve.” Local Authorities have the power to designate Local Nature Reserves on any land in their area, provided that the power is exercised in consultation with NRW (Appendix 1 shows form to submit to NRW when council approved).
- 2.2 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council currently has seven Local Nature Reserves designated; Cwmcelyn Pond (2013), Cwmtillery Lakes (2009), Parc Nant y Waun (2009), Roseheyworth Community Woodlands (2013), Six Bells / Parc Arrail (2013), Trevor Rowson (2013) and Silent Valley (1997). The area designated and declared totals 120.3 hectares.
- 2.3 More information is available on the Local Nature Reserves proposed to be designated and declared. In summary:

Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodlands	79.7 ha	Community group supports
Central Valley	10.5 ha	Gwent Wildlife Trust supports
Garden City	45.3 ha	
Parc Bryn Bach	109.7 ha	‘Friends of’ group supports

Sirhowy Hill Woodlands 70.1 ha Community group supports
Maps are in Appendix 2.

- 2.4 Declaration and designation will contribute to the council's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-22) to comply with the duty placed on us by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 2.5 Four of the sites have been put forward before for declaration but have had issues with disputed land and boundaries, which are now resolved. The fifth is Central Valley nature reserve which demonstrates positive regeneration for nature and people on part of The Works site.
- 2.6 Common land is considered suitable to be designated as LNRs¹. This is relevant to the Beaufort Hill Ponds and Woodland site, which is also designated as Mynydd Llangattock Common (BCL018). It is also relevant to the Garden City and Sirhowy Hill Woodland sites which are noted as replacement common land should the deregistration of part of Trefil-Las and Twyn Bryn-March Common (BCL015) go ahead.
- 2.7 Four of the sites, all except for Garden City, were acquired and reclaimed using former Welsh Development Agency (now Welsh Government) Derelict Land Reclamation Funding and as such the Council needs to comply with its Explanatory Memorandum on Derelict Land Reclamation, which broadly means Welsh Government has to approve the principle of the designation of the sites as Local Nature Reserves.
- 2.8 There are several leaseholders on the sites including community groups, Welsh Water, Network Rail, Aneurin Leisure Trust and individuals. A draft letter to inform leaseholders is included in Appendix 3.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Options Appraisal

- **Option 1:** Not to designate and declare five Local Nature Reserves
 - **Option 2: Preferred option** To designate and declare five Local Nature Reserves; Sirhowy Hill Woodlands, Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland, Parc Bryn Bach, Garden City, and Central Valley.
- 3.2 Designating and declaring 5 more Local Nature Reserves primarily meets the objective in the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-22) to 'Maintain and enhance biodiversity and improve ecosystem resilience on council owned land, particularly with regard to priority species and habitats' which meets our duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
 - 3.3 No recommendations were received from Community Services DMT.
 - 3.4 No recommendations were received from Regeneration & Community Services SMT meeting on 10/12/19.

3.5 Comments were received regarding section 5.1 from CLT on 17/12/19 and the report modified accordingly.

3.6 Community Services Scrutiny Committee 16/01/20:
The committee endorsed option 2.
Councillors expressed concerns about the impact on proposed developments at Parc Bryn Bach and also the management of existing and new LNRs. Meetings have subsequently taken place internally and with Aneurin Leisure Trust.

Four of the proposed LNRs, Central Valley excepted, are already designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in the current Local Development Plan 2012-2021. Policy DM14 applies to SINCs and LNRs.

Therefore, there is no extra planning burden through the designation of the sites as LNRs. Central Valley will be assessed for SINC designation in the current LDP review.

There is Welsh Government funding in place in Greater Gwent for the management of LNRs until 2022 (see 5.1).

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 Priority:**

Designating and declaring five more Local Nature Reserves primarily contributes to meeting the following priority:

4.2 Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities
- To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors.

4.3 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

Designating and declaring five more Local Nature Reserves meets all of the well-being plan objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone
- Safe and friendly communities
- To look after and protect the environment
- To forge new pathways to prosperity
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play

4.4 **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

4.5 The Plan directly contributes to actions needed for the 'resilient Wales' goal: "A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and

ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change)”

- 4.6 By designating and declaring five more Local Nature Reserves the Local Authority will be acting in line with the approved Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022), to meet our duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and maximise its contributions to the Well-being Goals.

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

Designating and declaring five more Local Nature Reserves requires resource to maintain and enhance their biodiversity and ecological resilience. The officer resource will be covered within the existing revenue budget. The ecology technical support maintains the management plans for the Local Nature Reserves, which meets our Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6 Duty.

The council has secured funding from the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being Grant, funded by Welsh Government, for the Resilient Greater Gwent project, until July 2022. The total project value is £1.3million to deliver 12 sub-projects across the five local authority areas in Greater Gwent with a range of public, charitable and private sector partners. The sustainable communities work stream will deliver the management actions required for the sites, such as woodland management, hedge laying, species surveys and meadow cuts. The Resilient Greater Gwent project will encourage long-term sustainable management through skills and capacity building within existing and new community groups.

The existing three community groups and Gwent Wildlife Trust manage the Local Nature Reserves in partnership with us in line with the ecological management plans. The community groups do apply to and succeed in securing external funding streams such as the Tesco bags for life scheme.

The potential loss of future funding is a risk however the mitigating factors are:

- Partnership working
- Long term management agreements
- Community Groups, especially after skills and capacity building
- Seeking alternative funding sources

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

The main risk is that failure to designate and declare these Local Nature Reserves may cause community group disengagement; not give protection to the sites under the Local Development Plan and ultimately would make our corporate commitment to ‘improving the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors’ more difficult to achieve.

5.3 **Legal**

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 says that “For a site to become a Local Nature Reserve it must have natural features of special interest to the local area, and the authority must either have a legal interest in the land or have an agreement with the owner to manage the land as a reserve.” The allocation of the sites as LNR’s will restrict the ability of the Council to dispose of the sites, disposal will require seeking Ministerial consent.

5.4 **Human Resources**

Local Nature Reserves can contribute to staff health and well-being. For example, by raising awareness of the nearest Local Nature Reserves to council buildings for walks during breaks and walking meetings staff health and well-being could be enhanced.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The Local Nature Reserves have current management plans or plans under review.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

Biodiversity underpins the health and resilience of all of our ecosystems. In turn, these ecosystems support all life on Earth. This means that taking positive action for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in Blaenau Gwent will enhance the natural resources the public utilise such as clean water, air and food production including pollination services. The natural environment is also a vital resource to enhance mental and physical health and well-being.

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

The sites proposed for designation and declaration have been discussed with the Estates department who have provided information around land ownership and the current position with the allocation of some of the sites as replacement Common Land for an internal project.

The proposal was discussed with the community group involved with each Local Nature Reserve and their letters of support are in Appendix 4.

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

Declaring a LNR protects it for the long-term in the Local Development Plan. To de-declare a LNR the local authority would have to consult with Natural Resources Wales (NRW). LNRs should only be de-declared if absolutely necessary.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

Contributing to the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience will help to mitigate climate change and provide positive opportunities to maintain and improve mental and physical health and well-being.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

Management of the LNRs is undertaken in partnership with community groups

and Gwent Wildlife Trust.

Information about LNRs should be shared with the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board. Many of the community groups who assist in managing the nature reserves are partners of the Blaenau Gwent & Torfaen Local Nature Partnership, which will assist with a strategic approach to environmental and ecological management in both boroughs.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

Access to a healthy natural environment has many benefits to all services.

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

A brief Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 5.

Local Nature Reserve management plans and the community groups managing the sites will take into account each of the protected characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. They are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Further work is required to ensure that Local Nature Reserves are meeting Equality requirements, particularly with regards to access for disabled people.

These actions are being considered following the Welsh Audit Office assessment of the corporate plan objective 'to improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors.'

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 The status of Local Nature Reserve management will be monitored as part of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-22) monitoring through service area business plans.
- 7.2 An annual monitoring report will be submitted to the ERED Scrutiny committee in the first quarter of each financial year (2020, 2021 and 2022) summarising progress and any updates on the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan 2019-2022.
- 7.3 Further monitoring may be available from the monitoring and evaluation activity for the ENRaW funded Resilient Greater Gwent and Gwent Green Grid projects (numbers 075 and 076 respectively).

9. Background Documents /Electronic Links

- [1 https://www.gov.uk/guidance/create-and-manage-local-nature-reserves](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/create-and-manage-local-nature-reserves)
- [2 https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-01/common-land-at-trefil-order.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-01/common-land-at-trefil-order.pdf)
- <https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/150512-biodiversity-and-resilience-of-ecosystems-duty-en.pdf>
- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018->

9. **Glossary**

9.1 Biodiversity - means 'biological diversity' which refers to all the variety of life on Earth (plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms) as well as to the communities that they form and the habitats in which they live.

9.2 Ecosystem - dynamic network of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.

9.3 Ecosystem Resilience - is the ability of an ecosystem to maintain its normal patterns of nutrient cycling and biomass production after being subjected to damage caused by an ecological disturbance.

10. **Appendices**

10.1 NRW LNR Declaration Blaenau Gwent

10.2 Maps of proposed Local Nature Reserves

10.3 Letter to leaseholders

10.4 Letters of support

10.5 Equality Impact Assessment 04_11_19

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SITE NAME: **Sirhowy Hill Woodlands / Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland / Parc Bryn Bach / Garden City / Central Valley**

ATTACHMENTS: SITE MAPS

1. Background

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council had seven Local Nature Reserves designated; Cwmcelyn Pond (2013), Cwmtillery Lakes (2009), Parc Nant y Waun (2009), Roseheyworth Community Woodlands (2013), Six Bells / Parc Arrail (2013), Trevor Rowson (2013) and Silent Valley (1997).

The designation and declaration of five further Local Nature Reserves in January 2020; Sirhowy Hill Woodlands, Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland, Parc Bryn Bach, Garden City, and Central Valley brings this total to twelve.

The area designated and declared now totals 447.8 hectares.

The designations have been supported by local community groups and Gwent Wildlife Trust, please see attached letters of support. The reserves are managed for their value to local people and to enhance ecosystem resilience. The council oversees their management through ecological management plans. The council and community groups work in partnership to deliver objectives for maintaining and enhancing the nature conservation interest of the sites. Further efforts to involve more people and to promote awareness and understanding of nature recovery issues are underway through Welsh Government grant funded projects such as A Resilient Greater Gwent.

2. LNR Management Plans have been produced?

The LNR management plan (**date**) is being implemented **and/or currently being reviewed**.

3. The objectives for the proposed Local Nature Reserve as identified in the Management Plan are:

- A biologically diverse site, where existing features and informed management combine to maximise the value of the site for nature conservation;
- A site that all members of the community are able to use and enjoy;
- A site that proudly retains its sense of history, at the same time as offering new possibilities as a focus for the community in the local area;
- And, above all, a site that helps develop a sense of the reserve as a special place, of great value to the local area and the wider region.

4. Reason for Declaration:

Declaration and designation will contribute to the council's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-22) to comply with the duty placed on us by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

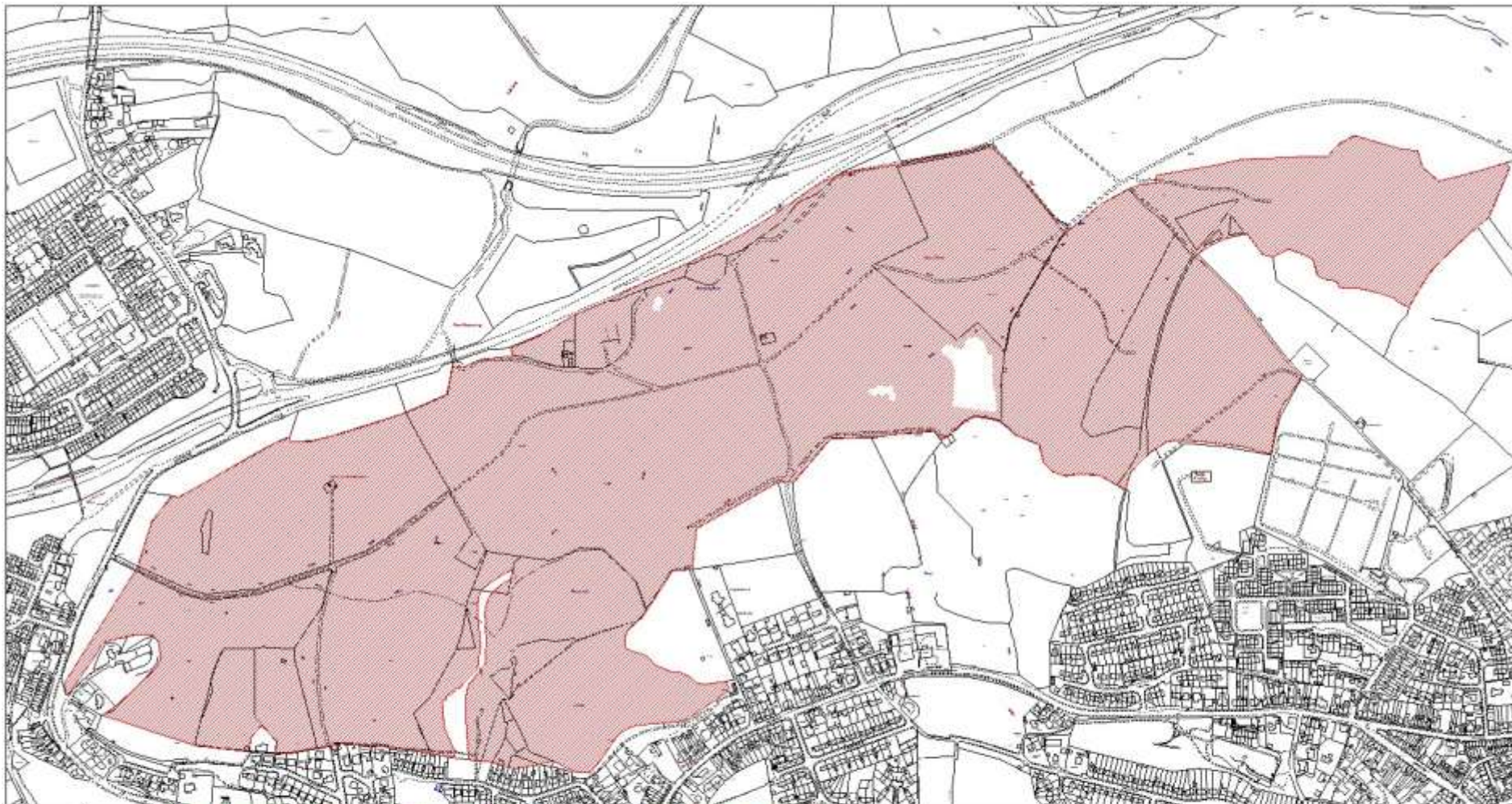
5. Resource Implications:

Designating and declaring five more Local Nature Reserves the plan will have a cost neutral impact on budgets.

The sites and managing community groups will be able to access [Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being Grant](#) and other funding streams.

6. Compliance

Under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended), Local Authorities have the power to designate Local Nature Reserves on any land in their area, provided that the power is exercised in consultation with NRW.



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Corporate Services & Strategy Directorate, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, Gwent, NP23 6XB

Tel/Ffon: (01495) 350555

Fax/Ffacs: (01495) 355291

A. M. Jones J.B. (Hon.) – Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance

Date: 05/11/2019

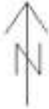
Map Reference: S01712

Scale: 1:5500

TITLE:	BEAUFORT WOODLANDS	AREA: 79.7Ha GRID REF:
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Corporate & Legal Services, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, Gwent, NP23 6XB

Tel/Ffon: (01495) 350555

Fax/Ffacs: (01495) 355291

A. M. Jones I.J.B. (Hons) – Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance

Date: 05/11/2019

Map Reference: SO1708

Scale: 1:5000



a better place to live and work

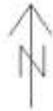
TITLE: CENTRAL VALLEY

AREA: 10.5Ha
GRID REF:

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Tel/Ffon: (01495) 350555

Fax/Ffacs: (01495) 355291

A. M. Jones I.J.B. (Hons) – Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance

Date: 05/11/2019

Map Reference: SO1607

Scale: 1:5000



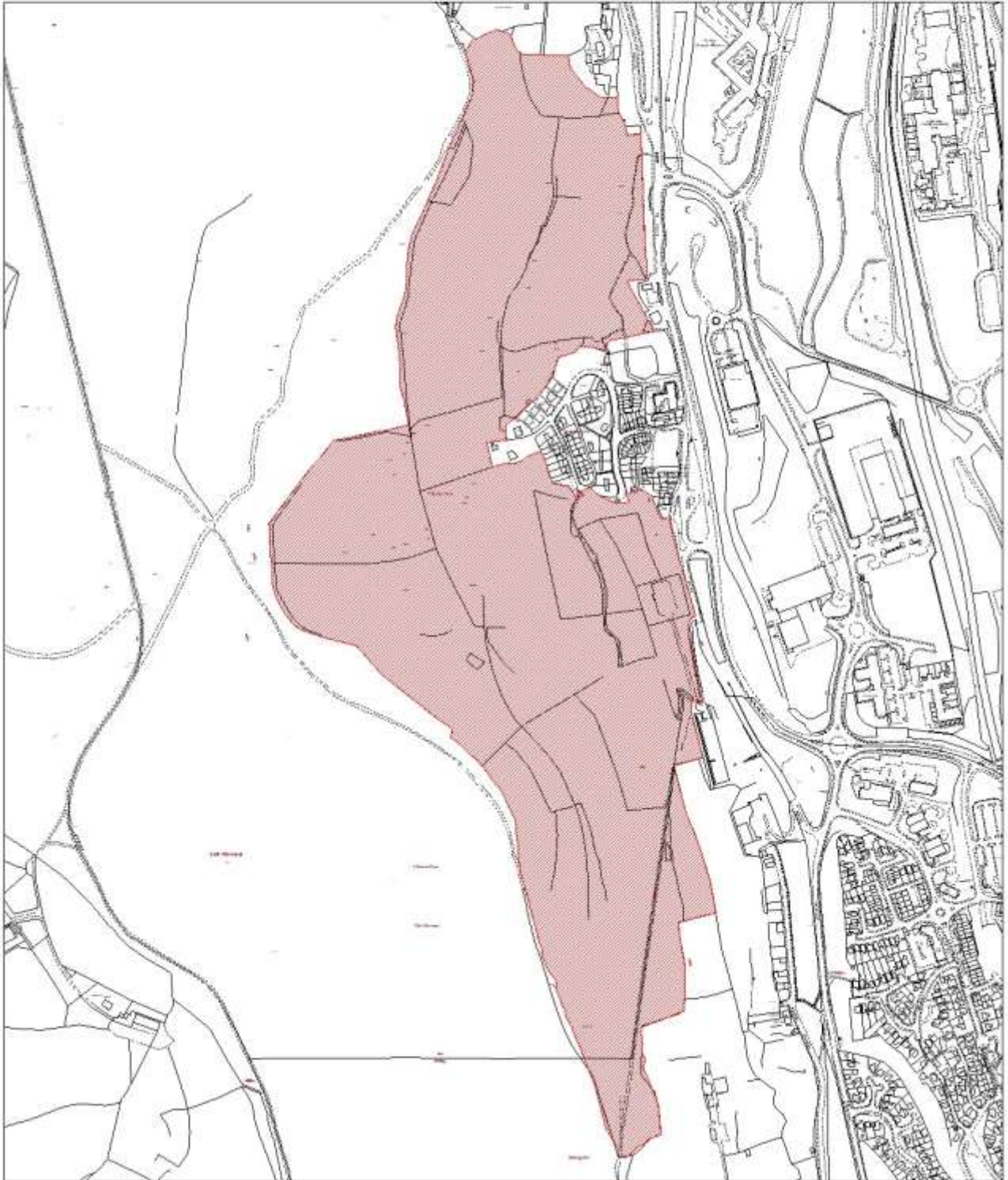
a better place to live and work

TITLE: GARDEN CITY

AREA: 45.31a
GRID REF:

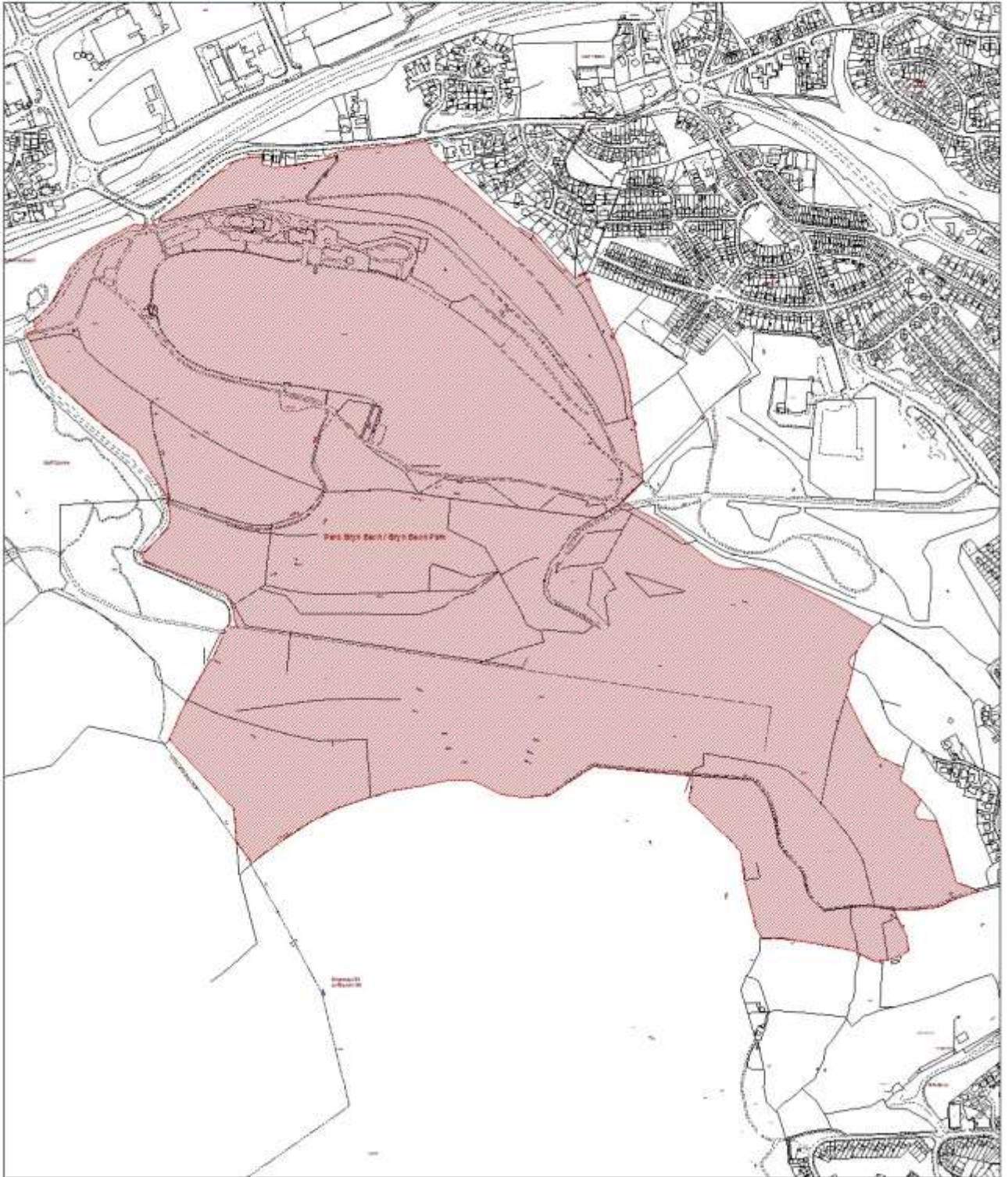
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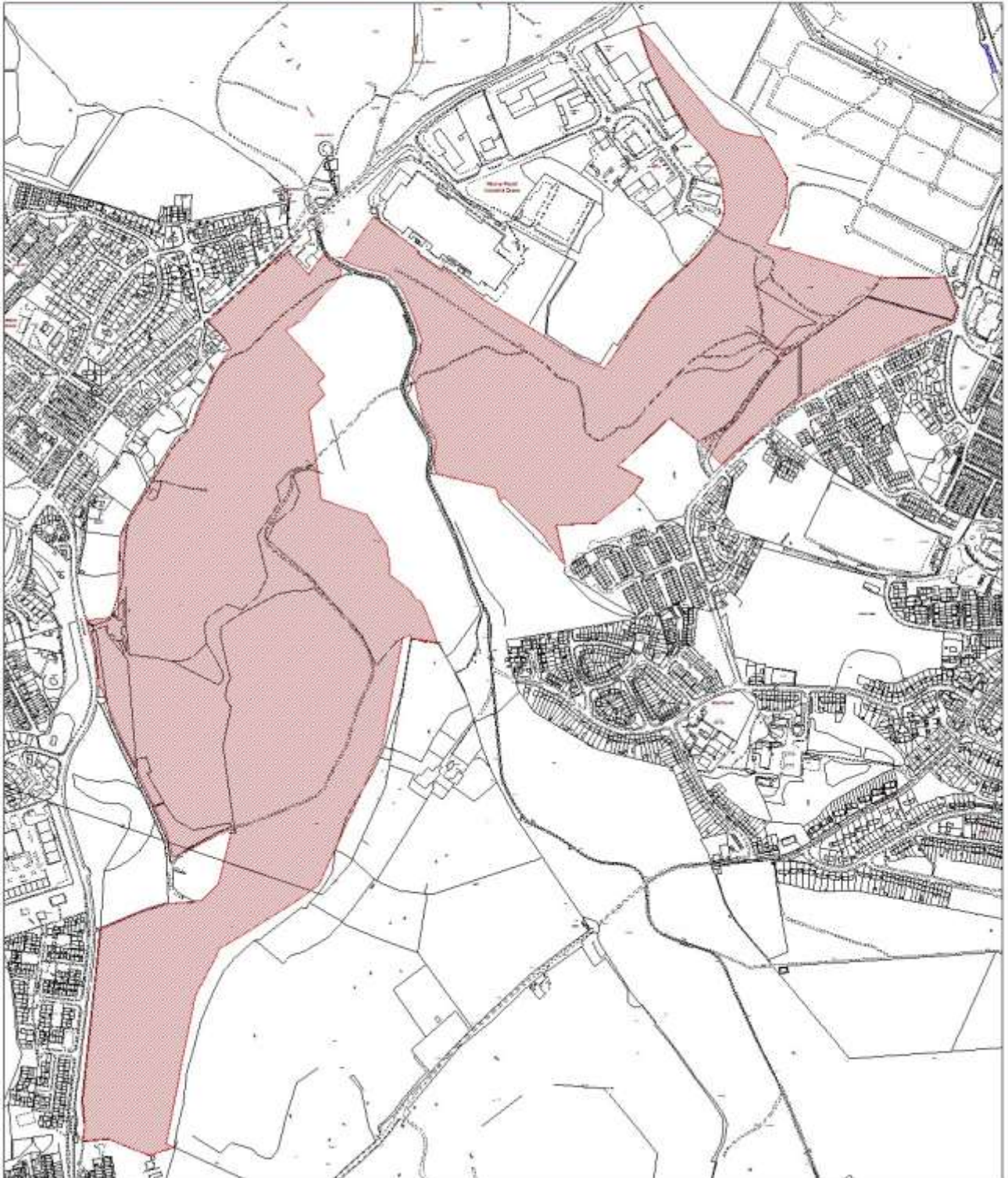


TITLE: BRYN BACH PARK	AREA: 110ha GRID REF:
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TITLE: SIRHOWY WOODLANDS	AREA: 70.1Ha GRID REF:
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T: (01495) 356089 DDI: (01495) DX: 43956 Ebbw Vale
F: (01495) E: another@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk



Our Ref./Ein Cyf.

Your Ref./Eich Cyf.

Contact:/Cysylltwch â:

January 2020

RE: Designation of Local Nature Reserve

I am writing on behalf of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to inform you that the land you lease from the council has been designated and declared as a Local Nature Reserve.

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 says that "For a site to become a Local Nature Reserve it must have natural features of special interest to the local area, and the authority must either have a legal interest in the land or have an agreement with the owner to manage the land as a reserve." Local Authorities have the power to designate Local Nature Reserves on any land in their area, provided that the power is exercised in consultation with NRW (Appendix 1 shows form to submit to NRW when council approved).

Declaration and designation contributes to the duty placed on us by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity' and 'to promote the resilience of ecosystems'.

This does not affect your current lease with us.

If you would like further information about the ecological management or public access to the Local Nature Reserve, or any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

Kind regards,

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn cyfathrebu gyda chi yn eich dewis iaith, dim ond i chi rhoi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English and we will communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

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BEAUFORT HILL PONDS & WOODLANDS PRESERVATION SOCIETY

49 Highlands Road, Beaufort, Ebbw Vale. NP23 5RG
E-mail - john.hillier@beauforthillwoodlands.org.uk
Web - www.beauforthillwoodlands.org.uk

Chairperson – David White

Liz Hancocks
Ecologist
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Ebbw Vale
NP23 6XB

Wednesday, 30 October 2019

RE: Designating Beaufort Hill Woodlands as a Local Nature Reserve

Dear Liz,

We would like to show our support regarding the proposed designation of Beaufort Hill Woodlands as a Local Nature Reserve.

The Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodlands Preservation Society was formed in March 2005 in response to the threatened loss of the Beaufort Ponds after the closure of the local steelworks. The aims of the Society were to help maintain and improve the ponds and woodlands and to preserve the environment for future generations. The site comprises of two man made ponds and several natural ‘scrapes’ with a community woodland to the west and north-west. A car parking area overlooking the ponds aims to encourage visitors from further afield and make it easier for people with disabilities to visit the woodland; the old informal pathway network has been upgraded and resurfaced linking up much of the Woodlands. A bridge with the inclusion of an “all ability” circular path was constructed around the Upper Boat Pond, giving good access not only to walkers, but also to wheelchair and pushchair users. This pathway links up with a network of other pathways throughout the Woodlands site. The main ethos of the society is to reduce feelings of social exclusion by providing opportunities for social and recreational activities and by fostering well-being and social cohesion through community events and celebrations.

The Society has developed access to the area through several access points and local children had designed the gateway artwork, and these were so successful the themes were continued throughout the site. Site interpretation concentrates on the flora, fauna and industrial heritage of the site. The society is particularly pleased with the level of community involvement and usage of the site and considers the amount of volunteer involvement as important both for the project and for the individuals involved. The involvement of local children in the design of the artwork throughout the site has encouraged them to take pride in their work and to take ‘ownership’ of the site. Their involvement in the early stages of planning and development has helped to lessen anti-social behaviour on the site and has resulted in greatly increased use of the site by families. This highlights the importance of getting children involved in projects at the early stages and encouraging them to stay involved through providing appropriate opportunities.

Designating Beaufort Hill Woodlands as a local nature reserve will ensure that the community of Beaufort Hill and the surrounding areas will be able to continue to appreciate the flora and fauna knowing that they will be protected for the future. Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodlands Preservation Society therefore supports an application for the site to be designated as a Local Nature Reserve.

Regards

John Hillier – Secretary



Liz Hancocks
Ecologist
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Ebbw Vale
NP23 6XB

Seddon House
Dingestow
Monmouth
NP25 4DY
Tel: 01600 740600

Re: Designating Central Valley as a Local Nature Reserve

Dear Liz,

Thank you for contacting Gwent Wildlife Trust regarding the proposed designation of Central Valley as a Local Nature Reserve.

Gwent Wildlife Trust has been managing Central Valley Reserve for people and wildlife, on behalf of Blaenau Gwent Council, since 2015. Although a relatively new reserve, it contains a variety of habitats including grassland, scrub, woodland, ponds and reedbeds, which all support a wide range of species. A recent bioblitz of the site recorded more than 200 different species on just one day. We know that the site is used by toads, slow worm and lizards, and barn owls and kestrels hunt over the reserve. Almost every year a new plant species is identified by our reserve officer, and during the spring and summer it is alive with bees and butterflies, supporting bilberry bumblebees as well as a shrill carder bee.

The site is an urban oasis within Ebbw Vale, enjoyed regularly by locals as a walking route between main amenities. Our Education and Reserve Officers also use the site as an educational resource, supporting school, college and adult learners' groups through the year to explore and learn more about the habitats and species on site. It is ideally situated for this, being nearly adjacent to our office and classroom – the Environmental Resource Centre, on Steelworks Road.

The Trust has been managing the site for wildlife for four years, rotationally cutting areas of grassland on an annual basis, thinning out reedbeds as required and creating feature dry stone walls. Future work we would like to do includes repairing the boundary dry stone walls and laying some of the boundary hedges. We have also been partners within the Ebbw Fawr Trail project, led by Blaenau Gwent Council, and through this we have been able to install interpretation panels and artwork on site, to make it more informative and appealing to the people who enjoy using it.

Designating Central Valley as a local nature reserve will ensure that the habitats and species here remain protected for the future, as well as recognising its value to the people of Ebbw Vale and the surrounding areas. We wholeheartedly support its declaration as an LNR.

With best wishes,



Natalie Waller, Living Landscape Manager, Eastern Valleys
nwaller@gwentwildlife.org





Welsh Newfoundland Activity Group

Liz Hancocks
Ecologist
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Ebbw Vale
NP23 6XB

Secretary:
Kay Burridge
30A Dinas Baglan Rd
Baglan
SA12 8AE

Re: Designating Parc Bryn Bach as a Local Nature Reserve

Dear Liz,

Thank you for contacting Welsh Newfoundland Activity Group regarding the proposed designation of Parc Bryn Bach as a Local Nature Reserve.

Designating Parc Bryn Bach as a local nature reserve will ensure that the habitats and species here remain protected for the future, as well as recognising its value to the people of Tredegar and the surrounding areas. We wholeheartedly support its declaration as an LNR.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kay Burridge".

Kay Burridge
Secretary Welsh Newfoundland Activity Group



Web: www.sirhowyvalleywoodlands.co.uk
E-Mail: info@sirhowyvalleywoodlands.co.uk

Sirhowy Valley Woodlands
Roseland
Dukestown Road
Tredegar
Blaenau Gwent
NP22 4RE

Liz Hancocks

Borough ecologist

BGBC

29/10/19

Hi Liz

This is to confirm our support for the designation of LNR for Sirhowy Hill Woodlands a 70 hectare site of mixed woodland, ponds and grasslands situated between Ebbw vale and Tredegar, which our organisation manages in conjunction with BGBCB.

Yours sincerely

Susy Arnold

Company Secretary and director of SIRHOWY HILL WOODLANDS CIC
(formerly known as Sirhowy valley woodlands paperwork website etc in process of name change)



Web: www.sirhowyvalleywoodlands.co.uk
E-Mail: info@sirhowyvalleywoodlands.co.uk

Sirhowy Valley Woodlands
Thomas Ellis Way
Tredegar
Blaenau Gwent
NP22 4QF

Blaenau Gwent Equality Impact Assessment 2018

Statutory duties under The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

Name of Policy:	Designation and declaration of five Local Nature Reserves; Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland, Central Valley, Garden City, Parc Bryn Bach and Sirhowy Hill Woodlands.	Person(s) completing this form:	Liz Hancocks
Department:	Regeneration & Community Services	Division:	Community Services / Technical Services / Green Infrastructure
Start Date of Assessment:	04/11/19	Tel No:	01495 355702

Q.1. Please outline the purpose of the policy or practice: (include the aims, objectives, expected outcomes and any key emerging themes from the policy; you may want to outline any key priorities / objectives outlined in the policy or practice)

Local Nature Reserves are important for people and for nature.

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 says that “For a site to become a Local Nature Reserve it must have natural features of special interest to the local area, and the authority must either have a legal interest in the land or have an agreement with the owner to manage the land as a reserve.” Local Authorities have the power to designate Local Nature Reserves on any land in their area, provided that the power is exercised in consultation with NRW.

Q.2. Is the policy or practice new, existing, or under review:

Q.2.1. Is this policy or practice subject to any of the following processes:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>A Financial Efficiency Saving</i> | 2. <i>A Policy</i> |
| 3. <i>A Report</i> | 4. <i>Decision Making Process</i> |
| 5. <i>Business or service plan</i> | |

New

1. No
3. Yes
5. No

2. No
4. Yes

Q.3. Potential Positive, Adverse or Neutral effects on Protected Characteristics:

<u>Protected Characteristic</u>	<u>Positive, Negative, Neutral</u>	<u>Relevance of the Policy or Practice</u>
Age	Neutral	Local Nature Reserves are open to all members of the public

<i>Disability</i>	Neutral	Local Nature Reserves are open to all members of the public however improvements could be made to improve access for disabled people
<i>Gender Reassignment</i>	Neutral	Local Nature Reserves are open to all members of the public
<i>Marriage & Civil Partnership</i>	Neutral	Local Nature Reserves are open to all members of the public
<i>Pregnancy & Maternity</i>	Neutral	Local Nature Reserves are open to all members of the public
<i>Race</i>	Neutral	Local Nature Reserves are open to all members of the public
<i>Religion & Belief</i>	Neutral	Local Nature Reserves are open to all members of the public
<i>Sex</i>	Neutral	Local Nature Reserves are open to all members of the public
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	Neutral	Local Nature Reserves are open to all members of the public
<i>Welsh Language</i>	Neutral	Any printed or published communications related to Local Nature Reserves will be bi-lingual and consider the heritage of the nature reserve.

Q.3.1. Overall evaluation on the potential impact on each protected characteristic:

No impact or improvements anticipated.
 Local Nature Reserve management plans and the community groups managing the sites will take into account each of the protected characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010.
 Further work is required to ensure that Local Nature Reserves are meeting Equality requirements, particularly with regards to access for disabled people.

*** Please ensure that relevant arrangements are made for the publishing of this assessment on the Equality section of the website.**

Agenda Item 13

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 26.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 25.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

Report Subject: **Street Lighting Service Review**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. G. Collier, Deputy Leader / Executive Member, Environment**

Report Submitted by: **Clive Rogers – Head of Community Services.**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
10/12/19	17/12/19	26.02.20			16/01/2020	11/03/2020		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
To provide the Members of the Executive Committee with an update on the Street Lighting review.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 Following a Member's briefing on the 19th February 2019 on Street Lighting, there was a desire by members for the service to undergo a full review.
 - 2.2 As a result, the Neighbourhood Services section set out a terms of reference (**Appendix 1**), which consisted of three overarching priorities:
 - Priority 1 - Financial Diligence
 - Priority 2 – Stock Management & Assets; and
 - Priority 3 – Legislative drivers and performance of the service.

Below outlines the outputs against the priorities to date. The outstanding elements will be reported in February 2020 upon the conclusion of the review.

- 2.3 **Outputs against Priority 1 – Financial Diligence**
 - a) **Current revenue budget including Energy costs - (Completed)**
The Street Lighting Team met with the accountants in May to identify current and future energy costs. This allowed the service to identify the revenue budget available to cover ongoing maintenance on a month by month basis.
 - b) **Capital programme – (Completed)**
As part of the review, the street lighting team identified capital investment that was required to bring industrial estates back up to an acceptable standard. As a result, all Industrial estate entrances, including Junctions and roundabouts are now lit. Furthermore, we have ensured the lighting as you enter into the Industrial units, are also lit to cover for shift workers.

c) Insurance claims – (Completed)

The Street Lighting Team has been working closely with Cardiff Council to identify the best approach for dealing with Insurance Claims. As a result, the Street Lighting team have mirrored their approach and have set up a system which is bespoke to Blaenau Gwent (**Appendix 2**). This method was tested following a recent RTA, and the Council was successful in reclaiming the monies back from the insurance company.

2.4 **Outputs against Priority 2 – Stock Management & Assets**

a) Redundant stock – (Completed)

The redundant stock within stores was also written off to reduce the ongoing deficit on the budget to the sum of £317,000. This stock is now going through a process of being auctioned off. The remaining stock will then be used as part of the ongoing maintenance budget.

b) List of assets on the various road networks – (Completed)

Held on Mayrise database [13000 street lights / 2000 signs & bollards / 36 traffic signal sites]

c) Monitoring systems – (Ongoing)

We need to reduce from three monitoring systems down to one system. Much of the day burning issues are associated with the outdated Mayflower system. The preferred monitoring system is Telensa. However, there are approximately 700 Mayflower nodes left to move onto Telensa [£45 per node = £31,500]. In 2016 there were 4,300 units, so significant strides have been made in this respect.

d) Examine new technologies – (Completed)

We are trialling Solar LED lanterns in Newtown, Ebbw Vale and some of the Industrial Estates. This is a new technology which doesn't incur any energy costs and are useful when there are expensive underground faults, which historically prevented the Council lighting certain areas. The department are also exploring digital reporting to eliminate paper output. Whilst this task is completed, it is critical for the department to ensure it looks for new technologies to ensure the service is sustainable for the future.

2.5 **Outputs against Priority 3 – Legislative drivers & Performance of the service.**

a) To understand and confirm the Council's statutory duties in relation to street lighting and highway based power supplies – (Completed).

A local authority does not have a duty to provide street lighting; however once provided, the local authority does have a duty to maintain the system in a safe condition. The standards for street lighting are laid down in British Standard: BS.5489 and European Standard BS EN 1320.

- b) To review how our duties are discharged, including how priorities are arrived at and how resources are allocated – (Completed)
 We have 3 engineers, plus 1 apprentice to carry out reactive maintenance, Electrical Testing and Structural testing. We have outsourced the 'Out Of Hour' service, which is provided by SSE. For Traffic Signals, this, along with general maintenance is carried out by Centregreat. Having this in-house and external arrangement provides resilience to the Street Lighting department.
- c) To review recent performance and the methods of performance measurement that are applied to this area; (Ongoing)
 Performance at the end of 2018/19 was greatly affected by a significant budget overspend, the service was reduced to dealing with only essential / risk to life maintenance issues, all other routine maintenance ceased with the exception of electrical Testing. Since the review, the street lighting department is now dealing with complaints in a more, timely manner. That said, the Street Lighting department will be setting out a new 'Street Lighting Policy', which will be public facing and this will set out reaction times to complaints.
- d) To review what service improvements are being implemented and what improvements could be implemented, to improve performance still further. – (Ongoing)
 As part of the department's succession planning, we introduced a new Apprenticeship in 2019, which has created further resilience within the Street Lighting section. We are also upgrading some of the LED lanterns through the Refit programme, which will reduce future maintenance levels.
- e) To review whether the Council's own processes and response rate in dealing with street lighting is timely, effective and cost-efficient, and what effect the responsiveness of the utility companies can have on the service; (Ongoing)

The Street Lighting section will be setting out a new Policy as outlined above, which will be public facing through the Council's internet. Our aspirations within the policy will be as follows:

- 1) Lamps will be checked if a fault is found on the monitoring systems
- 2) Routine repairs will be carried within 5 working days of the fault being reported.
- 3) Communication (Monitoring) and underground cable faults will be dealt with in a timely manner.
- 4) Western Power Distribution will repair any faults they are responsible for within 20 working days.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 **Option 1** to accept the information in the report.

- 3.2 **Option 2** to consider the information contained within the report and provide challenge and/or further action for consideration to make improvements.
- 3.3 On the 16th January 2020, the Community Services Scrutiny Committee commended the report and the improvements that have been made to the Street Lighting Service, and recommended option 1 for approval.

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

Council Priorities

The improvement of the Street Lighting departments performance supports the Council Priority '*Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities*' in particular 'To re-invest in highways maintenance particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements'

Statutory Responsibilities

A local authority does not have a duty to provide street lighting; however once provided, the local authority does have a duty to maintain the system in a safe condition. The standards for street lighting are laid down in British Standard: BS.5489 and European Standard BS EN 1320.

Well-being Plan

Street Lighting supports the Well-being objective '*Blaenau Gwent wants to look after and protect the environment*' by using our resources in a fair and sustainable way.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

As part of the service review we identified where the cost pressures were within the service area, whereby a budget growth item of £284,000 was agreed by Council to cover current and future energy increases, whilst at the same time providing a revenue budget that will allow the service to react to complaints within five working days. Furthermore, the write off of obsolete stock to the sum of £317,000 has also put the service in a good position, making it more sustainable for the future.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

Failure to ensure that there is robust monitoring of the Street Lighting Service, including services provided by Contractors, carries with it a number of significant risks:

- Undetected and unaddressed decline in service performance and the quality of provision; and
- Negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

Regular monitoring of the Street Lighting performance is a key element in ensuring that the Council knows its services well and is able to support and intervene appropriately.

5.3 **Legal**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no direct human resource implications for the local authority in relation to this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

N/A

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

A more sustainable and reliable street lighting service which meets customer demands.

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

We have engaged with other local authorities to enable us to proceed with future insurance claims, where street lighting columns have been damaged through road traffic accidents.

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

Having a more sustainable street lighting service will ensure the service is resilient and meets the needs of residents living in Blaenau Gwent.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

Investment into the Street Lighting service through one monitoring system will ensure the service is fit for purpose and creates more control over the lighting network throughout Blaenau Gwent.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The Street Lighting section will continue to work in collaboration with other authorities in Wales to seek best practice. It will also continue to work with the private sector through SSE, Western Power Distribution and Roman Builders. Having this diverse set of skills will ensure the service is resilient and meets the demands of the customer.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

The Street Lighting Service works closely with its counterparts in Highways and this joined up integration allows the service to be more responsive to the demands on the service.

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

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 The performance of the Street lighting department will be measured through:
- Reaction times to complaints / service requests and outages

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference
- Appendix 2 – Insurance Claims procedure.

Street Lighting – Service review

Terms of reference

Priority 3

Legislative drivers and performance of the service

- To understand and confirm the Council's statutory duties in relation to street lighting and highway based power supplies;
- To review how our duties are discharged, including how priorities are arrived at and how resources are allocated;
- To review recent performance and the methods of performance measurement that are applied to this area;
- To review what service improvements are being implemented and what improvements could be implemented, to improve performance still further.
- To review whether the Council's own processes and response rate in dealing with street lighting is timely, effective and cost-efficient, and what effect the responsiveness of the utility companies can have on the service;

Priority 2

Stock Management & Assets

- Redundant stock
- List of assets on the various road networks.
- Monitoring systems
- Examine new technologies

Priority 1

Financial diligence

- Current revenue budget incl Energy costs
- Capital programme
- Insurance claims

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RECOVERABLE REPORT

Our Ref / Recoverable Code:

Site / Location:

Date of Incident:

Vehicle registration:



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Community Services

Central Depot, Barleyfield Ind Est, Brynmawr, NP23 4YF

Tel: 01495 311556

Email: matthew.stent@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

RECOVERABLE REPORT – CONTENTS

Our ref / recoverable Code:

Site / Location:

Date of incident:

Vehicle Registration:

CONTENT DESCRIPTION

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

Community Services

Central Depot, Barleyfield Ind Est, Brynmawr, NP23 4YF

Tel: 01495 311556

Email: matthew.stent@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

RECOVERABLE COSTS - BREAKDOWN

Our ref / recoverable Code:

Site / Location:

Date of incident:

Vehicle Registration:

**For the repair / replacement of Blaenau Gwent CBC [traffic signals/
Street Lighting and / or Highways infrastructure] assets only:**

A – Direct Costs

B – Other Costs e.g. Third party call outs

Sub Total	
Uplift 16.43% as per BT v Geraghty & Miller International	
Total	

Matthew Stent
Team Manager – Waste & Fleet Management
Community Services

Community Services
Central Depot, Barleyfield Ind Est, Brynmawr, NP23 4YF
Tel: 01495 311556
Email: matthew.stent@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

RECOVERABLE REPORT - IMAGES

Our ref / recoverable Code:

Site / Location:

Date of incident:

Vehicle Registration:

BEFORE INCIDENT

AFTER INCIDENT

Community Services

Central Depot, Barleyfield Ind Est, Brynmawr, NP23 4YF

Tel: 01495 311556

Email: matthew.stent@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

RECOVERABLE REPORT

Our ref / recoverable Code:

Site / Location:

Date of incident:

Vehicle Registration:

Authorisation to proceed with recovery

Reporting Officer:

Signature:

Authorised by:

**Matthew Stent
[Team Manager]**

Signature:



Community Services

Central Depot, Barleyfield Ind Est, Brynmawr, NP23 4YF

Tel: 01495 311556

Email: matthew.stent@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

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Agenda Item 14

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**
Report Subject: **Revenue Budget Monitoring - 2019/2020, Forecast
Outturn To 31 March 2020 (As at 31st December
2019)**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate
Services**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	18/02/2020	26.02.20			09/03/2020	11/03/2020		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2019/2020 (as forecast at 31st December 2020) and to review the actions taken forward to move towards a balanced out turn position.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 This report provides details on the following:

- Forecast financial position to the end of March 2020 across all portfolios
- Details of significant adverse variances
- Forecast outturn for Fees & Charges
- Progress on the achievement of the Financial Efficiency Projects for 2019/2020
- Action Plans developed to address significant adverse variances

- 2.12 This report forms part of the quarterly financial reporting framework to Members.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 (Recommended Option)

Members of the Executive Committee consider and approve the report and

- Provide appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report
- Consider the action plans attached at Appendix 4 developed to address the forecast adverse variances at the end of December 2019.

3.2 Option 2

Members of the Executive do not accept the report.

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

4.1 This report supports the Council Priority, “Efficient Council”, as it is part of the financial planning and reporting arrangements which support the Councils’ financial resilience.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

5.1.1 The overall forecast outturn as at September 2019, was a small adverse variance of £7,200. Two portfolios were reporting significant adverse variances (Education - £64,000 and Environment - £259,000), however, these were offset by the forecast underspends, Social Services being the most significant at £180,000.

5.1.2 The forecast overall financial position across all portfolios at 31 December 2019 is shown in the table below:

Portfolio/ Committee	2019/2020 Revised Revenue Budget	2019/2020 Forecast Outturn @ 31 December 2019	Favourable/ (Adverse) To 31 March 2020	Append ref:
	£m	£m	£m	
Underspending Portfolios				
Corporate Services & Financial Management & Strategy	14.718	14.711	0.007	2a
Social Services	44.915	44.841	0.074	2b
Education	55.477	55.455	0.022	2c
Economy	1.516	1.467	0.049	2d
Sub Total (1)	116.626	116.474	0.152	

Overspending Portfolios				
Environment	29.53	29.73	(0.20)	2e
Planning	1.056	1.061	(0.005)	2f
Licensing	0.065	0.076	(0.011)	2f
Sub Total (2)	30.651	30.867	(0.216)	
Total	<u>147.277</u>	<u>147.341</u>	<u>(0.064)</u>	

5.1.3 The table indicates that the provisional outturn is higher than the budget by £64,000 (across all services). This is after the application of £0.6m from specific reserves to address “one-off” in year planned expenditure.

5.1.4 **PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS**

5.1.5 Overall, the forecast end of year adverse variance has increased by £57,000 since the quarter 2 forecast position.

There are four portfolios forecasting adverse variances totalling £0.216m, however there are a number of cost pressures identified across all portfolios. Appendix 1 identifies those services where the adverse variance exceeds £15,000, and Action Plans to address these cost pressures are attached at Appendix 4.

5.1.6 **Corporate Services – Movement in variance from £75,000 favourable to £6,000 favourable**

5.1.7 The main reason for the reduction in the adverse variance is due to an increase in forecast expenditure for Council Tax Reduction Scheme and an increase in Resources Departmental expenditure due to early termination costs. Further detail is included within the Action Plan attached at Appendix 4.

5.1.8 **Social Services – Movement in variance from £175,000 favourable to £74,000 favourable**

5.1.9 The forecast favourable variance at September 2019 has reduced by £109,000 for Children’s Services and this is mainly due to an increase in the number placements with Independent Fostering Agencies.

5.1.10 Despite this fact, there are no significant adverse variances greater than £15,000, and therefore no action plan has been developed. However, expenditure and budgets will continue to be monitored closely.

- 5.1.11 **Education – Movement in variance from £64,000 adverse to £22,000 favourable**
- 5.1.12 The Welsh Government Education Maintenance Grant recently awarded has enabled £100,000 of revenue spend on maintenance to be funded from this grant which has contributed to reducing the forecast adverse variance. Reasons for the movement in the significant adverse variances and actions taken can be seen in the Action Plan attached at Appendix 4.
- 5.1.13 **Economy – Movement in variance from £78,000 favourable to £48,000 favourable**
- 5.1.14 There are no significant adverse variances within the portfolio, however the Estates Management departmental Budget has moved from a £15,000 favourable variance to a £12,000 adverse variance position. The increased cost is due to the temporary solicitor post being extended from September to March 2020.
- 5.1.15 **Environment – Movement in variance from £259,000 adverse to £200,000 adverse**
- 5.1.16 The forecast adverse variance has decreased due to additional fees & charges and the reallocation of costs for asbestos works at Pond Road to capital expenditure. Reasons for the movement in the significant adverse variances and actions taken can be seen in the Action Plan attached at Appendix 4.
- 5.1.17 **Fees & Charges**
- 5.1.18 The 2019/2020 portfolio estimates include income budgets in relation to fees & charges (excluding Council Tax) of £14.8m across all portfolios. Attached at Appendix 3 is an analysis of income received against budget for the financial year for individual portfolios, and current forecast indicates an improved adverse variance against this target of £0.3m (£0.57m as at September 2019), primarily relating to charges within Social Services.
- 5.1.19 Whilst this analysis is useful, it should not be considered in isolation, as elements of any shortfall within Portfolios can be inextricably linked to underspends in expenditure within the same budget heading. Where this is the case, budget holders should action budget virements to ensure that the income targets reflect more accurately expected income. Likewise, any over achievement in income which offset overspends in expenditure within the same budget, should be treated in the same way.
- 5.1.20 **Financial Efficiency Projects (FEP)**
- 5.1.21 In setting the 2019/2020 budget, Financial Efficiency Projects (FEPs) were approved to deliver savings of £3.34m. Of this target £3.33m (99.4%) is forecast to be achieved, with a shortfall of £20,000, and this is due to 2 projects:

- Full cost recovery of premises related costs for Community & Town Councils (£10,625) – This is included within the Action Plans attached at Appendix 4.
- Management Review (£12,590) – This is due to a delay in the implementation of the Senior Management review. The savings is fully achieved for 2020/2021.

5.1.22 This shortfall forms part of the overall portfolio out turn position and a summary of progress against the FEPs is attached at Appendix 5.

5.1.23 The Council continues to be successful in delivering the planned level of savings, and the achievement of 99% demonstrates the Council's ability to implement and deliver the approved savings as part of the budget setting process.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

5.2.1 (1) Grants form a significant element of the Council's income and support the delivery of priority services to the people of Blaenau Gwent. There is a risk that a reduction or cessation of grant funding will result in service levels reducing or services no longer being delivered.

A grants register have been developed and is being maintained and will be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

(2) Action Plans do not address the cost pressures identified.

5.2.2 The Action Plans will be monitored as part of the Budget Monitoring and Reporting Framework and the impact reported to the Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee, Executive Committee and the Cost Pressure Sub Group.

(3) There is a risk of increase costs for food, fuel and other essential goods and services following the ongoing situation regarding Brexit.

5.2.3 Brexit has been added as an organisational risk to the corporate risk register, whilst a separate, more detailed Brexit high level action plan has been developed and is being monitored by the Brexit Core planning Group.

5.3 Legal
N/A

5.4 Human Resources
N/A

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 A summary page for each portfolio is contained in Appendices 2a to 2g.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The report details the financial implications for the Council in providing services to the communities of Blaenau Gwent.

6.2.2 If overspends continue into the medium term, resources will be diminished and this may impact on the Council's ability to provide services to the public.

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

6.3.1 CLT have considered the forecast financial position for 2019/2020 (as 31st December 2019).

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

6.4.1 For new and emerging cost pressures identified during the financial year, budget holders will be required to produce Action Plans which should address the cost pressure during the year. These Action Plans will form part of the quarterly budget reports and will be submitted to the Cost Pressure Sub Group for scrutiny, challenge and monitoring.

6.4.2 Cost Pressures are also considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

6.5.1 Budget holders have developed Action Plans which should mitigate the forecast adverse variance during the financial year. Whilst Action Plans have had some impact on the overall cost pressures, it will be necessary to implement further actions including maintaining vacant posts and limiting non-essential spend during the final quarter of the financial year, where it is possible to do so, to prevent any unplanned draw from reserves at the year end.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

6.6.1 Accountancy works closely with budget holders during the financial year in producing the financial forecast, identifying cost pressures and in developing Action Plans.

6.7 *Integration(across service areas)*
N/A

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

6.9 All Financial Efficiency Projects that were approved as part of the budget setting process had gone through the EqlA process.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements

- 7.1 Financial reporting to Joint Scrutiny and the Executive is carried out on a quarterly basis. Where services are reporting significant cost pressures, there will be a requirement for Budget Holders to develop and implement Action Plans these will be reported to the Cost Pressure Sub Group, on a quarterly basis.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Summary of Main Variances

Appendix 2 – Portfolios

Appendix 3 – Fees and Charges

Appendix 4 – Action Plans

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SUMMARY OF MAIN FORECAST ADVERSE VARIANCES 2019/2020

		<u>Adverse Variance 2018/2019 out turn</u> £	<u>Forecast Adverse Variance at December 2019 Forecast</u> £	<u>Action Plan Ref:</u>
	<u>Adverse variances in Excess of £15,000</u>			
1.	<u>Corporate Services</u>			
	Housing Benefits	(137,283)	(108,529)	4a
	Resources Departmental Budget	27,553	(134,231)	4a
	Council Tax Reduction Scheme	77,975	(27,555)	4a
	Democratic Representation & Management	517	(26,057)	4a
3.	<u>Education</u>			
	AWPU Clawback	(81,136)	(64,000)	4b
	SEN Recoupment	(76,220)	(35,000)	4b
	Education Departmental Budget	5,941	(34,488)	4b
4.	<u>Environment</u>			
	Waste Services	(142,167)	(94,770)	4c
	Meals on Wheels	(53,685)	(23,469)	4c
	Cwmcrachen Caravan Site	(20,578)	(64,915)	4c
	Littering and dog control orders	(19,492)	(33,500)	4c
	Coroner's Court	(13,725)	(25,516)	4c

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CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2020	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) 30 Sept 2019
	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL AND OTHER RECHARGEABLE SERVICES</u>				
Corporate Services Department	(77,630)	(294,806)	217,176	214,078
Resources Department	47,180	181,411	(134,231)	(13,219)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(30,450)</u>	<u>(113,395)</u>	<u>82,945</u>	<u>200,858</u>
<u>COMMERCIAL SERVICES</u>				
Archives	148,670	142,789	5,881	5,881
Festival Park	91,000	87,617	3,383	3,383
Housing Benefit	(224,130)	(115,601)	(108,529)	(107,333)
ICT Service	300,310	300,310	0	(100,000)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>315,850</u>	<u>415,115</u>	<u>(99,265)</u>	<u>(198,070)</u>
<u>LEGAL & CORPORATE COMPLIANCE SERVICES</u>				
Registration of Electors	16,340	16,312	28	(28)
Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths	48,550	53,895	(5,345)	(2,328)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>64,890</u>	<u>70,207</u>	<u>(5,317)</u>	<u>(2,357)</u>
<u>GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP SERVICES</u>				
Corporate Management	107,370	109,830	(2,460)	(9,938)
Democratic Representation and Management	1,210,600	1,236,657	(26,057)	(12,602)
CCTV Cameras	84,000	80,340	3,660	27,479
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>1,401,970</u>	<u>1,426,827</u>	<u>(24,857)</u>	<u>4,939</u>
<u>RESOURCES SERVICES</u>				
Corporate Management	348,810	316,888	31,922	22,811
Non Distributed Costs	746,240	746,156	84	84
Apprenticeship Levy	320,000	312,691	7,309	7,665
Council Tax Collection	(1,557,770)	(1,608,125)	50,355	19,536
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	8,895,900	8,923,455	(27,555)	27,341
N.N.D.R. Collection	(107,040)	(110,385)	3,345	4,445
Grants and Subscriptions	57,270	57,270	0	0
Voluntary Sector Schemes	0	0	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>8,703,410</u>	<u>8,637,951</u>	<u>65,459</u>	<u>81,881</u>
<u>CORPORATE CHARGES</u>				
Corporate Recharges	4,274,560	4,274,556	4	4
Senior Management Restructure	(12,590)	0	(12,590)	(12,590)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>4,261,970</u>	<u>4,274,556</u>	<u>(12,586)</u>	<u>(12,586)</u>
CORPORATE SERVICES TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>14,717,640</u>	<u>14,711,261</u>	<u>6,379</u>	<u>74,666</u>

SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2020	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) 30 Sept 2019
	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY				
<u>SOCIAL SERVICES</u>				
Children's Services - Commissioning and Social Work	3,188,670	3,188,665	5	27,808
Looked After Children	7,192,630	7,202,929	(10,299)	324
Family Support Services	191,240	190,059	1,181	4,638
Youth Justice	237,820	228,118	9,702	9,702
Other Children's and Family Services	2,160,000	2,175,121	(15,121)	52,342
Older People Aged 65 or Over	5,627,200	5,620,163	7,037	63,917
Adults Aged Under 65 with a Physical Disability or Sensory Impairment	41,800	42,784	(984)	150
Adults Aged Under 65 with Learning Disabilities	3,531,545	3,506,630	24,915	49,037
Adults Aged Under 65 with Mental Health Needs	606,295	633,024	(26,729)	(15,511)
Other Adult Services	357,430	360,350	(2,920)	(3,166)
Community Care	15,862,160	15,775,675	86,485	(14,944)
Support Service and Management Costs	899,990	899,802	188	642
Corporate Recharges	5,018,490	5,018,487	3	3
Total Expenditure	44,915,270	44,841,808	73,462	174,942

EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2020	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) 30 Sept 2019
	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY				
SCHOOLS BUDGET				
Individual Schools Budget	42,833,880	42,833,880	0	0
Education Improvement Grant	257,800	278,479	(20,679)	(1,631)
Other Costs	662,320	563,546	98,774	(2,226)
Supporting Special Education Needs	1,779,810	1,884,328	(104,518)	(82,267)
<i>Schools Budget Total Expenditure</i>	<u>45,533,810</u>	<u>45,560,233</u>	<u>(26,423)</u>	<u>(86,124)</u>
LEA BUDGET				
Strategic Management	2,217,480	2,221,632	(4,152)	(4,152)
Assuring Access to Schools	2,086,540	2,086,914	(374)	(36,181)
Facilitating School Improvement	419,760	421,866	(2,106)	(4,017)
Supporting Special Education Needs	328,130	263,132	64,998	68,511
<i>LEA Budget Total Expenditure</i>	<u>5,051,910</u>	<u>4,993,543</u>	<u>58,367</u>	<u>24,161</u>
OTHER EDUCATION SERVICES				
Further Education and Training	133,290	132,710	580	580
Youth Service	365,130	341,546	23,584	11,164
Other Expenditure	141,040	140,417	623	(4,217)
Education Departmental Budget	22,000	56,488	(34,488)	(9,969)
<i>Other Education Services Total Expenditure</i>	<u>661,460</u>	<u>671,162</u>	<u>(9,702)</u>	<u>(2,442)</u>
CORPORATE CHARGES				
Corporate Support Recharges	4,230,270	4,230,270	0	0
<i>Corporate Charges Total Expenditure</i>	<u>4,230,270</u>	<u>4,230,270</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>55,477,450</u>	<u>55,455,208</u>	<u>22,242</u>	<u>(64,405)</u>

ECONOMY PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2020	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) 30 Sept 2019
	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY				
DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES				
Economic Strategy and Development - Departmental Budget	(106,013)	(132,853)	26,840	31,324
Estates Management - Rechargeable	106,013	117,640	(11,627)	14,902
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>0</u>	<u>(15,213)</u>	<u>15,213</u>	<u>46,226</u>
ECONOMY SERVICES				
Affordable Housing	0	0	0	0
Aspire	0	0	0	0
Community Benefits Investment	0	0	0	0
CSCS	0	(1,410)	1,410	621
Destination Management	16,150	15,726	424	500
DRivE	0	0	0	0
Financial Support to Business	6,790	2,925	3,865	3,865
General Offices	(59,630)	(70,349)	10,719	16,444
Industrial Land	7,000	6,199	801	801
Inspire	0	0	0	0
Nursery Units/Misc. Industrial Premises	(680,650)	(692,785)	12,135	5,088
Pentagon	0	0	0	0
Regeneration Projects	4,900	6,075	(1,175)	(1,175)
Resilient Project	0	0	0	0
Estates Management Non Rechargeable	(70,490)	(75,229)	4,739	5,761
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(775,930)</u>	<u>(808,848)</u>	<u>32,918</u>	<u>31,905</u>
Corporate Recharges	2,291,480	2,291,470	10	10
Total Expenditure	<u>1,515,550</u>	<u>1,467,409</u>	<u>48,141</u>	<u>78,141</u>

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2020	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) 30 Sep 2019
#VALUE!	£	£	£	£
SUMMARY				
<u>COMMUNITY SERVICES</u>				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Environment Department - Corporate Division	(31,020)	(31,020)	0	10,816
Environmental Services Division	(8,537)	(35,221)	26,684	(2,514)
Technical Services - Engineering & Property Management	(18,980)	(29,980)	11,000	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(58,537)</u>	<u>(96,221)</u>	<u>37,684</u>	<u>8,302</u>
<u>WASTE SERVICES</u>				
Waste Services Team	102,676	102,676	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>102,676</u>	<u>102,676</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>WASTE COLLECTION</u>				
Household and Trade Waste Collection	510,900	507,472	3,428	(4,417)
Recycling Collection	2,060,070	2,069,699	(9,629)	(34,403)
Bulky Waste Collection	15	7,646	(7,631)	(3,435)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>2,570,985</u>	<u>2,584,817</u>	<u>(13,832)</u>	<u>(42,255)</u>
<u>WASTE TRANSFER</u>				
Civic Amenity Sites	303,920	310,852	(6,932)	(4,064)
Transfer Station	675,140	747,199	(72,059)	(64,635)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>979,060</u>	<u>1,058,051</u>	<u>(78,991)</u>	<u>(68,699)</u>
<u>WASTE DISPOSAL</u>				
Disposal Of Waste	1,108,870	1,105,462	3,408	6,425
Recycling Disposal	229,895	235,250	(5,355)	1,034
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>1,338,765</u>	<u>1,340,712</u>	<u>(1,947)</u>	<u>7,459</u>
<u>PUBLIC SERVICES</u>				
County Borough Cleansing	1,200,951	1,202,054	(1,103)	703
Cemeteries / Crematorium	(287,860)	(278,431)	(9,429)	(8,168)
Meals On Wheels	(1,200)	22,269	(23,469)	(22,588)
Grounds Maintenance	918,220	927,908	(9,688)	(10,153)
Countryside Recreation Sites	34,690	32,597	2,093	2,093
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>1,864,801</u>	<u>1,906,397</u>	<u>(41,596)</u>	<u>(38,113)</u>
<u>FACILITIES MANAGEMENT</u>				
Corporate Landlord	1,452,680	1,452,680	0	(63,449)
Corporate Property	6,360	6,360	0	0
Building Cleaning	67,880	79,953	(12,073)	(5,956)
Catering Account	120,850	120,850	0	(14,055)
Appetite For Life	42,010	39,803	2,207	1,886
School Breakfast Club	373,950	382,226	(8,276)	(14,550)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>2,063,730</u>	<u>2,081,872</u>	<u>(18,142)</u>	<u>(96,124)</u>

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2020	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) 30 Sep 2019
	£	£	£	£
<u>HIGHWAYS & ROADS SERVICES</u>				
Highways - Street Care Team	0	985	(985)	(1,248)
Non Operational Land	1,460	1,460	0	0
Licensing (Highway Permits)	(40,690)	(40,690)	0	0
Shopping Arcade, Abertillery	2,780	6,577	(3,797)	0
Road and Street Works Acts	(51,300)	(51,300)	0	838
Multi-Storey Car Parks	272,740	272,740	0	1,660
On Street Parking	1,100	1,052	48	88
Surface Car Parks	31,790	30,257	1,533	1,533
Public Transport Co-Ordination	920	2,245	(1,325)	(1,325)
Bridges	7,590	7,590	0	0
Structural Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads)	166,870	166,870	0	2,013
Environmental Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads)	19,440	19,440	0	0
Safety Maintenance (Principal and Other Roads)	65,790	65,790	0	0
Routine Repairs (Principal and Other Roads)	636,430	636,430	0	0
Street Lighting	1,111,620	1,111,620	0	0
Winter Maintenance	387,360	387,360	0	0
Sub Total	2,613,900	2,618,426	(4,526)	3,559
<u>TRANSPORT SERVICES</u>				
Traffic Orders	(14,330)	(13,097)	(1,233)	317
Highways Adoptions	(9,070)	(9,070)	0	0
Traffic / Accident Research	15,690	15,690	0	0
Traffic Management	6,760	7,187	(427)	54
Parking Enforcement	0	(2,002)	2,002	0
Road Safety Education	17,250	14,008	3,242	3,061
Crossing Patrols	145,160	141,175	3,985	0
Concessionary fares and Support to Operators	281,050	281,050	0	0
Local Transport Plans	2,620	23	2,597	2,597
Home to School Transport	0	0	0	0
Transport and Heavy Plant	29,440	29,440	0	(5)
Sub Total	474,570	464,404	10,166	6,024
<u>CULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
General Administration and Markets	(24,170)	(21,115)	(3,055)	(4,848)
Countryside Programme and Management	1,990	1,990	0	0
Landscaping and Afforestation	20,660	20,660	0	0
Reservoirs, Tips, Quarries and Mines	10,130	5,192	4,938	4,938
Flood Defence And Land Drainage	55,380	55,380	0	0
City Deal	45,900	50,330	(4,430)	0
Sub Total	109,890	112,437	(2,547)	90
COMMUNITY SERVICES TOTAL EXPENDITURE	12,059,840	12,173,571	(113,731)	(219,757)

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2020	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) 30 Sep 2019
	£	£	£	£
<u>PUBLIC PROTECTION</u>				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Environmental Health	20,735	26,567	(5,832)	(1,165)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>20,735</u>	<u>26,567</u>	<u>(5,832)</u>	<u>(1,165)</u>
<u>CARAVAN SITES</u>				
Cwmcrachen Caravan Site	(56,170)	8,745	(64,915)	(53,713)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(56,170)</u>	<u>8,745</u>	<u>(64,915)</u>	<u>(53,713)</u>
<u>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</u>				
Food Safety	6,390	7,481	(1,091)	(2,970)
Control of Pollution	10,040	9,227	813	1,280
Dog Wardens	10,500	1,393	9,107	9,107
Animal Health and Welfare	23,360	20,000	3,360	3,360
Pest Control	60,180	70,083	(9,903)	(9,820)
Littering and Dog Control Orders	0	33,500	(33,500)	(14,729)
Health and Safety at Work (Commercial Prem.)	1,510	1,463	47	(2,153)
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>111,980</u>	<u>143,147</u>	<u>(31,167)</u>	<u>(15,925)</u>
<u>HOUSING SERVICES</u>				
Homelessness	234,200	217,598	16,602	19,262
20 Church Street	19,240	22,051	(2,811)	(5,396)
General Properties	(7,590)	(7,416)	(174)	(174)
Housing Access	60,420	40,579	19,841	12,719
Works in Default	275	277	(2)	(5)
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,040	132	908	938
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>307,585</u>	<u>273,221</u>	<u>34,364</u>	<u>27,344</u>
<u>TRADING STANDARDS</u>				
Trading Standards	(28,320)	(31,434)	3,114	3,359
Inspection and Enforcement	7,910	6,938	972	968
<i>Sub Total</i>	<u>(20,410)</u>	<u>(24,496)</u>	<u>4,086</u>	<u>4,327</u>
PUBLIC PROTECTION TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>363,720</u>	<u>427,184</u>	<u>(63,464)</u>	<u>(39,132)</u>

ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

Item	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2020	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) 30 Sep 2019
	£	£	£	£
<u>CORPORATE CHARGES</u>				
Fire Service	3,398,900	3,398,900	0	0
Coroner's Court	89,460	114,976	(25,516)	(1,038)
Corporate Recharges	9,194,740	9,194,740	0	0
Procurement Saving	0	0	0	0
Prudential Borrowing	0	0	0	0
Income Generation	0	0	0	0
CORPORATE CHARGES TOTAL EXPENDITURE	12,683,100	12,708,616	(25,516)	(1,038)
<u>ANEURIN LEISURE TRUST</u>				
<u>ANEURIN LEISURE TRUST</u>				
Aneurin Leisure Trust	3,178,800	3,178,800	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>3,178,800</i>	<i>3,178,800</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<u>RETAINED SERVICES</u>				
General Entertainment	2,580	3,792	(1,212)	0
Corporate Recharges	1,242,610	1,238,021	4,589	616
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>1,245,190</i>	<i>1,241,813</i>	<i>3,377</i>	<i>616</i>
ANEURIN LEISURE TRUST TOTAL EXPENDITURE	4,423,990	4,420,613	3,377	616
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	29,530,650	29,729,984	(199,334)	(259,311)

PLANNING COMMITTEE AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Item	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Total Forecast Expenditure to March 2020	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) 30 Sept 2019
	£	£	£	£
PLANNING COMMITTEE SUMMARY				
<u>BUILDING CONTROL</u>				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Building Control	0	0	0	0
<u>BUILDING CONTROL SERVICES</u>				
Building Regulations	(6,580)	(6,580)	0	0
Dangerous Structures	22,200	20,743	1,457	1,101
<i>Building Control Total Expenditure</i>	<u>15,620</u>	<u>14,163</u>	<u>1,457</u>	<u>1,101</u>
<u>DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT</u>				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Development Management	8,076	13,997	(5,921)	(2,144)
<u>DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICES</u>				
Dealing with Applications	(202,740)	(202,740)	0	0
Planning Appeals	3,190	3,190	0	0
Enforcement	(30)	884	(914)	(54)
<i>Development Management Total Expenditure</i>	<u>(191,504)</u>	<u>(184,669)</u>	<u>(6,835)</u>	<u>(2,198)</u>
<u>DEVELOPMENT PLANS</u>				
<u>DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES</u>				
Development Plans	(6,276)	(6,298)	22	22
<u>DEVELOPMENT PLANS SERVICES</u>				
Development Plans	7,080	7,080	0	1
<i>Development Plans Total Expenditure</i>	<u>804</u>	<u>782</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>
Corporate Recharges	1,231,080	1,231,080	0	0
Funding from General Reserves	0	0	0	0
Planning Committee Total Expenditure	<u><u>1,056,000</u></u>	<u><u>1,061,356</u></u>	<u><u>(5,356)</u></u>	<u><u>(1,074)</u></u>
LICENSING COMMITTEE SUMMARY				
Licensing	29,090	39,828	(10,738)	(9,966)
Internal Recharges	36,100	36,098	2	2
Funding from General Reserves	0	0	0	0
Licensing Committee Total Expenditure	<u><u>65,190</u></u>	<u><u>75,926</u></u>	<u><u>(10,736)</u></u>	<u><u>(9,964)</u></u>

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Fees and Charges Forecast 2019/2020 (As at December 2019)

Portfolio	Service	Description of Income	Income Source	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Forecast	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Sept 2019	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at June 2019
				£	£	£	£	£
Fees & Charges								
Corporate Services	Communications	Advertising	Fees & Charges	19,070	4,794	(14,276)	(15,264)	(15,264)
Corporate Services	Business Support	External Printing and photocopying charges.	Fees & Charges	8,000	8,008	8	70	(523)
Corporate Services	Legal Fees	Legal Charges	Fees & Charges	13,380	13,313	(67)	(67)	934
Corporate Services	Corporate Support	Land Charges	Fixed - Set Locally	30,450	37,894	7,444	7,444	7,444
Economy	General Offices	Rental Income	Fees & Charges	49,260	65,020	15,760	9,062	(2,709)
Economy	Departmental	Reimbursement of staff costs and receipts for external works	SLA	62,990	45,035	(17,955)	(36,065)	(36,065)
Environment	Household and Trade Waste Collection		Fees & Charges	97,305	98,580	1,275	9,401	8,615
Environment	Recycling Collection	Recycling Collection & Disposal Income - Commercial Customers	Fees & Charges	24,890	21,268	(3,622)	(2,945)	4,740
Environment	Bulky Waste Collection	Bulky Waste Collection	Fees & Charges	66,660	57,579	(9,081)	(7,311)	(9,690)
Environment	Recycling Disposal	Sale of Recyclate Materials	Fees & Charges	393,200	510,971	117,771	105,914	45,480
Environment	County Borough Cleansing	C&CR - External Cleansing Works	Fees & Charges	210	0	(210)	(210)	(210)
Environment	Cemeteries / Crematorium	Burial Fees	Fees & Charges	491,470	461,759	(29,711)	(29,711)	(75,536)
Environment	Cemeteries / Crematorium	General Properties	Fees & Charges	2,580	3,000	420	420	420
Environment	Meals On Wheels	Sale of Meals	Fees & Charges	166,030	121,444	(44,586)	(41,364)	(37,004)
Environment	Grounds Maintenance	Income from Letting of Playing Fields, Ground Rent & Way Leaves	Fees & Charges	55,700	86,628	30,928	2,779	0
Environment	General Properties	Rental Income	Fees & Charges	7,590	7,416	(174)	(174)	0
Environment	Cwmcrachen Caravan Site	Rental	Fees & Charges	109,840	95,269	(14,571)	(18,971)	(9,004)
Environment	Dog Wardens	Byelaw Enforcement Fees	Fees & Charges	5,364	2,912	(2,452)	(2,452)	(2,452)
Environment	Corporate Landlord	Civic Centre - Rental of Land	Miscellaneous	755	844	89	89	89
Environment	School Catering Service	Sale of Meals	Fees & Charges	881,501	954,967	73,466	71,896	814
Environment	Cleaning Services	External Cleaning Services	Fees & Charges	43,052	43,052	0	0	0
Financial Management and Strategy	Accountancy Division	Administration charges for administering Appointeeships	Fees & Charges	25,150	16,181	(8,969)	(9,460)	(9,300)
Infrastructure	Technical Services - Engineering & Property Management	Reimbursement of staff costs and receipts for external works	Fees & Charges	324,149	484,091	159,942	46,188	15,637
Infrastructure	FEP - Increase in Income	Fees	Fees & Charges	30,019	0	(30,019)	0	0
Infrastructure	Licensing (Highway Permits)	Skips & Scaffolding Permits	Fees & Charges	40,692	41,290	598	598	598
Infrastructure	General Administration and Markets	Rental income	Fees & Charges	24,172	21,115	(3,057)	(4,850)	0
Infrastructure	Traffic Orders	Income from contractors, Welsh Water etc. for road works	Fees & Charges	22,634	21,397	(1,237)	313	0
Infrastructure	Road and Street Works Acts	Inspection fees, section 74's, FPN, coring, Dropped kerbs etc.	Fees & Charges	81,115	86,148	5,033	856	0
Infrastructure	Highways Adoptions	Highway Searches	Fees & Charges	9,065	9,065	0	0	0
Infrastructure	Multi-storey Carparks	Charge to Coleg Gwent	Fees & Charges	30,000	30,000	0	0	0
Infrastructure	Public Transport Co-Ordination	Charge to bus companies for use of Brynmawr Bus Station	Fees & Charges	400	400	0	0	0
Licensing	Hackney Carriages	Licence Fees	Fees & Charges	76,460	57,834	(18,626)	(18,037)	(17,743)
Licensing	Private Hire Vehicles	Licence Fees	Fees & Charges	1,830	938	(892)	(713)	(671)
Licensing	Scrap Metal	Sale of Scrap Metal	Fees & Charges	600	1,036	436	102	(232)
Planning	Enforcement	Enforcement Fees	Fees & Charges	610	0	(610)	(610)	(610)
Planning	Development Plans	Heritage Officer Income	Fees & Charges	0	0	0	0	0
Social Services	Other Children's and Family Services	Training Fees (Early Years tied in with expenditure which is set	Fees & Charges	0	0	0	0	1,318
Social Services	Older People aged 65 or over	Fees & Charges in respect of Care (Cwrt Mytton, Home Care, Extra Care & Joint Day Care Unit)	Fees & Charges	607,300	571,084	(36,216)	(65,807)	(74,192)
Social Services	Adults aged under 65 with Learning Disabilities	Fees & Charges in respect of Care (Augusta, Supported Living Bungalows & Community Options)	Fees & Charges	420,050	305,666	(114,384)	(147,066)	(135,578)
Social Services	Adults aged under 65 with Mental Health Needs	Fees & Charges in respect of Care (Vision House & Ysbyty'r Tri Chwm)	Fees & Charges	24,430	17,617	(6,813)	(5,393)	(3,320)
Social Services	Support Service and Management Costs	Fees & Charges in respect of Piper Alarms (IAA)	Fees & Charges	0	0	0	0	0
Sub - Total				4,247,973	4,303,615	55,642	(151,338)	(344,014)

Fees and Charges Forecast 2019/2020 (As at December 2019)

Portfolio	Service	Description of Income	Income Source	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Forecast	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Sept 2019	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at June 2019
				£	£	£	£	£
Fees & Charges - Set Nationally								
Corporate Services	Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths	Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths	Fixed - Set Nationally	86,770	77,992	(8,778)	(11,426)	(13,484)
Environment	Food Safety	Hygiene ratings & Health Certificates	Fixed - Set Nationally	2,000	7,678	5,678	5,678	5,678
Environment	Control of Pollution	Environmental Permits	Fixed - Set Nationally	16,238	16,238	0	0	0
Environment	Health and Safety at Work (Commercial Prem.)	Petroleum + Tattoo Licences	Fixed - Set Nationally	0	3,942	3,942	3,942	3,942
Environment	Trading Standards	Explosives Licences	Fixed - Set Nationally	761	876	115	115	115
Licensing	Licence Fees	Various (Gambling, Premises/ Clubs & Street Trading)	Fixed - Set Nationally	57,900	62,416	4,516	2,254	5,857
Planning	Dealing with Applications	Planning Application Fees	Fees & Charges	213,360	213,360	0	0	0
Planning	Building Regulations	Building Regulation Fees	Fixed - Set Nationally	95,620	95,620	0	0	24
Social Services	Older People aged 65 or over	CHC Income (Home Care and Extra Care Provision)	Fixed - Set Nationally	0	0	0	0	85,194
Social Services	Adults aged under 65 with Learning Disabilities	CHC Income (Augusta House; Supported Living Bungalows; Community Options)	Fixed - Set Nationally	50,000	223,853	173,853	199,417	223,494
Social Services	Community Care	Fees & Charges in respect of Care	Fixed - Set Nationally	3,324,670	2,946,393	(378,277)	(411,108)	(354,483)
Social Services	Community Care	Sale of Property	Fixed - Set Nationally	286,620	286,620	0	0	(19,789)
Social Services	Community Care	CHC Income	Fixed - Set Nationally	371,220	100,000	(271,220)	(271,220)	(308,220)
Social Services	Support Service and Management Costs	CHC Income (Adult Service Managers)	Fixed - Set Nationally	0	0	0	0	0
		Sub - Total		4,505,159	4,034,988	(470,171)	(482,348)	(371,672)
Fees & Charges - In Line with Local Agreements								
Economy	Industrial Land	Ground rent and commercial bookings	Fixed - Set Locally	2,750	2,900	150	150	150
Economy	Nursery Units/Misc. Industrial Premises	Rental income for industrial units	Fixed - Set Locally	694,530	746,137	51,607	52,819	39,880
Economy	Estates - Non Rechargeable	Ground Rent	Fixed - Set Locally	120,850	130,487	9,637	9,549	9,647
Economy	Financial Support to Business	Ground rent and commercial bookings	Fixed - Set Locally	0	2,650	2,650	2,650	2,650
Economy	CSCS	Charges for Construction Skills Certificates	Fixed - Set Locally	0	10,178	10,178	10,137	8,364
Environment	Corporate Landlord	Little Stars Nursery - Rent (Recovery of costs)	Miscellaneous	8,329	14,694	6,365	6,365	6,365
Education	Inter Authority Recoupment	Charges to other Local Authorities for SEN placements within Blaenau Gwent Schools	Fixed - Set Locally	612,000	769,222	157,222	92,458	93,516
		Sub - Total		1,438,459	1,676,268	237,809	174,128	160,572
		Total - Fees & Charges		10,191,591	10,014,871	(176,720)	(459,558)	(555,114)

Fees and Charges Forecast 2019/2020 (As at December 2019)

Portfolio	Service	Description of Income	Income Source	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Forecast	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Sept 2019	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at June 2019
				£	£	£	£	£
SLA								
Aneurin Leisure Trust	SLA Income	Provision of Support Services	SLA	238,820	238,822	2	2	0
Environment	Grounds Maintenance	SLA	SLA	189,220	167,610	(21,610)	(21,610)	(21,610)
Environment	Building Maintenance	SLA	SLA					
Financial Management and Strategy	Accountancy Division	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	178,480	178,480	0	0	0
Corporate Services	Organisational Development, Payroll & Health & Safety	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	303,480	303,480	0	0	0
Corporate Services	Legal Fees & GDPR	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	39,680	39,680	0	0	0
Corporate Services	Communications	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	3,070	3,070	0	0	0
Corporate Services	Performance (SIMS Support)	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	81,610	81,610	0	0	0
Corporate Services	Business Support (Courier)	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	3,950	3,950	0	0	0
Financial Management and Strategy	Creditors Division	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	7,570	7,570	0	0	0
Corporate Services	ICT	Support Services SLA with Schools	SLA	406,013	406,013	0	0	0
Environment	School Catering	SLA with Schools (excludes Corporate Landlord)	SLA	1,060,605	1,060,605	0	0	0
Environment	Cleaning Services	SLA with Schools	SLA	1,028,298	1,028,295	(3)	(3)	0
Infrastructure	CPM - Schools Biodiversity SLA	SLA with Schools	SLA	7,220	7,220	0	0	0
Infrastructure	Winter Maintenance	SLA with LA's for salt Storage	SLA	12,500	12,500	0	0	0
		Sub - Total		3,560,516	3,538,905	(21,611)	(21,611)	(21,610)
Court Fees/Fixed Penalty Notices/Fines								
Corporate Services	Corporate Services and Strategy	Legal income and land charges. Advertising.	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	10,000	9,647	(353)	(353)	(353)
Education	Welfare Service	Fixed Penalty Notices	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	2,070	2,070	0	0	0
Environment	Littering and Dog Control Orders	Income in relation to FPNs	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Leg	128,765	79,894	(48,871)	(19,665)	(24,665)
Corporate Services	Payroll Division	Attachment Orders	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	1,020	584	(437)	(188)	(382)
Financial Management and Strategy	Council Tax Collection	Court Costs	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	162,680	162,680	0	0	0
Financial Management and Strategy	NNDR	Court Costs	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	1,800	1,800	0	0	0
Corporate Services	Housing Benefits Account	Admin Penalties	Court Fees/FPN/Fines/Legal	25,000	25,000	0	0	0
		Sub - Total		331,335	281,674	(49,661)	(20,206)	(25,400)

Fees and Charges Forecast 2019/2020 (As at December 2019)

Portfolio	Service	Description of Income	Income Source	Revised Estimate 2019/2020	Forecast	Variance Favourable / (Adverse)	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at Sept 2019	Variance Favourable / (Adverse) as at June 2019
				£	£	£	£	£
Consortium Arrangements								
Economy	General Offices	Annual Service & Rental Charge to Torfaen CBC in relation to Archives	Consortium Arrangements	74,940	85,022	10,082	10,082	10,082
Environment	Disposal Of Waste	Contribution from SVWS	Consortium Arrangements	110,000	110,000	0	0	0
Environment	Cemeteries / Crematorium	Crematorium Income - Reallocation of surplus at year end	Consortium Arrangements	131,925	131,925	0	0	12,825
Environment	20 Church Street	Housing Advice Centre Contribution	Consortium Arrangements	11,740	12,400	660	660	660
Environment	Housing Access	Income from Housing Associations in relation to Administration of the Common Housing Register	Consortium Arrangements	86,050	111,610	25,560	18,276	18,276
Environment	Environmental Health	Public Protection Collaboration with Torfaen CC	Consortium Arrangements	108,400	86,118	(22,282)	(22,282)	(22,282)
		Sub - Total		523,055	537,075	14,020	6,736	19,561
Miscellaneous								
Education	Supporting Special Educational Needs	Internal Income - Recovery of pupil lead funding from schools.	Internal Income	100,000	36,000	(64,000)	(81,000)	(81,000)
Corporate Services	Corporate Procurement Division	Rebates - Energy & Randstad	Miscellaneous	95,700	93,779	(1,921)	(187)	(54)
Corporate Services	Corporate Procurement Division	Purchase Card Income	Miscellaneous	1,640	5,024	3,384	3,384	3,360
Infrastructure	L&A - Invasive Weeds	Contribution from Caerphilly for Treatment of Knotweed	Miscellaneous	10,000	10,000	0	0	0
		Sub - Total		207,340	144,803	(62,537)	(77,803)	(77,694)
		TOTAL		14,813,837	14,517,328	(296,509)	(572,442)	(660,257)

Action Plan

Corporate Services 2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31 December 2019)

Appendix 4a

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Sept 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Housing Benefits	(137,273)	(107,205)	(108,529)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse Variance:</u> The forecast overspend is due to external audit fees (£43,000) for which there is no budget and an anticipated shortfall on the Administration Subsidy grant of £64,000. In the previous financial year, these costs were offset by an in year budget virement.</p> <p><u>Update:</u> A cost pressure of £107,000 has been approved as part of the 2020/2021 budget setting process. This pressure will therefore not continue into 2020/21.</p>	Not Currently Known	Anne-Louise Clark
Resources Departmental budget	£27,553	(£13,219)	(£134,231)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse Variance:</u> The reason for the adverse variance is due to a combination of the delayed implementation of the departments service review and subsequent redundancy costs (which will only relate to the current financial year). At quarter 2 this was</p>	Not Currently Known	Rhian Hayden

Action Plan

Corporate Services 2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31 December 2019)

Appendix 4a

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Sept 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
				<p>mitigated by an in year virement from within the Portfolio, which has since been reversed due to an emerging cost pressure.</p> <p>Action: Expenditure will be closely monitored during the last quarter, to minimise this cost pressure by the year end.</p> <p>The revised structure is now in place and therefore this cost pressure will not to continue into 2020/21.</p>		
Council tax Reduction Scheme	£77,975	£27,341	(£27,555)	<p>Reason for adverse variance: Whilst the CTRS caseload has not increased, there has been an improvement in the speed of processing, particularly in relation to the change of circumstances process. As a result CTRS claimants are receiving</p>	Not currently Known	Rhian Hayden

Action Plan

Corporate Services 2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31 December 2019)

Appendix 4a

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Sept 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
				<p>their entitlement in a more timely manner and should impact on the outstanding debt position at year end.</p> <p>Action: Expenditure will be closely monitored during the last quarter, to minimise this cost pressure by the year end.</p>		
Democratic Representation and Management	£517	(£12,602)	(£26,057)	<p>Reason for adverse variance: Following Community Asset Transfers of a number of buildings, the council is incurring rental costs for the occupation of Town & Community Councils and no progress has been made for charging for this accommodation.</p> <p>Action: This is being progressed under the Assets and Property Strategic Business Review, as part of the Bridging the Gap programme.</p>		

Action Plan

Education

2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31st December 2019)

Appendix 4b

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at September 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
AWPU Clawback	(81,000)	(81,000)	(64,000)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <p>The anticipated funding recovered from Schools as a result of the LA providing alternative education provision has reduced due to schools increasingly providing provision to meet pupils needs as an alternative to requiring specialist placement and as a result of the River Centre being at capacity.</p> <p><u>Proposed Action</u></p> <p>Areas have been identified where guidance requires or advises AWPU clawback from schools. This will be taken forward following appropriate awareness-raising.</p> <p>Mechanisms for identifying AWPU clawback eligibility are being devised with the River Centre. The reduced adverse variance (from £81k in September 2019) indicates that progress is being made, although it is uncertain at this stage if the total £100,000 income target will be achieved.</p>	17,000	Gavin Metheringha m

Action Plan

Education

2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31st December 2019)

Appendix 4b

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at September 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
SEN recoupment/ Independent school Fees	(60,773)	(62,175)	(45,658)	<p><u>Reason for adverse variance:</u> New and continuing placements to Out of County Schools have increased the adverse variance.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> The forecast of placements to the end of the financial year will continue to be reviewed and monitored on a more regular basis in the final quarter.</p> <p><u>Update:</u> The forecast adverse variance have reduced due to an in year budget virement of £60,000 from Social Services offset by fluctuations in individual placement costs and charges.</p>	60.000 (15,000)	Gavin Metheringha m
Departmental Budget	-		(34,488)	<p><u>Reason for adverse variance:</u> Continuing external professional support to the Abertillery Learning Community is the main element within this adverse variance.</p>	28,000	Lynette Jones

Action Plan

Education

2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31st December 2019)

Appendix 4b

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at September 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
				<u>Action:</u> Consideration will be given to an in year budget virement from the Psychology Budget.		

Action Plan

Environment

2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31 December 2019)

Appendix 4c

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Sept 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact	Responsible Officer
Waste Services	(313,145)	(103,495)	(68,086)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u> The adverse variance is due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer Station Costs have increased due to additional hours being worked as a result of black bag sorting and increased recyclate - £50,000 • The Sustainable Waste Management grant is lower than estimated by £45,000, due to the grant reduction being higher than anticipated. <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further virements into Waste Services from underspending budgets will be a priority. • There are likely to be further savings associated with 'keeping up with the Joneses' campaign which has seen a reduction in residual waste. • The waste recycling disposal contracts will continue to be monitored and reviewed. • Transfer of costs from revenue into new HWRC capital project for staff time working on the project and receptacles. <p><u>Updates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The waste recycling disposal contracts have been 		M Perry / M Stent

Action Plan

Environment

2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31 December 2019)

Appendix 4c

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Sept 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact	Responsible Officer
				<p>reviewed resulting in a reduction in costs and increases in recycle income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk based approach has resulted in the security contract being terminated from October 2019. However, this has since been reviewed and security reinstated at a reduced cost. • The 'keeping up with the Joneses' campaign has assisted in a reduction in residual waste costs. • In year virements have also been undertaken to offset the additional revenue costs incurred from the narrow access and rear loading vehicles. • The baler at the Transfer Station has now commenced operation, allowing for the potential to generate additional income from the increased levels and quality of recycle. • Transfer of eligible staff costs for staff working on the project from revenue into the HWRC capital scheme • Cost pressure agreed as part of the 2020/2021 budget setting process to mitigate the £45,000 shortfall in the Sustainable Waste Management Grant. 	<p>20,000</p> <p>130,000</p> <p>118,000</p> <p>75,000</p> <p>45,000</p>	

Action Plan

Environment

2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31 December 2019)

Appendix 4c

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Sept 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact	Responsible Officer
Meals on Wheels	(25,375)	(22,588)	(23,470)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This overspend is due to the income from the sale of meals not achieving the target income. <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <p>In line with the recommendation of the service Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing hours have been reduced to 80 hours • Meal prices have increased • Continued marketing and promotion of the service to try to increase sales <p>However, the service continues to struggle to breakeven.</p>		C Rogers / M Price
Corporate Landlord	0	(63,449)	(0)	<p><u>Update:</u></p> <p>This overspend has been reduced due to the transfer of eligible revenue costs for asbestos removal at Pond Road to capital and an increase of fees and charges.</p>	45,000	C Rogers / M Price

Action Plan

Environment

2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31 December 2019)

Appendix 4c

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Sept 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact	Responsible Officer
Cwmcrachen Caravan Site	(53,713)	(53,713)	(64,915)	<p><u>Reason for Variance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Energy Costs increased • Electricity Management Problems • Investigations into electricity usage • Other tenancy management/repairs (e.g Bailiff costs £8.5k). • <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation into corporate utility bill arrangements at the site to ensure correct billing. This is still ongoing. • Review to ensure that the council is full cost recovering against these costs. • New sub meters and payment meters installed • Reporting of any suspected illegal activity • To review after June 2020, to consider capital invest to save for direct supply if problems continue. 		D Thompson
Littering and Dog Control Orders	(14,418)	(14,729)	(33,500)	<p><u>Reason for Variance</u></p> <p>Staff turnover, Contractor management and financial challenges/viability. Reduced income.</p> <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <p>Agreement has been reached (Mid-January 2020) to change the contract to enable sustainable continuation for both the</p>		D Thompson

Action Plan

Environment

2019/20 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31 December 2019)

Appendix 4c

Service Area	2019/2020 Variance at June 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Sept 2019 Forecast £	2019/2020 Variance at Dec 2019 Forecast £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact	Responsible Officer
				<p>Authority and LA Support (Kingdom). Discussed and agreed in principle with Executive Member on 24/1/2020.</p> <p>Terms are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction to 2 x Enforcement Officers (75 hours/week) from 4 Officers. • 6% (4.5 hrs) to dedicated to Dog Control patrols • FPN income to be retained by LA Support. • Zero cost to the Authority. • Short notice to terminate contract for both parties. <p>Subject to signing the new SLA this pressure will not continue into 2020/2021.</p>		
Coroners Court	(1,038)	(1,038)	(25,516)	<p><u>Reason for Variance</u> The adverse variance is as a result of additional costs following the service being brought back in house (Newport CC) and the recovery of 2018/2019 overspend.</p> <p><u>Actions</u> Further information is being sought from the lead authority.</p>		

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Agenda Item 15

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

Report Subject: **Capital Budget Monitoring, Forecast for 2019/2020
Financial Year (as at 31 December 2019)**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr N Daniels – Leader / Executive Member Corporate
Services**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden – Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	11/02/2019	26.02.20			09/03/2019	11/03/2019		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2019/2020 financial year, as at 31st December 2019.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 This report provides details on the following:

- Forecast financial position to the end of March 2020 across all portfolios
- Details of any significant adverse and/or favourable variances

- 2.2 This report forms part of the quarterly financial reporting framework to Members.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 (Recommended Option)

Members of the Executive Committee accept the report and

- Provide appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report.
- Continue to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council.
- To note the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding.

3.2 Option 2

Do not accept the report.

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

4.1 This report supports the Council Priority, “Efficient Council”, as it is part of the financial planning and reporting arrangements which support the Council’s financial resilience.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 The overall financial position as forecast at 31st December 2019 indicates a nil variance against a total in year capital budget of £23.7m. It is anticipated that all in year capital expenditure will be fully funded.

Across all Portfolios, the overall position is shown below:-

Total Approvals Q3 (Dec 2019)	Future funding	In year funding	Actual Expenditure to 31/12/2019 (Month 9)	Forecast Expenditure 2019/2020	Forecast Variance underspent / (overspent)
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
71,626	47,896	23,730	8,006	23,730	0

5.1.2 It is imperative that capital reserves are not committed beyond affordable funding levels. Budget holders must therefore maintain spending within the overall total for the approved capital scheme.

5.1.3 Expenditure against external funding approvals needs to be maximised in order to avoid loss of funding. Where significant delays in capital expenditure have occurred or are anticipated, liaison with funding bodies is required at the earliest opportunity in order to secure approval for funding re-profile.

5.1.4 Where overall funding approvals are likely to be exceeded and additional compensatory funding sources cannot be identified, budget holders will initially report the consequences to the Corporate Leadership Team, including proposals to defer/delete other approved schemes.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

5.2.1 If capital schemes are not kept within budget, then capital reserves may be committed beyond affordable levels, with the consequence that projects that have not yet commenced may be deferred or not undertaken, so impacting upon future Capital Programmes.

5.2.2 If capital schemes do not achieve the required level of expenditure within the correct financial year, funding may be lost to the Authority and be detrimental to the Authority's chances of securing future funding.

5.2.3 Both of the aforementioned risks are mitigated as far as possible through close working relationship with budget holders and external funding bodies such as Welsh Government. This ensures that where possible, funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured should the need arise

5.3 **Legal**
N/A

5.4 **Human Resources**
N/A

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

6.1.1 Appendix 1.1 & 1.2 details the provisional financial position for 2019/2020.

Appendix 2 provides information of funding changes since the second quarter report.

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

6.2.1 The report details the financial implications for the Council in providing capital investment for the communities of Blaenau Gwent.

All forecast overspends and underspends are managed in order that secured funding approvals are not lost and to mitigate any potential adverse impact upon future Capital investment in Blaenau Gwent.

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

The Capital Programme is developed to support the Council's strategic priorities and is considered and agreed by full Council. Corporate Overview Scrutiny and Executive Committees consider the budget monitoring reports on a quarterly basis and provide challenge as appropriate.

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

It is essential that all forecast overspends and underspends are managed in order that secured funding approvals are not lost and to mitigate any potential adverse impact upon the future capital programme.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The Capital Services Team to continue their close working relationship with budget holders and external funding bodies to ensure that funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured in future financial years.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
The Capital Services Team works closely with budget holders in producing the financial forecast and with external funding bodies to ensure that where possible funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured should the need arise.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
N/A

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

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 Financial reporting to the Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee is carried out on a quarterly basis. Where projects are reporting significant cost pressures, there is a requirement for Budget Holders to ensure that where possible funding is maximised or funding amendments are secured should the need arise.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1.1

Appendix 1.2

Appendix 2

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2020/9

Capital Programme Funding Estimates Summary

<i>Portfolio</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure To: December 2019</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
Corporate Services Portfolio	729,251	227,086	502,165	202,747	24,339	227,086	0
Social Services Portfolio	5,635,050	1,700,547	3,934,503	578,085	1,122,462	1,700,547	0
Economy Portfolio	19,817,960	4,028,892	15,789,068	931,864	3,097,028	4,028,892	0
Education and Active Living	32,470,486	6,830,987	25,639,499	4,059,583	2,771,404	6,830,987	0
Environment Portfolio	9,149,390	8,146,937	1,002,453	1,459,068	6,687,869	8,146,937	0
Infrastructure Portfolio	2,837,076	2,005,647	831,429	742,622	1,263,025	2,005,647	0
All Portfolios	986,291	789,328	196,963	31,828	757,500	789,328	0
Total Capital Funding	71,625,504	23,729,424	47,896,080	8,005,797	15,723,627	23,729,424	0

End of Report

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Capital Programme - 2019/20 Funding Estimates
Capital Report 2019/20

Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2020/9

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: December 2019</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
Corporate Services Portfolio								
Corporate Services								
101385	Workplace Transformation	124,511	26,339	98,172	26,339	0	26,339	0
327037	WPT - Civic Centre IT Network	194,740	0	194,740	0	0	0	0
327100	Ebbw Vale Test Track	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	0	20,000	0
327101	Emergency Electrical & IT Works Civic Ce	240,000	30,747	209,253	30,747	0	30,747	0
328090	CCTV Upgrade	150,000	150,000	0	125,661	24,339	150,000	0
Corporate Services		729,251	227,086	502,165	202,747	24,339	227,086	0
Corporate Services Portfolio		729,251	227,086	502,165	202,747	24,339	227,086	0

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Capital Programme Funding Estimates

Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: December 2019	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Social Services Portfolio								
Childrens Services								
323152	Beaufort Road - Extension Training Flat	130,475	0	130,475	0	0	0	0
323153	Beaufort Road - Outdoor spaces and Exiti	38,675	0	38,675	0	0	0	0
324718	Flying Start - First Friends Childcare	55,000	55,000	0	0	55,000	55,000	0
324719	Flying Start - Cwm 2	26,352	26,352	0	26,352	0	26,352	0
324721	Flying Start - Ebbw Vale North	150,000	150,000	0	6,939	143,061	150,000	0
324727	Flying Start - Swyffryd	19,500	19,500	0	0	19,500	19,500	0
324736	Flying Start Additional Works	60,000	60,000	0	20,775	39,225	60,000	0
324770	Childcare Offer - Sixbells Scheme	1,500,000	80,000	1,420,000	5,210	74,790	80,000	0
324771	Childcare Offer - Badminton Scheme	1,500,000	50,000	1,450,000	0	50,000	50,000	0
324772	Childcare Offer - Blaina ICC Scheme	500,000	50,000	450,000	46,766	3,234	50,000	0
324773	Childcare Offer - Swfryd Scheme	500,000	450,000	50,000	9,464	440,536	450,000	0
324774	Childcare Offer - Small Grants Scheme	100,000	100,000	0	100,000	0	100,000	0
Childrens Services		4,580,002	1,040,852	3,539,150	215,506	825,346	1,040,852	0
Adult Services								
323003	Health & Safety	63,943	63,943	0	2,893	61,050	63,943	0
323005	Tackling Food Poverty - WLGA	23,147	23,147	0	0	23,147	23,147	0
323120	Disabled equipment	283,250	279,750	3,500	279,750	0	279,750	0
323142	ICF - DCP Accommodation and Support fc	23,000	23,000	0	0	23,000	23,000	0
323143	ICF - DCP AI, Digital Mobile Assistive	23,000	23,000	0	0	23,000	23,000	0
323144	ICF Main Capital Programme	104,151	104,151	0	550	103,601	104,151	0

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Management Reports		Capital Programme Funding Estimates						
<i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2020/9</i>								

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: December 2019</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
323147	Intermediate Care Fund	23,704	23,704	0	23,704	0	23,704	0
323148	ICF - Digital & Mobile Assistive Technol	19,000	19,000	0	1,100	17,900	19,000	0
323149	Better Care Capital Project	50,000	50,000	0	12,529	37,471	50,000	0
323150	Cwrt Mytton Lift Refurbishment	50,000	50,000	0	42,053	7,947	50,000	0
323151	Augusta House - Enablement Pods	391,853	0	391,853	0	0	0	0
Adult Services		1,055,048	659,695	395,353	362,579	297,116	659,695	0
Social Services Portfolio		5,635,050	1,700,547	3,934,503	578,085	1,122,462	1,700,547	0

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Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2020/9

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: December 2019	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Economy Portfolio								
Tredegar Regeneration								
326163	Tredegar HLF	1,225,419	587,160	638,259	432,994	154,166	587,160	0
326167	Tredegar STAR Community Centre	7,810	4,682	3,128	3,980	702	4,682	0
Tredegar Regeneration		1,233,229	591,842	641,387	436,974	154,868	591,842	0
Ebbw Vale Town Centre								
326191	TRI - Urban Centre Commercial Property I	720,000	410,000	310,000	607	409,393	410,000	0
326192	TRI- Urban Centre Residential Property E	200,000	75,000	125,000	268	74,732	75,000	0
Ebbw Vale Town Centre		920,000	485,000	435,000	875	484,125	485,000	0
Valleys Regional Park								
326200	VRP Ebbw Fach Trail	2,274	979	1,295	979	0	979	0
326205	VRP - Discovery Gateway	500,000	500,000	0	4,351	495,649	500,000	0
Valleys Regional Park		502,274	500,979	1,295	5,329	495,650	500,979	0
The Works Site								
325097	Big Arch	1,058,000	25,362	1,032,638	25,362	0	25,362	0
325102	Learning Works - 11-16 school	34,835	34,835	0	34,835	0	34,835	0
325220	Site Investigation Works	19,000	0	19,000	0	0	0	0
325225	Ebbw Valley Railway - Northern Extension	2,441	0	2,441	0	0	0	0
326079	General Offices Refurb	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	0	20,000	0

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<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: December 2019</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
	The Works Site	1,134,276	80,197	1,054,079	80,197	0	80,197	0
	Other Regeneration							
326006	Tech Valley s Initiative	500,000	0	500,000	0	0	0	0
326180	Lime Avenue Business Park	6,420,975	500,000	5,920,975	33,203	466,797	500,000	0
326181	Lime Avenue Employment park	2,701,872	101,489	2,600,383	78,987	22,502	101,489	0
326182	Box Works	1,012,234	450,000	562,234	211,780	238,220	450,000	0
326183	Regain 2	4,050,000	34,075	4,015,925	34,075	0	34,075	0
326225	Heat Networks Project	17,385	0	17,385	0	0	0	0
326226	Electric Vehicle Chargepoints	573,406	573,406	0	0	573,406	573,406	0
326251	Constrained Units	455,370	419,465	35,905	0	419,465	419,465	0
326252	Constrained Units - Roseheyworth	200,000	200,000	0	0	200,000	200,000	0
326262	Acquisition of Cwm Draw Units 1-6	4,500	0	4,500	0	0	0	0
326263	Ebbw Vale Cenotaph & War Memorial Gar	20,752	20,752	0	20,752	0	20,752	0
326264	Aneurin Bevan Memorial Stones	30,000	30,000	0	29,692	308	30,000	0
326265	Victoria Business Park - Development	41,687	41,687	0	0	41,687	41,687	0
	Other Regeneration	16,028,181	2,370,874	13,657,307	408,489	1,962,385	2,370,874	0
	Economy Portfolio	19,817,960	4,028,892	15,789,068	931,864	3,097,028	4,028,892	0

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Capital Programme Funding Estimates

Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: December 2019	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Education and Active Living								
Education Services								
324125	Education Minor Works	116,943	28,591	88,352	28,591	0	28,591	0
324130	Abertillery Comprehensive Lighting Upgr	12,439	0	12,439	0	0	0	0
324135	School Works Programme - Tech Services	35,022	0	35,022	0	0	0	0
324138	Education Capital Maintenance	16,450	16,450	0	1,795	14,655	16,450	0
324140	Brynmawr Comp - Remodelling Reception	62,768	62,768	0	62,768	0	62,768	0
324141	Bryn Bach - Kitchen Rep & Classroom ren	148,691	148,691	0	148,691	0	148,691	0
324142	Georgetown Windows & Boiler Replaceme	95,000	95,000	0	78,987	16,013	95,000	0
324143	Rhos-y-fedwyn - Refurbishment	96,000	96,000	0	90,622	5,378	96,000	0
324144	St Marys - Refurbishment	60,000	60,000	0	0	60,000	60,000	0
324145	Tredegar Comp - Food & Technology	100,000	100,000	0	725	99,275	100,000	0
324146	Deighton - Kitchen	106,332	106,332	0	106,332	0	106,332	0
324201	Class Size - Willowtown	199,600	199,600	0	130,007	69,593	199,600	0
324202	Class Size - St. Illtyd s	70,000	70,000	0	65,335	4,665	70,000	0
324203	Period Poverty	6,589	6,589	0	6,589	0	6,589	0
324205	St. Marys CIW MUGA	89,125	89,125	0	55,600	33,525	89,125	0
324206	Georgetown S106	47,000	47,000	0	30,387	16,613	47,000	0
324515	Learning in Digital Wales	34,596	0	34,596	0	0	0	0
324519	Digital 2030 Capital Grant - Post 16	26,970	26,970	0	0	26,970	26,970	0
324530	ALN	122,298	0	122,298	0	0	0	0
324532	Ebbw Fawr ASD	3,890	0	3,890	0	0	0	0
324560	Schools IT Infrastructure	588,068	588,068	0	87,881	500,187	588,068	0

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Reporting Year: and Period: 2020/9

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: December 2019</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
324580	Brynmawr 3G Pitch	817,225	650,657	166,568	20,344	630,313	650,657	0
324590	Tredegar Comp 3G Pitch	200,000	200,000	0	3,950	196,050	200,000	0
324740	New Abertillery Primary School	29,164	0	29,164	0	0	0	0
324741	Band A - Tredegar Comprehensive	3,738	0	3,738	0	0	0	0
324743	21st Century Schools Six Bells Project	3,329,782	3,329,782	0	2,900,792	428,990	3,329,782	0
324744	Ystruth Primary Welsh Medium Primary	19,858	19,858	0	19,858	0	19,858	0
324750	Band B - Welsh Medium New Build	6,350,000	200,000	6,150,000	6,388	193,612	200,000	0
324751	Band B - New Primary Ebbw Fawr Valley	9,000,000	80,000	8,920,000	3,810	76,190	80,000	0
324752	Band B - Secondary Remodelling Brynma	3,200,000	0	3,200,000	0	0	0	0
324753	Band B - Secondary Remodelling Abertille	3,200,000	0	3,200,000	0	0	0	0
324754	Band B - Secondary Remodelling Tredega	3,200,000	0	3,200,000	0	0	0	0
324755	Band B - Welsh Medium Remodelling Bro	763,432	400,000	363,432	51,375	348,625	400,000	0
Education Services		32,150,980	6,621,481	25,529,499	3,900,829	2,720,652	6,621,481	0
Active Living Services								
329089	Abertillery LC Demolition	102,506	102,506	0	96,605	5,901	102,506	0
329095	Splash Pad	110,000	0	110,000	0	0	0	0
329097	Play Equipment	107,000	107,000	0	62,150	44,850	107,000	0
Active Living Services		319,506	209,506	110,000	158,755	50,751	209,506	0
Education and Active Living		32,470,486	6,830,987	25,639,499	4,059,583	2,771,404	6,830,987	0

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Capital Programme Funding Estimates

Code	Scheme	Total Funding	In Year Budget	Future Funding	Expenditure to: December 2019	Remaining in Year Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav
Environment Portfolio								
Environmental Services								
327018	RCAF Long Term Organics Procurement	26,512	0	26,512	0	0	0	0
327036	WPT Business Resource Centre (SS)	100,000	100,000	0	100,000	0	100,000	0
327039	Kerbside Collections	15,919	8,300	7,619	8,300	0	8,300	0
327042	Collaborative Change Programme 18-19	296,873	296,873	0	144,505	152,368	296,873	0
327043	Household Waste Recycling Centre	2,800,000	2,800,000	0	6,352	2,793,648	2,800,000	0
327044	AHP Waste Collections	152,000	152,000	0	0	152,000	152,000	0
327045	BRC Decommissioning Project	196,718	0	196,718	(1,231)	1,231	0	0
327055	Central Depot Project	2,185	0	2,185	0	0	0	0
327065	Re:Fit	4,110,381	4,110,381	0	747,562	3,362,819	4,110,381	0
327067	Market Hall - Asbestos Removal	92,000	92,000	0	57,775	34,226	92,000	0
327068	Cemeteries Investment Programme	210,000	0	210,000	0	0	0	0
Environmental Services		8,002,588	7,559,554	443,034	1,063,263	6,496,291	7,559,554	0
Housing Environmental Health								
328221	Remediation of Contaminated Land/Dereli	150,921	32,211	118,710	32,211	0	32,211	0
350510	Improvement grants - new scheme	831,193	400,000	431,193	264,646	135,354	400,000	0
350550	Support for Independent Living	152,316	142,800	9,516	98,949	43,851	142,800	0
350560	Empty Property Grants	12,372	12,372	0	0	12,372	12,372	0
Housing Environmental Health		1,146,802	587,383	559,419	395,805	191,578	587,383	0

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Management Reports		Capital Programme Funding Estimates						
<i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2020/9</i>								

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: December 2019</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
	Environment Portfolio	9,149,390	8,146,937	1,002,453	1,459,068	6,687,869	8,146,937	0

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Reporting Year: and Period: 2020/9

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: December 2019</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
Infrastructure Portfolio								
Engineering Services								
328040	Cwm By Pass	13,970	0	13,970	0	0	0	0
328147	SRIC - Brynmawr to Garnlydan	295,000	295,000	0	0	295,000	295,000	0
328310	Local Transport Fund	150,000	150,000	0	3,322	146,678	150,000	0
328315	Local Transport Fund - Project Retention	22,988	0	22,988	0	0	0	0
328318	Active Travel Fund	406,000	406,000	0	18,998	387,002	406,000	0
328340	LTF Metro Plus	265,000	265,000	0	0	265,000	265,000	0
Engineering Services		1,152,958	1,116,000	36,958	22,321	1,093,679	1,116,000	0
Highways Network Management								
328063	Bridge Strengthening Works	1,311	0	1,311	0	0	0	0
328269	Highways PB Imp. Works.	20,946	0	20,946	0	0	0	0
328270	Highways Improvement Works	1,596,041	889,227	706,814	719,881	169,346	889,227	0
328334	LGBI - Trinant Hall	65,820	420	65,400	420	0	420	0
Highways Network Management		1,684,118	889,647	794,471	720,301	169,346	889,647	0
Infrastructure Portfolio		2,837,076	2,005,647	831,429	742,622	1,263,025	2,005,647	0

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Management Reports

Reporting Year: and Period: 2020/9

Capital Programme Funding Estimates

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: December 2019</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
All Portfolios								
All Portfolios								
300300	City Deal	233,500	233,500	0	0	233,500	233,500	0
303990	OS Capital Admin/Design & Supervision	524,000	524,000	0	0	524,000	524,000	0
321112	Disabled Access - Special Programme	28,791	28,791	0	28,791	0	28,791	0
324672	The Company Shop - Tred	200,000	3,037	196,963	3,037	0	3,037	0
All Portfolios		986,291	789,328	196,963	31,828	757,500	789,328	0
All Portfolios		986,291	789,328	196,963	31,828	757,500	789,328	0

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Management Reports		Capital Programme Funding Estimates						
<i>Reporting Year: and Period: 2020/9</i>								

<i>Code</i>	<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>In Year Budget</i>	<i>Future Funding</i>	<i>Expenditure to: December 2019</i>	<i>Remaining in Year Budget</i>	<i>Forecast Expenditure</i>	<i>Forecast Variance (Adv)/Fav</i>
	Total Capital Funding	71,625,504	23,729,424	47,896,080	8,005,797	15,723,627	23,729,424	0

End of Report

Information on Capital Funding Changes 2019/20**New Approvals and/or material Funding Changes in Quarter 3**

Portfolio	Cost Centre	Scheme	Amount (£)	Funding Body	Type
Corporate Governance					
Social Services - Adult & Children					
	323005	Tackling Food Poverty - WLGA	23,147	Welsh Government	Welsh Local Government Association
	323148	ICF - Digital & Mobile Assistive Technol	19,000	Welsh Government	Intermediate Care Fund
	323142	ICF DCP Accommodation and Support for Young People	23,000	Welsh Government	Intermediate Care Fund
	323143	ICF DCP AI, Digital Mobile Assistive Technology	23,000	Welsh Government	Intermediate Care Fund
	323144	ICF Main Capital Programme	104,151	Welsh Government	Intermediate Care Fund
	323152	Beaufort Road - Extension Training Flat	130,475	Welsh Government	
	323153	Beaufort Road - Outdoor spaces and Exiting rooms	38,675	Welsh Government	
	323151	Augusta House - Enablement Pods	391,853	Welsh Government	Intermediate Care Fund
Economy					
	326180	Lime Avenue Business Park	3,150,000	Welsh Government	Tech Valleys
	326226	Electric Vehicle Chargepoints	573,406	Welsh Government	Office for Low Emissions Vehicles
	326265	Victoria Business Park - Development	41,687	Welsh Government	Tech Valleys
	326252	Constrained Units - Roseheyworth	200,000	Welsh Government	Sports, Multifunctional & Local Infrastructure Scheme
Education, Active Living and Learning					
	324519	Digital 2030 Capital Grant - Post 16	26,970	Welsh Government	21st Century Schools & Colleges
	324590	Tredegar Comp 3G Pitch	200,000	Sports Council Wales	Sports Wales
		Schools Maintenance Grant 2019/20	825,673	Welsh Government	21st Century Schools & Colleges
Environment					
	327043	Household Waste Recycling Centre	2,280,000	Welsh Government	
	327044	AHP Waste Collections	152,000	Welsh Government	
Infrastructure					
	328147	SRiC - Brynmawr to Garnlydan	295,000	Welsh Government	Safe Routes in Communities
	328340	LTF Metro Plus	265,000	Welsh Government	Local Transport Fund
	328318	Active Travel Fund	240,000	Welsh Government	Active Travel Fund
All Portfolios					

It should be noted that the funding changes detailed above will not balance to total funding changes between Q2 to Q3

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Agenda Item 16

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

Report Subject: **Use of General and Earmarked Reserves
2019/2020**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr N Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	18/02/20	26.02.20			09/03/2019	11/03/2019		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To report to the members of the Executive Committee the forecast reserves position for 2019/2020 as at Quarter 3 (31 December 2019).
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 There are a number of statutory requirements concerning Local Authority Reserves, including:
 - The Local Government Act 1972;
 - The Local Government Finance Act 1988;
 - The Local Government Finance Act 1992;
 - The Local Government Act 2003; and
 - The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.
 - 2.2 The CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) issued Bulletin 99: Local Authority Reserves and Balances in July 2014. This provides non-statutory guidance on relevant issues including:
 - Proper accounting treatment; and
 - Principles to assess the adequacy of reserves.
 - 2.3 To ensure compliance with CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Panel Bulletin 99 and identified best practice, the Council revised its protocol for managing reserves, with effect from April 2015.
 - 2.4 One aspect of the revised protocol concerns the enhancement of Elected Member engagement and scrutiny, and to this end quarterly reports detailing the actual and forecast use of general and earmarked reserves, including changes in requirement/amounts and risk assessments, are prepared and presented to Executive and Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee during the financial year.

2.5 In order to adopt a long-term approach to the need to provide services to the citizens of Blaenau Gwent, the protocol was amended and agreed by Council in March 2016 to include a target level for general reserves. This was set as 4% of the last reported actual net revenue expenditure (as included in the Revenue Outturn return).

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 That the Executive Committee considers the attached report of forecast use of general and earmarked reserves for 2019/2020 and:

- note the planned forecast increase of the General Reserve to 4.54% (above the 4% target level) for 2019/2020 and future years strengthening the Council's Financial Resilience.
- consider the impact the £0.064m forecast adverse variance for 2019/2020 would have on the General Reserve target; and
- continue to challenge budget overspends and implement appropriate service Action Plans, where required.

Maintenance of general reserves at an adequate level is crucial to the Council being able to meet future liabilities arising from risks for which specific provision has not been made.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of Council Priorities / Statutory Responsibilities / National Well-being Goals etc.

4.1 National Well-being Goals

The management of earmarked and general reserves (in recognition of the need to plan for known or predicted future obligations, unexpected events or emergencies), allows the Authority to deliver services in pursuance of its obligations under the national well-being goals.

4.2 Corporate Priorities

This report supports the Council Priority, "Efficient Council", as it is part of the financial planning and reporting arrangements which support the Council's financial resilience.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Financial Impact

5.1.1 Section 6 provides an overall summary of the forecast financial position in relation to the remaining balances in general and earmarked reserves at 31 March 2020.

5.1.2 Table 1 at 6.1.3 (below) shows the forecast position for the general reserve at year-end 2019/2020 to be an increase of £0.185m, to £6.079m. This balance would represent 4.54% of net revenue expenditure, £0.718m above the 4% target level of £5.361m, indicating some progress towards strengthening the financial resilience of the Council and allowing a buffer to deal with unexpected future issues.

5.1.3 The increase in general reserves is due to:

- £117,000 contribution as agreed by Council during the 2019/2020 budget setting process
- £132,000 as a result of a reduction in the Fire Service Precept charge following additional funding from Welsh Government for the increase in employers pension contributions.

5.1.4 Table 2 at 6.1.7 (below) shows the forecast level of earmarked reserves at 31 March 2020 to be £3.697m, an in year reduction of £3.132m. A substantial element of this reduction relates to school balances which are currently estimated to reduce by £1.061m over the financial year.

5.1.5 As a result of the positive provisional settlement, the Council has approved an increase to Reserves in excess of £1.5m for 2020/2021 when setting the 2020/2021 Budget, to support medium term financial planning and strengthening the Council's financial resilience.

5.2 Risk

5.2.1 The Council must ensure an appropriate level and use of reserves to support its financial sustainability and to meet future liabilities arising from risks for which a specific provision has not been made.

5.2.2 Included within the 2020/2021 budget, it is planned to increase reserves in excess of £1.5m, with a further £0.2m increase per annum planned for the life of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5.2.3 Failure to comply with the requirements set out in CIPFA LAAP Bulletin 99: *Local Authority Reserves and Balances*, which include the implementation of a clear protocol for the establishment, use, control and review of reserves, could result in adverse comments by regulators.

5.2.4 A protocol for the management of reserves was adopted in April 2015 to mitigate the risk of non-compliance with CIPFA LAAP Bulletin 99 and identified best practice.

5.2.5 In the short-term, the level and adequacy of reserves are regularly reviewed and monitored through regular outturn/ forecast reporting. In the medium term, reserves are assessed as part of the budget-setting process and the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which includes provision for an increase in reserves of £0.2m per annum over the life of the Strategy.

5.2.6 In its Annual Audit Letter relating to the 2017/2018 financial year, the Wales Audit Office noted the continued fall in total general and earmarked revenue reserves (i.e. usable reserves). In comparison to all other Welsh Authorities, the letter indicated that, as at 31 March 2018, Blaenau Gwent had the lowest level of general and earmarked reserves expressed as a percentage of Gross Revenue Expenditure (4.63%, compared with a maximum of 23.62% and an average of 11.44%).

5.2.7 In order to meet this Welsh average, general and earmarked reserves would need to increase significantly to approximately £20.7m.

5.2.8 There is a risk that failure to increase reserves further will attract adverse criticism from regulators. This risk can be mitigated by increasing the Council fund Reserve.

5.3 **Legal**

5.3.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires authorities in England and Wales to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.

5.3.2 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on chief finance officers' to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves when the authority is considering its budget requirement.

5.3.3 Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the chief finance officer to report to all the authority's councillors if there is or is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget. This would include situations where reserves have become seriously depleted and it is forecast that the authority will not have the resources to meet its expenditure in a particular financial year.

5.4 **Personnel**

5.4.1 There are no direct personnel/staffing implications arising out of this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 Performance Information and Data

6.1.1 The level of the Council's general reserve disclosed in the statutory accounts presented to Audit Committee in September 2019 for the financial year ended 31 March 2019 was £5.894m equating to 4.40% of net revenue expenditure (as reported in the 2018/2019 Revenue Outturn forms). The current 4% target level of general reserves in accordance with the reserves protocol is £5.361m.

6.1.2 The revenue budget forecast year-end position for 2019/2020 (as at end of Quarter 3) indicates an overspend of £0.064m after the application of £0.6m from earmarked reserves.

6.1.3 Therefore, the potential impact on the forecast outturn position for the general reserve at 31 March 2020 would be as follows:

Table 1: General Reserve	£000
Balance at 31 March 2019	5,894
Contribution to General Reserve	117
Reduction in Fire Authority Precept	132
Use of reserve: funding of forecast overspend	(64)
Forecast Balance at 31 March 2020	6,079

6.1.4 The forecast general reserve balance at 31 March 2020 of £6.079m would represent 4.54% of net revenue expenditure as reported in the 2018/2019 Revenue Outturn forms. The general reserve would therefore be £0.718m above the 4% target level of £5.361m

6.1.5 Appendix 1 gives details of the total earmarked reserves held at the start of the 2019/2020 financial year (£6.829m) with actual reserve movements to the end of quarter 3 (31 December 2019) and forecast movements to 31 March 2020.

6.1.6 The level of earmarked reserves has been determined in accordance with the agreed reserves protocol. The level of usable reserves available to the Authority increased by £2.352m in 2018/2019.

6.1.7 The current summary forecast outturn position for earmarked reserves at 31 March 2020 is as follows:

Table 2: Earmarked Reserves	£000
Balance at 31 March 2019	6,829
Reserve Adjustments	2
Actual Expenditure to Q3	(901)
Forecast Expenditure to Q4	(2,233)
Forecast Balance at 31 March 2020	3,697

6.1.8 For those reserves that have been utilised to fund actual expenditure to 31 December 2019 (£0.901m), details of the expenditure funded have been provided in Appendix 2. Details of additional income transferred to earmarked reserves (£0.002m) have been provided in Appendix 3.

6.1.9 During Quarter 3, earmarked reserves have been assessed for purpose, requirement and adequacy and adjusted where necessary to meet identified liabilities.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The management of earmarked and general reserves (in recognition of the need to plan for known or predicted future obligations, unexpected events or emergencies), helps demonstrate stewardship of the Authority's resources and its ability to provide services to the local community.

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

6.3.1 Not applicable.

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

6.4.1 Stewardship of the Authority's resources allows for the provision of services to the local community in the short and long term.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

6.5.1 Not applicable.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

6.6.1 Not applicable.

6.7 **Integration(across service areas)**

6.7.1 Not applicable.

6.8 **EqlA**

6.8.1 An EQIA is not required as this report provides an estimated outturn position in relation to the Authority's reserve balances for the financial year, on an objective basis in accordance with relevant accounting standards, codes, concepts, principles, guidance and legislation.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 In the short-term, the level and adequacy of reserves are regularly reviewed and monitored through regular outturn/forecast reports.

7.2 There are legal requirements in respect of the reporting of reserves when setting the annual budget and the statutory outturn position is considered by the Authority's external auditors in their audit of the annual Statement of Accounts.

7.3 In the medium term, reserves are assessed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Appendix 3

REF: UOGER18/19.120

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Appendix 1: Earmarked Reserves Movements 2019-2020

<u>Name of Reserve</u>	<u>Balance Brought</u>	<u>Reserve Adjustments</u>		<u>Actual Expenditure</u>	<u>Forecast Expenditure</u>	<u>Balance Carried</u>
	<u>Fwd 1 April 2019</u>	<u>Increases</u>	<u>Decreases</u>			<u>Fwd 31 March 2020</u>
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Deminimis Capital Works	87,812.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	(25,000.00)	62,812.13
Facilities	121,963.00	0.00	0.00	(65,988.00)	(55,975.00)	0.00
Energy Centre	55,659.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(5,565.90)	50,093.10
IT Infrastructure	133,809.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	(50,000.00)	83,809.48
Land at Blaenant Road	136,200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	136,200.00
WRAP Regional Vehicles	51,944.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	51,944.85
Budget Contingency Fund	71,347.89	0.00	0.00	(6,996.00)	(42,947.52)	21,404.37
Building Control Fees	83,180.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	(27,449.40)	55,730.61
Business Support	9,005.50	0.00	0.00	(2,450.00)	(6,555.50)	0.00
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	187,836.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	187,836.00
Community Asset Transfers	13,868.63	0.00	0.00	(13,868.63)	0.00	0.00
Deposits and Bonds	3,200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(160.00)	3,040.00
Downsizing, Redundancy & Transitional Costs	216,227.51	0.00	0.00	(103,806.57)	(47,552.69)	64,868.25
Election Costs	36,228.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	(7,245.77)	28,983.06
Future Interest Rate	106,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(106,000.00)	0.00
General/ Voluntary Sector Grants	60,000.00	0.00	0.00	(32,425.00)	(27,575.00)	0.00
ICT	272,120.31	0.00	0.00	(102,464.80)	(11,005.16)	158,650.35
Insurance Liabilities	922,662.65	0.00	(200,000.00)	0.00	(180,665.66)	541,996.99
Individual Schools Budget (ISB)	186,153.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(33,507.54)	152,645.46
Land & Property Charges	98,591.14	0.00	0.00	0.00	(4,929.56)	93,661.58
Leisure Termination Costs	165,238.28	0.00	0.00	(160,648.00)	(4,590.28)	0.00
Local Development Plan	192,166.54	0.00	0.00	(15,726.00)	(22,707.31)	153,733.23
LMS Balances	1,009,644.58	0.00	0.00	0.00	(1,061,000.00)	(51,355.42)
Members Local Grants	33,834.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	(13,533.87)	20,300.80
Payroll Project Management	23,529.97	0.00	0.00	0.00	(23,529.97)	0.00
Person Centred Practice	7,093.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(7,093.00)	0.00
Prudential Borrowing	200,000.00	200,000.00	0.00	(200,000.00)	0.00	200,000.00
Specialist Commercial Advice (Leisure Trust Review)	64,538.00	0.00	0.00	(9,474.00)	(22,795.00)	32,269.00
Specialist Commercial Advice (Waste Arrangements)	28,522.07	0.00	0.00	(26,619.76)	0.00	1,902.31
Stock Conditions Survey	12,137.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	(2,184.72)	9,952.62
Strategic Business Reviews	250,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(62,500.00)	187,500.00
Superannuation	500,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(25,000.00)	475,000.00

Appendix 1: Earmarked Reserves Movements 2019-2020

<u>Name of Reserve</u>	<u>Balance Brought Fwd 1 April 2019</u>	<u>Reserve Adjustments</u>		<u>Actual Expenditure</u>	<u>Forecast Expenditure</u>	<u>Balance Carried Fwd 31 March 2020</u>
		<u>Increases</u>	<u>Decreases</u>			
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Taxation	141,917.68	0.00	0.00	(5,640.00)	(1,455.88)	134,821.80
Technology Park Feasibility Study	80,000.00	0.00	0.00	(80,000.00)	0.00	0.00
Transport Oncost	23,127.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(4,162.86)	18,964.14
Waste Services	120,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(120,000.00)	0.00
Winter Maintenance	200,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(36,000.00)	164,000.00
Aneurin Bevan Health Board - Education	55,664.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(55,664.00)	0.00
Corporate Procurement	44,633.86	0.00	0.00	(44,633.86)	0.00	0.00
CRASB	11,058.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11,058.00
Education - Gypsy Travellers	43,618.42	0.00	0.00	(8,729.00)	(34,889.42)	0.00
EU Exit Preparations for Food Enforcement	9,738.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(9,738.00)	0.00
PR	33,647.89	0.00	0.00	(21,745.25)	0.00	11,902.64
Leadership Hallmark	24,837.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	24,837.66
Planning WAG Grant Planning Committee	6,264.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	(6,264.27)	0.00
Prevent	10,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
Regen General Contributions Unapplied (Town Centre Management)	47,588.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	(8,565.89)	39,022.37
Rights of Way Diversions	20,255.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(3,645.90)	16,609.10
Section 106 Agreements	225,390.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	(40,570.24)	184,819.96
SEW Adoption Collaboration	231,394.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	231,394.30
SMIFFs	13,558.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	(4,474.18)	9,083.93
SSIA/PLOF Grant	20,171.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	(17,365.31)	2,806.08
Workforce Development Collaboration	93,985.04	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	93,985.04
Restrictive Physical Intervention	5,903.75	0.00	0.00	0.00	(1,948.24)	3,955.51
School Based Counselling	2,385.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(2,385.00)	0.00
Youth Service	23,030.81	2,500.00	0.00	0.00	(8,425.17)	17,105.64
Total:	6,828,683.01	202,500.00	(200,000.00)	(901,214.87)	(2,232,623.19)	3,697,344.95

Appendix 2: Expenditure Funded by Earmarked Reserves, 2019-2020

<u>Name of Reserve</u>	<u>Actual Expenditure to Q3</u>	<u>Purpose of Expenditure</u>
	£	
Facilities	65,988.00	Works carried out at Brynmawr Market Hall Cinema.
Budget Contingency Fund	6,996.00	Funding the safeguarding of Teacher & Learning Responsibility payments at Abertillery Learning Campus following a restructure.
Business Support	2,450.00	Staff training costs.
Community Asset Transfers	13,868.63	Reserve fully utilised to fund Grounds CAT transfers.
Downsizing, Redundancy & Transitional Costs	103,806.57	Redundancies relating to staff downsizing .
General/ Voluntary Sector Grants	32,425.00	Funding the Authority's contribution towards the Citizens Advice Bureau.
ICT	102,464.80	Laptop Refresh
Leisure Termination Costs	160,648.00	Additional financial support to Aneurin Leisure to fund early termination costs.
Local Development Plan	15,726.00	Payment of invoice - AECOM Integrated Sustainability Appraisal.
Prudential Borrowing	200,000.00	Repairs to Roads
Specialist Commercial Advice (Leisure Trust Review)	9,474.00	Procurement of specialist advice for reviewing the delivery model.
Specialist Commercial Advice (Waste Arrangements)	26,619.76	Fees in respect of financial due diligence on Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd.
Taxation	5,640.00	To fund cost in relation to HMRC Making Tax Digital requirements.
Technology Park Feasibility Study	80,000.00	Provision of Concept Reports
Corporate Procurement	44,633.86	Utilising reserve for Strategic Business Review Support - 3rd Party Spend Consultant Fees
Education - Gypsy Travellers	8,729.00	Contribution towards employee costs in relation to Early Years.
IER	21,745.25	Stationery & Postage costs in relation to the Individual Electoral Register.
Total to Qtr 3:	901,214.87	

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Appendix 3: Additional Income Transferred to Earmarked Reserves, 2019-2020

<u>Name of Reserve</u>	<u>Income to Q3</u>	<u>Source of Income</u>
Youth Service	<p style="text-align: center;">£</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2,500.00</p>	Increase in reserve to cover backdated restructure.
Total to Qtr 3:	2,500.00	

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Agenda Item 17

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**
Report Subject: **Position Statement on the Council's CCTV system**
Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources (SIRO for CCTV)
Clive Rogers, Head of Community Services
Bernadette Elias, Head of Governance and Partnerships**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	w/c 27.01.20	26.02.20			12.02.20	11.03.20		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To provide a position statement on the Council's new overt CCTV system.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 **Service Review 2018/19**

As part of the Council's budget setting process for 2019/20 a review of the CCTV arrangements was undertaken. On 24th October 2018, the Council agreed an option to continue the provision of a CCTV service in Blaenau Gwent. This involved a move away from the existing Service Level Agreement with Newport City Council and the development of a sustainable solution.
 - 2.2 The option agreed by Council changed the monitoring arrangements. This meant moving the system from a 24/7 monitored system with Newport City Council to a 'record only' system. Footage is available for download on request of authorised agencies via a local unmanned control room, with no 'live' feeds being monitored.
 - 2.3 The new system uses digital technology with new high definition cameras utilising wireless technology to improve quality of the imagery and reduce connectivity costs.
 - 2.4 As part of the review, work was undertaken with Gwent Police on the camera locations, the aim being to reduce the estate to 32 cameras providing coverage, with a focus on town centres based on evidence of crime and anti-social behaviour. The new arrangements would also allow for improving flexibility of CCTV coverage by adding new or relocating existing cameras where the infrastructure, site location and data networks are suitable and available. Cameras may be easily removed with no implications to the functionality of the system. The use of deployable cameras for crime hot spots can be added to the system as and when required.

2.5 **Location update**

There are currently 53 CCTV cameras installed on 33 specific posts in seven CCTV zone areas. These zones cover Ebbw Vale, Abertillery, Brynmawr, Tredegar, Cwm, Blaina and Llanhilleth train station. Each zone is legally compliant through Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) in-line with the expectation of the Surveillance Camera Commissioner.

2.6 This is an increase in the number of cameras agreed in the Council report in 2018. This due to on-site surveys and the pre-tender design process which identified technical restrictions associated with wireless transmission, site lines at specific locations, and camera fields of view to ensure effective coverage.

2.7 It has not been viable to put cameras in all of the locations initially identified due to technical and financial challenges. These challenges included the remote locations of sites which resulted in no direct line of sight between the camera locations and main recording equipment. This would result in the need to install extensive additional wireless infrastructure to serve a small amount of cameras. Provision of additional 4G network cameras was considered, however, these have limitations due to local signal strength and would require additional works to ensure operation that could ultimately be unsuccessful. As a consequence, to date no new cameras have been installed at Rassau Underpass and there are less cameras in Cefn Golau (two as opposed to four). Four cameras have been installed as a result of consolidating CCTV requirements at the new school site in Six Bells, and is being funded by the School Programme.

2.8 As part of the new arrangements, four deployable cameras were purchased and a testing phase has been implemented which has highlighted a number of key issues. This included solving software issues for downloading footage, and preparatory work aligned to Health and Safety for camera deployment which has included the fabrication of heavy duty brackets for deployment on standard street lighting columns.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The report was considered by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 12th February 2020 and the Committee supported Option 2. An all Member Briefing Session was also requested by the Committee and noted as part of the Action Sheet.

3.2 **Option One** - That the Executive:

- Considers the position statement on the overt CCTV function;
- includes the draft Policy and Strategy Framework for CCTV on the 2020/21 Forward Work Programme for endorsement; and
- receives the annual monitoring report.

Option Two - That the Executive:

- Considers and provides comment on the position statement on the overt CCTV function
- includes the draft Policy and Strategy Framework for CCTV on the 2020/21 Forward Work Programme for endorsement; and
- receives the annual monitoring report.

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

The provision of a CCTV service is non-statutory function and not required under legislation, however the CCTV system is one of a range of tools the Council uses with its partners to tackle crime and disorder, in-line with the requirements of its community safety partnerships (CSP) powers.

In utilising CCTV to tackle crime and disorder the Council is contributing to the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan Objective for Safe and Friendly Communities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

The provision of the new CCTV system, led to financial savings for the 2019/20. i.e. the termination of both the BT Contract (£68,000) and the Service Level Agreement with Newport City Council (£81,000).

The capital cost for implementing the new CCTV system as described was £150,000 and the additional cameras were covered by contingency sums, provisos in the tender contract and therefore the final outturn costs for the project were within the agreed budget.

The overall increase in number of cameras deployed (note above) has not impacted on the operational revenue costs required to run and maintain the equipment and will be covered within the current allocated revenue provision.

The 2019/20 operational revenue budget for CCTV is £83,000, which incorporates the provision for power (£8,000), annual running and maintenance (£25,000) and revenue requirements for monitoring and the provision of footage (£50,000).

As of month nine of 2019/20 the budget is forecasting a small underspend. This is as a consequence of reduced costs for maintenance (as it is a new system still under warranty), and staffing (not full year costs), but increased costs for unlimited power supply to the camera system (metered power supplies are being investigated to reduce this cost for 2020/21).

To ensure continued efficient operation of the system the budget should also provide allowance for planned preventative maintenance including regular replacement of components such as Recording media (hard drives), Cameras, Wireless transmission equipment, and ICT equipment such as server and PC's. Without this the system will degrade and become obsolete due to its location within the external environment and future technological and software changes.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.2.1 **Legal Compliance**

There is risk associated with non-compliance of good practice guidance provided by the Surveillance Commissioners and GDPR requirements

This risk will be mitigated by the appropriate policies / strategies being in place ensuring compliance with legislation and best practice.

5.2.2 **Revenue Implications moving forward**

There is a risk that unforeseen revenue costs related to dealing with operation of the CCTV arrangements will exceed the agreed budget.

This will need to be kept under review and corrective action taken as appropriate as part of normal budget monitoring.

5.2.3 **Technical Issues**

There has been a number of technical issues as the system has been installed and implementation and operational use has begun. There is a risk that there may be on-going technical issues.

To mitigate these issues technical services will be regularly monitoring the system for faults and working closely with the contractor to remedy these. Technical Services will be holding regular meetings with the contractor to discuss the status of the system, any future works remedial works required and what future improvements will need to be considered.

Due to the reduced data transfer rates resulting from removing the high cost rental fibre lines from the previous scheme, there are operational issues with retrieval in some instances of extremely large volume of video images when requested by the police. Options to mitigate this have been investigated with the contractor.

5.3 ***Legal***

The Council when operating a surveillance camera system needs to operate within the appropriate legislation e.g. Human Rights and Data Protection laws. The Surveillance Camera Commissioner provides guidance via the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice to support appropriate compliance.

A crucial step to ensure that the Council is operating in-line with these expectations is the completion of Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for our CCTV cameras and supporting systems. DPIAs help to ensure that the Council is lawfully operating systems, and establish and identify the 'pressing need' to capture CCTV images.

The Control Room where images captured by the system can be checked and transferred is restricted to authorised people. The Council has an obligation to guard against unauthorised use, access or disclosure.

There is a requirement for the Council to regularly review the CCTV system to ensure it remains justified, with an expectation from the use of the DPIA process on an annual cycle.

5.4 **Human Resources**

The Council's Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) is the Chief Officer Resources, aligned to the responsibilities via the General Data Protections Regulations (GDPR).

The Council's Technical Services Team has project managed the tendering, design, and implementation of the Council's new CCTV's system.

The Policy Team (Community Safety) has provided policy support to ensure that the Council is taking into considerations the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice, and has been providing operational support to enable to transfer of imagery to responsible authorities such as Gwent Police.

Out of hours cover for the CCTV system, for major emergency incidents is provided by the Emergency Duty Team.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The CCTV system is operational and has been actively providing high quality digital imagery to appropriate responsible authorities, such as Gwent Police, to aid the detection and prevention of crime and disorder across the local areas.

Following the installation of the new system there have been a number of technical issues which have presented as the process moves into operational delivery. The technical and external issues have included security and stability of the local Low Voltage power supplies, use of existing columns and their condition, local wireless interference, outages in broadband lines, vandalism, adverse weather conditions and premature failure of equipment. The issues may continue into the foreseeable future, however Technical Services will be implementing procedures to regularly monitor the system status and undertaking remedial works. The result of these issues has been and may continue to be that the transmission and recording of images has been and maybe interrupted at some periods. As a consequence of these issues, Technical Services and the contractor continue to liaise to ensure that the system is operating effectively.

The Council has received 42 requests for CCTV footage from all seven camera zones (30-Jul-19 to 15-Jan-20):

- 26 requests from Gwent Police in relation to the prevention and detection of crime;
- Four from Insurance companies in relation to road traffic accidents;
- Eight from members of public relating to road traffic incidents, potential crimes and subject access requests.
- Four incidents reported by local Councillors.

Footage has been shared with the Police on 16 occasions, for a variety of incidents including serious violence and disorder, burglary, criminal damage, drink-driving and road traffic incidents. This footage is provided in an evidential format for the Police to use to investigate and prosecute offenders, and to share as appropriately within the criminal justice system.

When appropriate footage from incidents reported by councillors and members of the public have been passed to the police, as the responsible authority.

Some incidents reported have been outside the scope and view of the CCTV system so no footage has been captured. Also, there has been a small number of occasions (four requests) when footage has not been available because of operational issues with cameras or system.

Compliance update

The cameras that are recording in each of the zones have been subject to the necessary DPIAs and have been approved and signed off by the Council's Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO).

The CCTV Policy and Operating Framework for the Council is being revised in-line with the new GDPR Privacy Commissioner expectation.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

The provision of CCTV is in place to assist with the prevention and detection of crime and disorder. The DPIA process described above ensures that appropriate consideration is given to the pressing need for surveillance to ensure that the Council is lawfully breaching people's rights under relevant legislation such as human rights and data protection.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

As part of the implementation of the new CCTV system, there was extensive involvement with Gwent Police who also represented views from town centres traders. This dialogue included discussions on the camera positions to identify overlaps and obsolete positions.

Support for the continuation of a CCTV service in the local areas was also provided by correspondence from the local MP.

In terms of the DPIAs process supporting evidence was utilised to establish the pressing need for cameras, e.g. crime statistics.

Moving forward, proactive involvement will be a key part of the annual review process of the CCTV system.

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

The new CCTV system utilises up-to-date hi-tech equipment and software which will provide a long-term CCTV solution, as long as there is appropriate investment in the running, upkeep and maintenance of the overall system. An annual review process will support this process, and

allow for forward planning and technological advancement to be regularly considered.

The CCTV Policy and Operating Framework for the Council is being revised in-line with the new GDPR Privacy Commissioner expectation.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The CCTV system provides a service which is focused on reactively providing evidence to police in relation to crime and disorder which will have already occurred.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

There has been extensive collaboration with Gwent Police in relation to the implementation of the new CCTV system, and this continues in relation to the exchange of imagery as evidence.

The Council remains in discussions on the opportunities at regional basis with partner organisations and neighbouring local authorities for greater collaboration in relation to CCTV. However, currently there are no definitive proposals for any regional collaborations.

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

The new policy and strategy framework for CCTV for the Council, taking into account the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice, will look to take wider consideration of CCTV as a whole, which is utilised by the Council.

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

As this is a progress report there is no requirement to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. Equality Issues are considered as part of the operational delivery of the service.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The Surveillance Camera Code of Practice outlines considerations for monitoring arrangements for CCTV systems noting there should be effective review and audit mechanisms. This will inform the Council's new CCTV Policy and Operating Framework.

The Council's SIRO will establish an officer group to monitor the arrangements to ensure compliance.

An annual monitoring report will form part of the committee forward work programme.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

N/A

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Agenda Item 18

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

Report Subject: **Corporate Services Workforce Sickness Absence Performance**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Daniels, Leader / Executive Member**

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Morris, Managing Director
Andrea J Prosser, Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
DMT	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	Feb 2020	20.02.20			12/02/20	11/03/20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the opportunity to consider and challenge relevant Portfolio sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Staff attendance is critical in delivering services and the Council's priorities and is a key performance indicator reflected in the quarterly Finance and Performance report. Improving attendance remains a key priority for the Council and is linked to the need to create efficiencies and improve service delivery.

- 2.2 Sickness absence within the Authority is identified as a key risk and it is acknowledged that high levels of sickness absence will have a detrimental impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively. Therefore, the need to reduce the impact and cost of sickness absence has been identified as a corporate priority.

2.3 Performance Information

- 2.3.1 The overall year end outturn figure for 2018/19 for the Council was 12.66 days per full time equivalent (FTE) employee. An increase from the previous year's outturn of 11.2 days and exceeds the target set of 8.5 days.

- 2.3.4 Whilst sickness levels remain high it is important to note that the majority of employees have little or no sickness absence and attend work regularly. The vast majority of Council employees have excellent attendance levels as data indicates that 2463 employees attended work every day during the period from April 2018 to March 2019 with the Council having an attendance level of 94.3%.

2.3.5 A report reviewing workforce Sickness Absence Performance for the Council went to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on the 19th November 2019. The Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations for improvement and also recommended the following; that processes be put in place for individual Directorates to report quarterly to their specific scrutiny committees for challenge and scrutiny on Directorate's sickness absence performance; and that the Executive Committee also have the opportunity to review this report.

2.3.6 **Appendix 1** outlines the sickness performance information for the Corporate Services Directorate for quarter 1 and 2 of 2019/20 as well as summarising the position in 2018/19.

3. Directorate Comments/Actions for Improvement

3.1 Management Actions for Absence management 2019

Staff are reminded of the policy in team meetings (recent one as result of Managers brief). Absence is discussed at Commercial Services Management Team Meeting and through regular meetings with OD Team and Senior Business Partner. Managers are reminded of the process for using iTrent.

Communications and Marketing

- Low levels of sickness in so normal absence management processes applied including return to work interviews.

Customer Service and Benefits

- Low levels of sickness in general so normal absence management processes applied including return to work interviews. An incident of longer term absence due to back pain. This was managed through a phased return and ongoing monitoring through weekly meetings.

STT

- Low levels of sickness in so normal absence management processes applied including return to work interviews.
- Pro-active support for member of staff experiencing anxiety included a temporary
- Reduction in workload
- Increased home-working for a number of weeks
- Short working days (time reimbursed)
- Occupational health referral
- Identification of a counselling service (time reimbursed to allow attendance)
- Identification of Mindfulness course (time reimbursed to allow attendance)

Procurement

- Low levels of sickness in so normal absence management processes applied including return to work interviews.

Business Support

- Business Support identified as a 'hotspot' with 643 days of sickness
- A full managerial audit of sickness absence carried out to include managerial compliance and a review of long term sickness cases – Managing Attendance policy applied in full with return to work and absence review meetings completed
- Main reason for long term sickness was mental health issues as a result of personal stress. All cases now resolved with either a return to work or exit from the Council. One case was significant/complex and elongated because of the nature of the case
- Target set at 5.5 days
- Sickness absence is an agenda item at management and team meetings as well as 121 meetings with all supervisory management
- Staff encouraged to take preventative approach to avoid sickness absence e.g. Workplace assessments, signposting to support for mental health issues

Organisational Development

- 60.9 days reported sick
- Target set at 5.5 days
- 2 people long term sick – mental health issues as a result of personal stress – both returned to work
- Managing Attendance policy applied in full with return to work and absence review meetings completed
- Sickness absence is an agenda item at management and team meetings as well as 121 meetings with all supervisory management
- Staff encouraged to take preventative approach to avoid sickness absence e.g. Workplace assessments, signposting to support for mental health issues

Social Care Workforce Development Service

- 96 days reported sick
- 2 people long term sick during period, 1 with mental health issues as a result of personal stress and 1 was a broken collar bones – both returned to work
- Managing Attendance policy applied in full with return to work and absence review meetings completed
- Target set at 5.5 days
- Sickness absence is an agenda item at management and team meetings as well as 121 meetings with all supervisory management
- Staff encouraged to take preventative approach to avoid sickness absence e.g. Workplace assessments, signposting to support for mental health issues

Senior Management

- Period of Post-surgery recovered managed through a phased return to work

Resources - General

- Overall attendance positive with absence to Q2 at 3.46 days per person, within the target of 5.5 days.

- Managing Attendance policy applied with return to work and absence review meetings completed.
- Sickness absence is an agenda item at management and team meetings as well as 121 meetings.

There have been 20 absences in total 7 of which exceeded 10 days. Of these:

Accountancy

- 5 long term absences (exceeding 10 days), 2 of which were related to Anxiety (of which 1 work related) and 3 minor operations and recovery periods.
- Referrals made to occupational health
- Identification of a counselling service & mindfulness course (time reimbursed to allow attendance)
- Phased return agreed including extended working from home

Internal Audit, Risk & Insurance

- Low levels of sickness, absence management processes applied including return to work interviews.

Revenues

- 2 long term absences (exceeding 10 days), relating to Anxiety (personal) and operation and recovery period.
- Referral made to occupational health
- Phased return to work agreed

Legal & Corporate Compliance

- Low levels of sickness; normal absence management processes applied including return to work interviews.
- Proactive approach to prevention, particularly in terms of early identification of workplace issues.

Governance and Partnerships

- Quarter 2 performance is below the target of 5.5
- Absence management is a standing item on the Managers team meeting agenda,
- 121 meetings also cover any specific issues with head of service.
- Managing Attendance policy applied with, return to work and absence review meetings completed.
- Referrals to occupational health are made where required
- Phased return to work plans established where required
- Preventative and proactive measures discussed including workplace assessments.

- 4. Options for Recommendation**
- 4.1 The report will be considered by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 3rd March 2020, and any comments will be provided verbally to the Executive Committee.
- 4.2 **Option 1**
That the Executive Committee consider the sickness absence performance information and proposed arrangements to improve attendance rates within the Corporate Services Directorate identify any further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement.
- 4.3 **Option 2**
That the Executive Committee agree the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance.
5. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 5.1 **Impact on Budget** (short and long term impact)
There are direct and indirect costs of sickness absence which are a key driver in the Council's approach to effectively improve attendance at work.
- 5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**
The underperformance in relation to the high levels of sickness absence does present a significant risk in terms of the impact on front line service delivery and continuity through lost time and staffing changes. In addition, the financial implications associated with sickness absence directly impact on the Council's financial efficiency targets and the level of financial savings that the Council needs to achieve. Mitigating actions are detailed within the report.
- 5.3 **Legal**
There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.4 **Human Resources**
The staffing implications are detailed within the content of the report.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***
The detailed performance evidence is detailed in appendix 1 as well as the actions taken to address the level of underperformance.
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
Information included within the report will provide opportunity for the public to scrutinise the Council's performance and provide accountability across the Council.
- 6.3 ***Involvement*** (consultation, engagement, participation)

Trade Union have been consulted on the sickness absence performance and are committed to working with the Council to improve attendance.

- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term*** (forward planning)
Options detailed in this report contribute directly to enabling the workforce for the future.
- 6.5 **Preventative focus**
The review of the Organisational Development Strategy will focus on prevention.
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
There are regular discussions with the national Human Resources Directors Network and regionally in terms of good practice or emerging practice in reducing sickness absence. There are early discussions with the WLGA to launch a project to learn from England any initiatives in relation to wellbeing.
- 6.7 ***Integration*** (across service areas)
NA
- 6.8 **EqlA** (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)
The review of sickness absence performance was carried out and included all employees of the Council.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Sickness Analysis Corporate Services

Sickness Absence 2019/20 (Quarter 1 & 2) – Corporate Services

Managing Director - Michelle Morris
 Chief Officer Commercial – Anne Louise Clarke
 Head of Organisational Development – Andrea Prosser
 Head of Governance and Partnerships - Bernadette Elias
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance - Andrea Jones
 Chief Officer Resources - Rhian Hayden

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

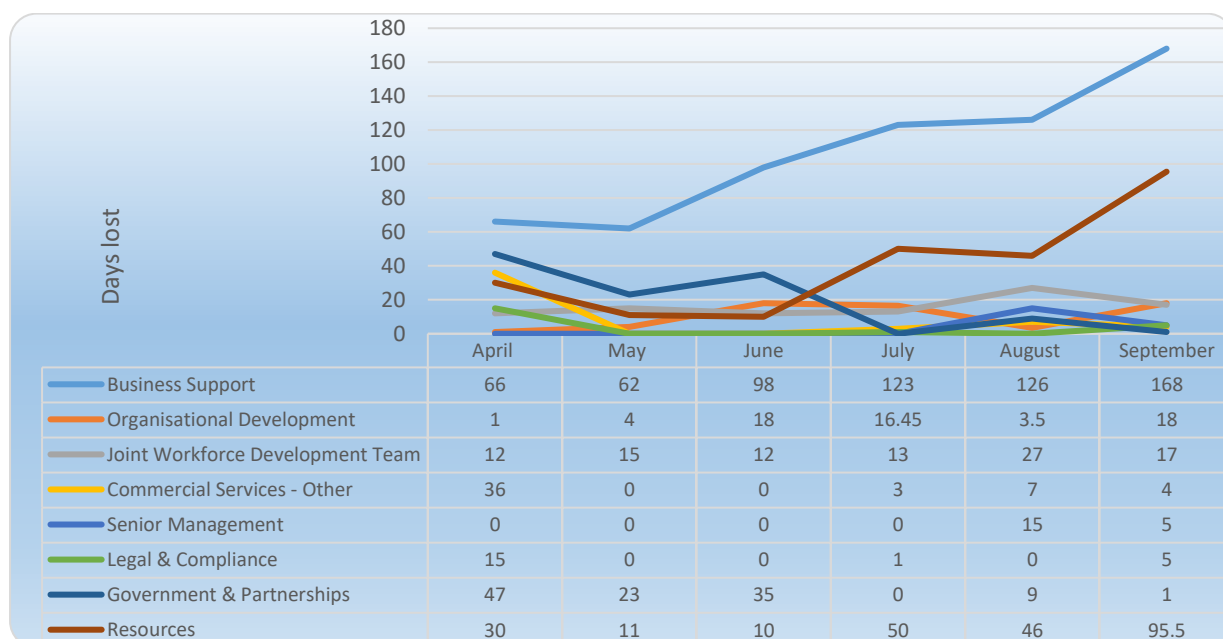
2019/20	Qtr1 (Target 2.75)	Qtr2 (Target 5.50)
Council	3.06	5.93
Education	2.84	5.09
Social Services	3.62	7.45
Regeneration & Community Services	3.78	7.09

2019/20	Qtr1 (Target 2.75)	Qtr2 (Target 5.50)
Corporate Services Total	1.71	4.34
Resources	0.76	3.46
Governance & Partnerships	3.73	4.01
Legal & Corporate Compliance	1.46	2.00
Senior Management	0.00	3.33
Commercial Services (OD /SCW/ BS)	2.25	6.29
Commercial Services (Other)	0.71	1.21
Commercial Services Total	1.83	4.92

- 2018/19 – Annual Review Corporate Services
- 8.29 FTE days lost (Quarter 1 2.19, Quarter 2 – 3.86)
 - 61.35% of absences were long term
 - 35 employees with one or more absences - mental health
 - 1,698 working days lost - mental health
 - 4 employees with more than 6 calendar months sickness
 - 1 employee disciplined for sickness absence

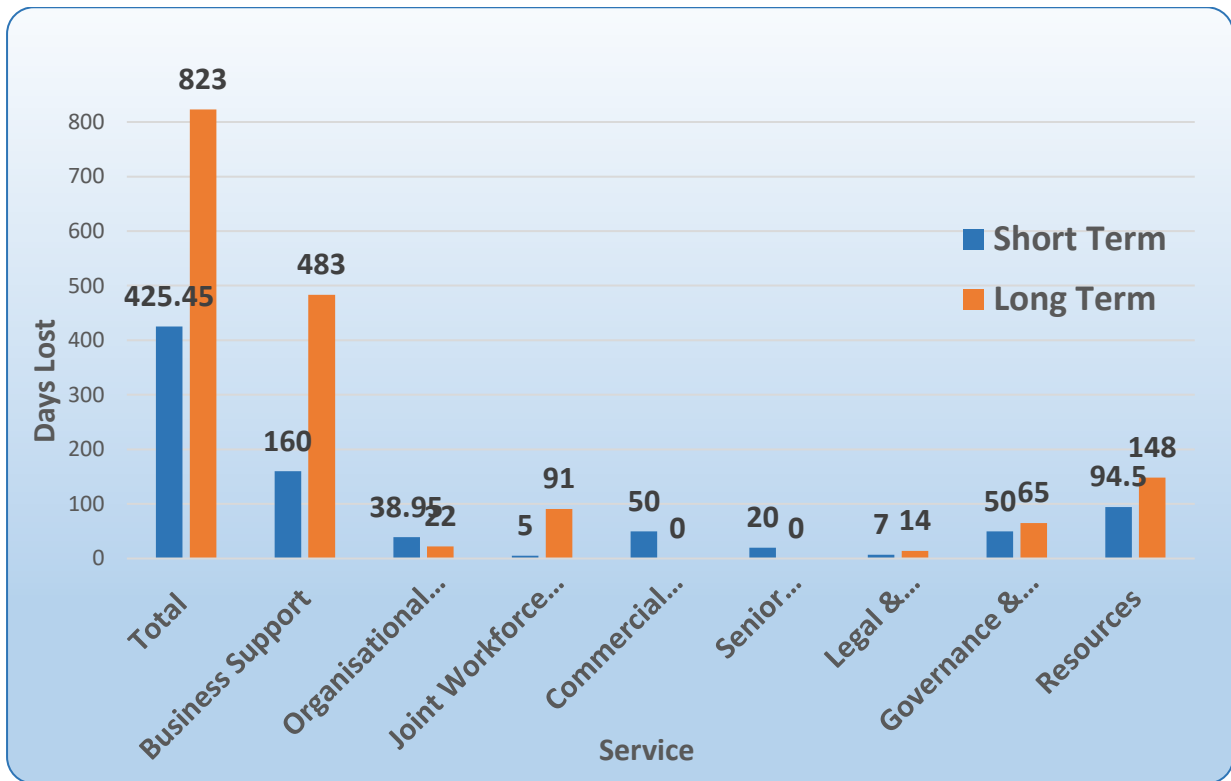
Total Working Days Lost - 01.04.19 – 30.09.19

- **1,248.45** working days lost to sickness absence (8,464.98 hours)



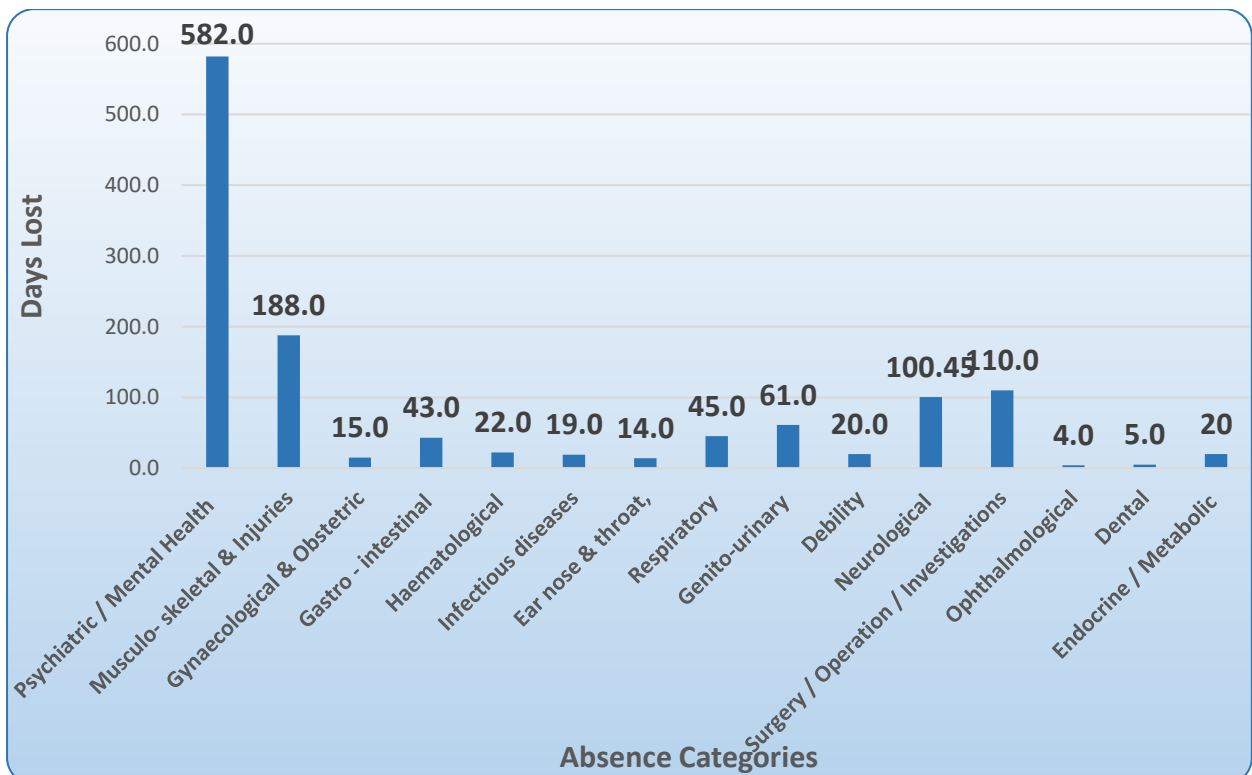
Total Working Days Lost - Short Term / Long Term

- 65.9% of absence is long term.



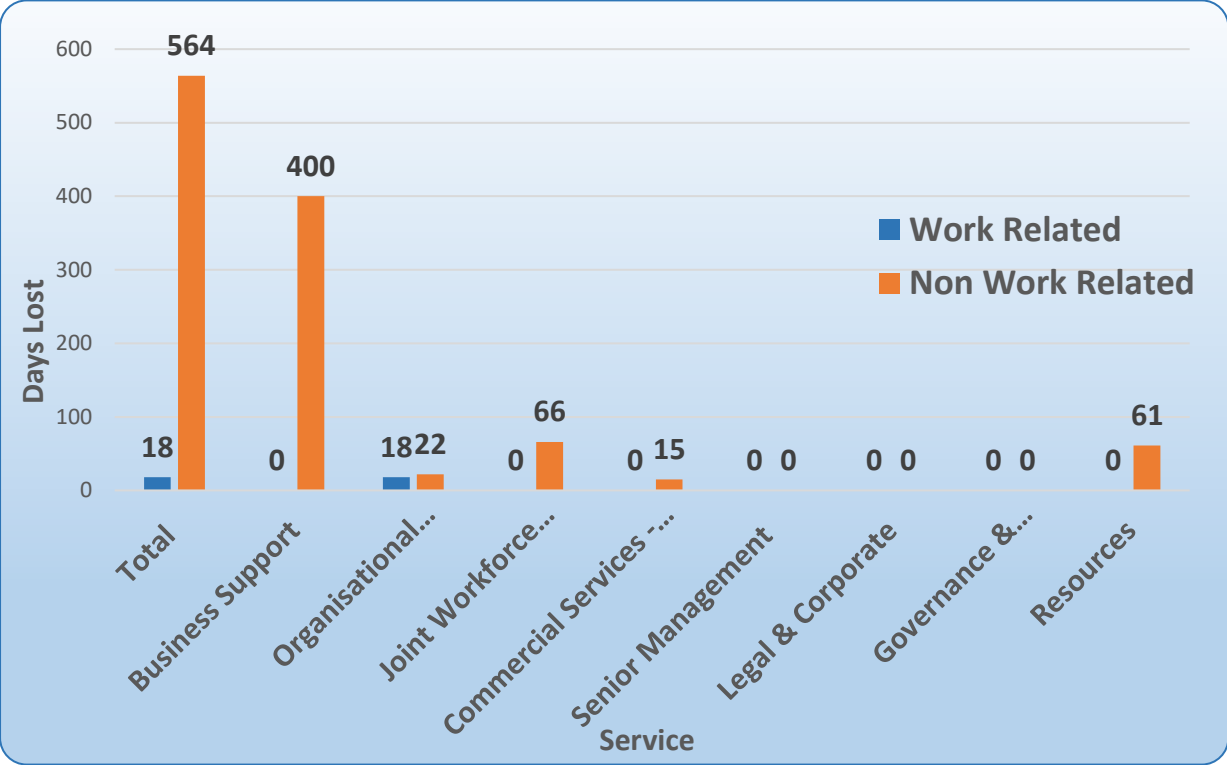
Total Working Days Lost by Reason

- Top 3 reasons – Psychiatric/Mental Health, Musculo-skeletal & Injuries and Surgery/Operation
- 582 working days lost to Psychiatric / Mental Health



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

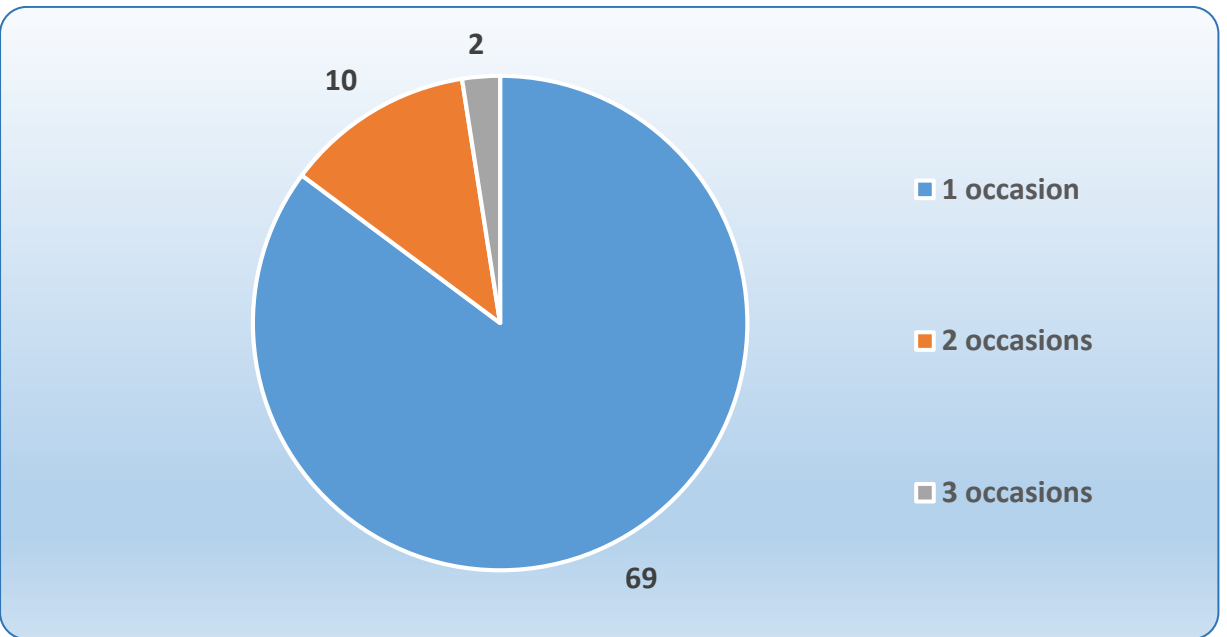
- 3% of days lost to Psychiatric / Mental Health identified as work related
- 22 employees with one or more absences - Mental Health
- 23 occasions of absence - Mental Health



Number reporting sickness

- Number of staff reporting sick – 82
- Number of occasions of sickness absence - 95

Number of occasions of absence per employee



Impact - Financial / Staff Resources

- The cost of lost time for the six-month period is estimated at **£101,410.46** based on an average salary of **£23,107.11 – £11.98** per hour (Average Salary - Pay Policy calculation excluding staff on the Teachers pay and conditions). These costs do not include on-costs, cover arrangements or management time to manage the sickness.
- This equates to **8.80 FTE** employees being absent for the full 6 months.

Management of Sickness Absence

- **16** Open sickness cases as at 30.09.19
- **20** Occupational health referrals made during the period
- Number of Trigger Breaks based on the most recent absence in the period for each employee (however they have broken more than one trigger in the rolling year)
 - **4 employees - 3 or more occasions**
 - **33 employees - 10 or more days absence**
 - **12 employees - 3 or more occasions & 10 or more days**
 - **33 employees - Did not hit a trigger**
- **31.58%** Return to works recorded on iTrent
- **No** Written Warnings issued

Agenda Item 19

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**
Report Subject: **Tech Valleys**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D. Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
17.12.19	07.01.20	26.02.20			23.01.20	11.03.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

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

2. Scope and Background

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

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

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

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

2.4 The current members of the Advisory Group are:

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

Current Position

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

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

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

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

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

(i) Industry in Schools

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

The project will:

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

(ii) Future Skills Academy

The project will:

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

- provide capacity for higher level training delivery from HE and FE for Business in existing and future/emerging technologies;
 - provide a 'maker space' to support inward investment and business start-ups by offering companies access to latest technologies;
 - have an apprenticeship programme that will generate engineers and technicians for the future;
 - provide a "first level or back to work" employment experience; and
 - support the culture of enterprise through the establishment of a Tech Lab.
- 2.8 The proposal under consideration will require capital and revenue investment from Tech Valleys and it is envisaged that this will be phased over the length of the programme. The contribution will be detailed within a business plan and demonstrate the commitment over a period of time.
- 2.9 There has already been a financial commitment made by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council with the purchase of premises for the proposed academy, the former Monwel Hankinson Building on Letchworth Rd in Ebbw Vale. The projects identified to date in the report will form part of a longer term investment pipeline of activity in line with the vision.

Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 The report was considered by the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 23rd January 2020. The committee supported Option 1.

3.2 **Option 1**

To note and endorse the work of the Tech Valleys Programme

Option 2

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

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

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

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

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

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

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

5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

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

5.3 *Legal*

There are no legal implications associated with the report

5.4 *Human Resources*

There are no immediate resource implications associated with the report.

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

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

Performance of the Tech Valleys Programme

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

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

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

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

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

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

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

6.5 *Preventative focus*

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

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

6.7 *Integration(across service areas)*

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

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

7. Monitoring Arrangements

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Agenda Item 20

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

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

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor D. Davies**

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

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

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the opportunity to consider and challenge relevant Directorate sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement.

2. Scope and Background

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

3 Performance Information

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

3.3 A report reviewing workforce Sickness Absence Performance for the Council went to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on the 19th November 2019. The Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations for improvement and also recommend the following; that processes be put in place for individual Directorates to report quarterly to their specific scrutiny committees for challenge and scrutiny on Directorate's sickness absence performance; and that the Executive Committee also have the opportunity to review this report.

3.4 **Appendix 1** outlines the sickness performance information for the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate for quarter 1 and 2 of 2019/20 as well as summarising the position in 2018/19.

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

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

Actions

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

5. **Options for Recommendation**

5.1 The report was considered by the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 23rd January 2020.

5.2 **Option 1**

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

5.2 **Option 2**

That the Executive Committee agrees the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance.

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

7.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

NA

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

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

8. Monitoring Arrangements

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Sickness Absence Monitoring – Quarters 1 and 2

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

Corporate Director – Richard Crook

Head of Regeneration & Development – Ellie Fry

Head of Community Services – Clive Rogers Evans

Service Manager Public Protection – Dave Thompson

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

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

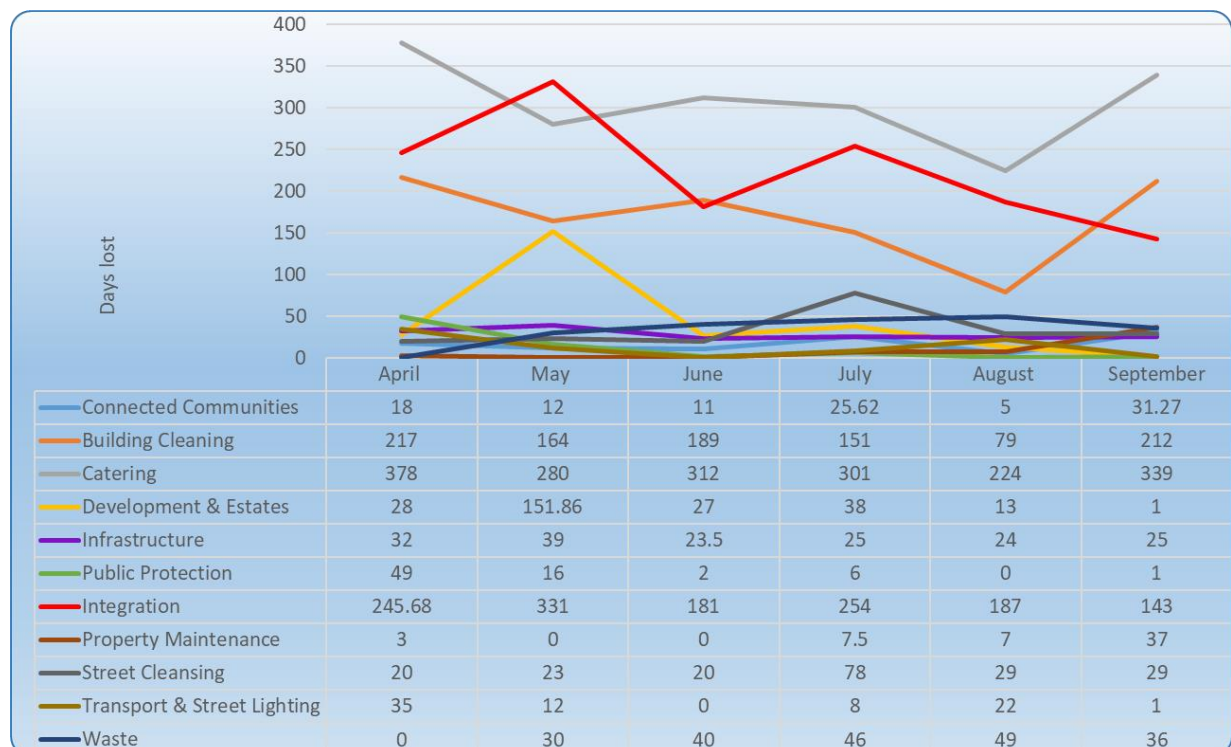
2019/20	Qtr1 (Target 2.75)	Qtr2 (Target 5.50)
Regeneration & Community Services	3.78	7.09
Regeneration & Development	1.57	2.80
Community Services	4.74	9.00
Public Protection	1.71	1.86
Senior Management	0.00	0.00

2018/19 – Annual Review Regeneration & Community Services

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

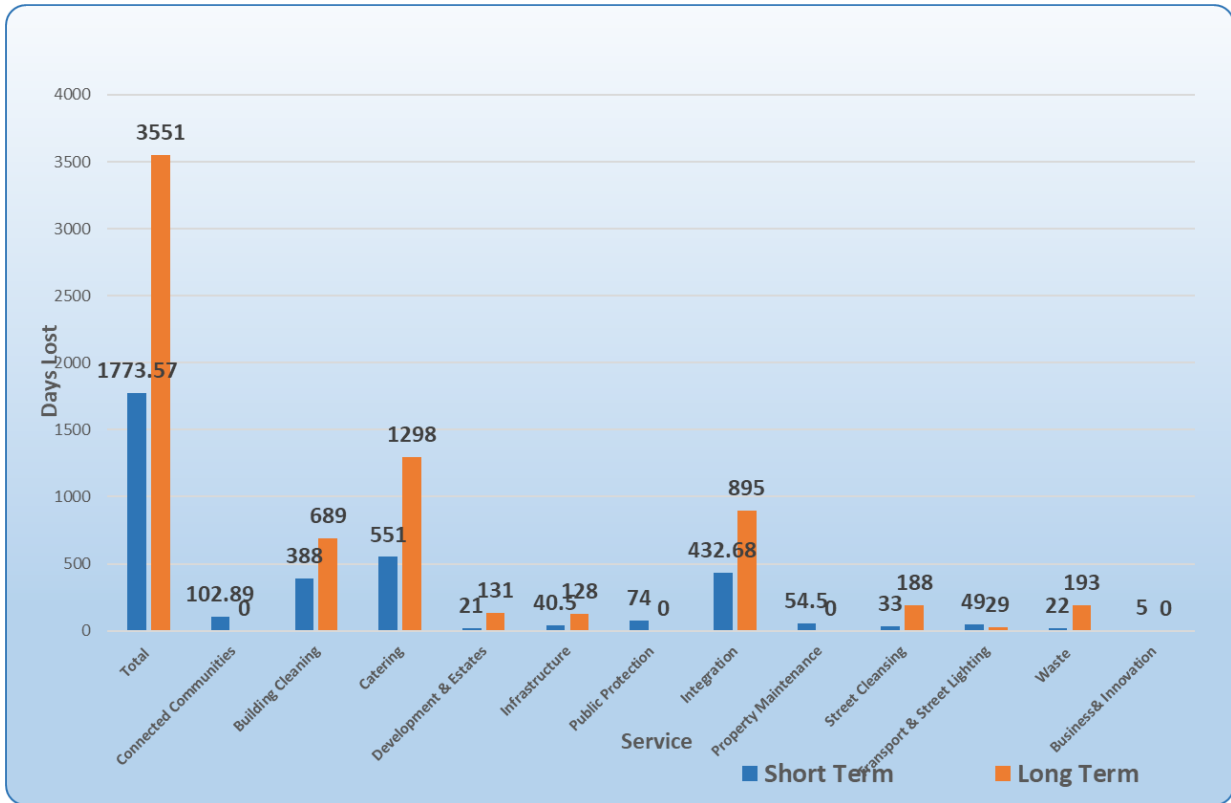
Total Working Days Lost - 01.04.19 – 30.09.19

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



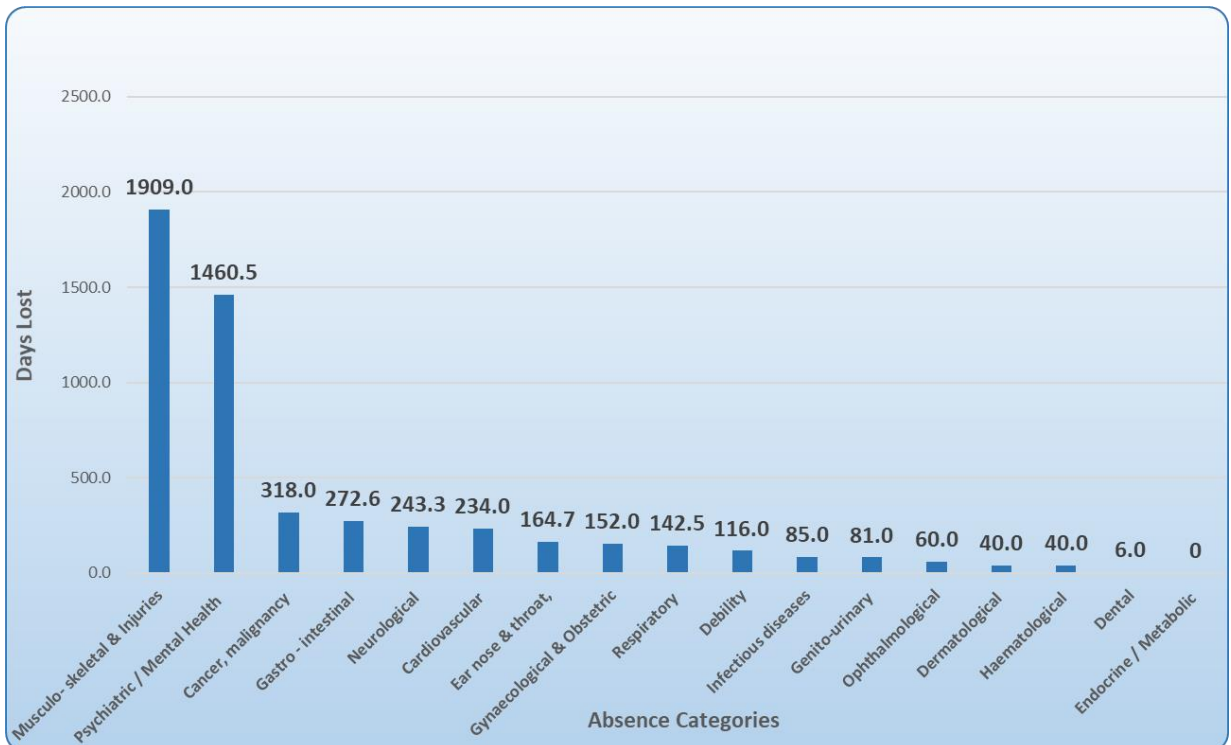
Total Working Days Lost - Short Term / Long Term

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



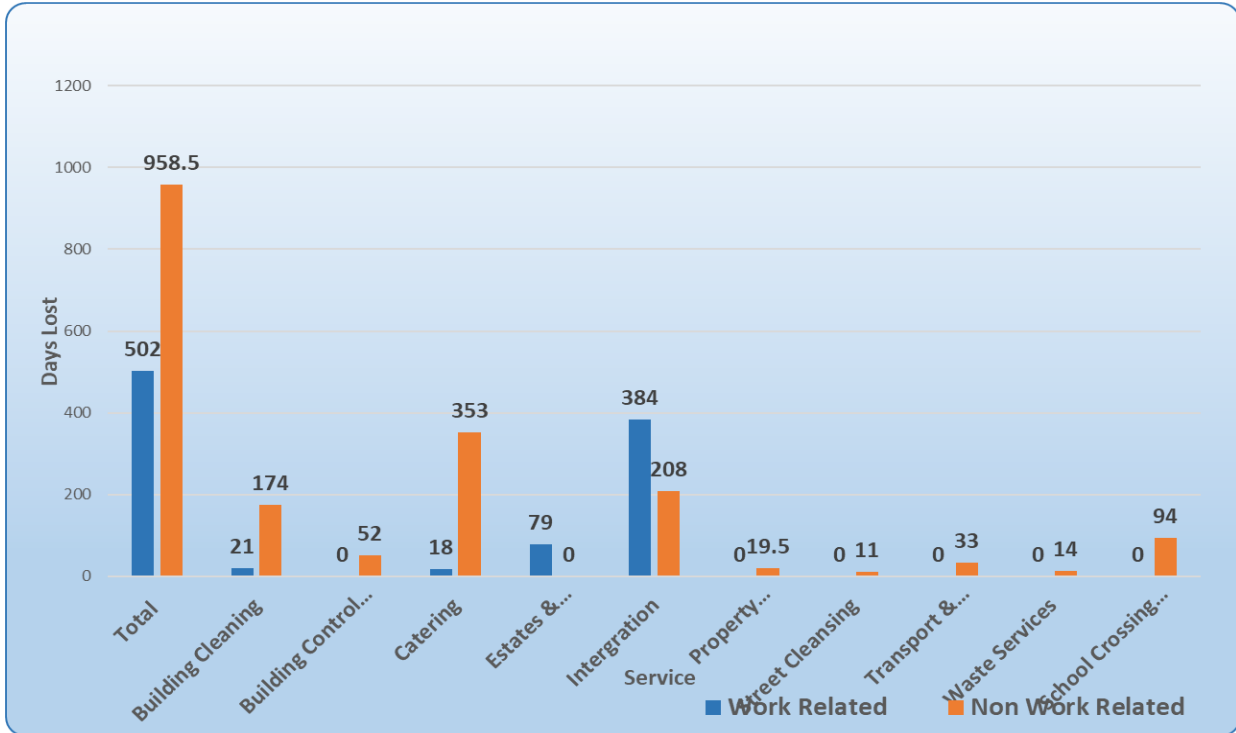
Total Working Days Lost by Reason

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



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

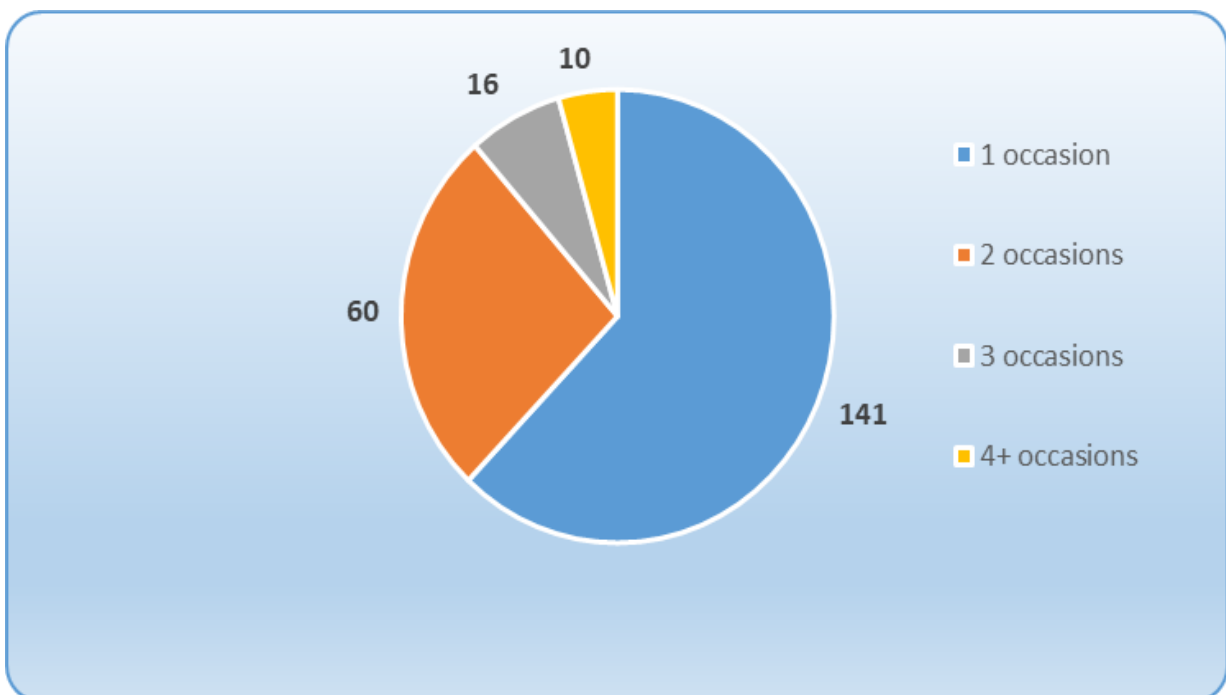
- 34% of days lost to Psychiatric / Mental Health identified as work related
- 46 employees with one or more absences - Mental Health
- 65 occasions of absence - Mental Health



Number reporting sickness

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

Number of occasions of absence per employee



Impact - Financial / Staff Resources

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

Management of Sickness Absence

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

Agenda Item 21

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

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

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

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

Reporting Pathway (Dates to be Entered)								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
21/01/20	28/01/20	26.02.20			27/02/19	11.03.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

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

2. Scope and Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

Outcomes

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

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

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

4.4.26 The law requires food businesses to display ratings at every public entrance. One local authority included a specific prompt on an ancillary FHRS display aide-memoire to check display at all entrances. The remaining authorities had not included any documented instruction to their officers to

check display at all entrances.

Good Practice

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

- 2.7 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has representation at the All Wales Food Safety Expert Panel. This is a working group with representatives across all 22 local authorities in Wales, the FSA, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and other core and co-opted members (as necessary). Discussions at this group are focussed around food hygiene related issues including matters such as the delivery and implementation of the Scheme. During a meeting of this group the findings of the audit report were considered and discussed with representative from the FSA. It was agreed that in order to support local authorities to identify the specific recommendations or relevant parts of recommendations applicable to themselves a further detailed analysis of local authority performance against the audit criteria would be provided. As previously outlined in point 2.6 above the recommendations and content of the audit report did not specifically name individual Local Authorities where areas for improvement had been identified. This resulted in difficulties for Local Authorities to identify the areas that they may need to address.
- 2.8 The additional detailed information was supplied by the FSA to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in March of 2019 and this was reviewed by key staff within the Commercial Team and any areas for potential improvement were identified for action. The information provided by the FSA contained a mixture of both areas where no action was required and those where potential action was needed. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the areas where potential improvements have been identified and the corresponding action that has been taken or which is planned to address these matters.
- 2.9 An update on progress against the action plan will be provided to the Public Protection Service Manager at the end of the financial year for 2019/20. At the time of writing this report there is no known follow-up work planned by the FSA in respect of checking the Authorities progress against any identified recommendations or parts of recommendations.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 The report will be considered by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 27th February 2020 and any comments from the Committee will be presented verbally to the Executive.
- 3.2 Option 1 – That the Executive Committee considers and approves the content of the action plan detailed in Appendix 2 (preferred option);
- 3.3 Option 2 – That the Executive Committee considers the contents of this report and the associated appendices and do not approve the content of the action plan detailed in Appendix 2.

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

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

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

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

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

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

5.3 ***Legal***
As above.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

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

6. **Supporting Evidence:**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

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

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

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

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

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

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

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

6.5 **Preventative focus**

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

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

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

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

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

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

No adverse impact identified.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – FSA Focussed All Wales Audit Recommendations

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

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

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

APPENDIX 1 – FSA Focussed All Wales Audit Recommendations

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

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

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

APPENDIX 1 – FSA Focussed All Wales Audit Recommendations

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

APPENDIX 1 – FSA Focussed All Wales Audit Recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Agenda Item 22

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**
Report Subject: **Activities Report – Pest Control Treatment Service up to December 2019**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr G. Collier, Deputy Leader / Executive Member Environment**
Report Submitted by: **David Thompson – Service Manager – Public Protection**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
14.1.20	21.1.20	26.02.20			27.2.20	11.3.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

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

2. Scope and Background

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

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

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

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

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

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 The report will be presented to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 27th February 2020 and any comments from the Committee will be presented verbally to the Executive Committee.

3.2 Option 1

That Members note the service performance and provide any specific comments prior to approval.

Option 2

That Members approve the report as provided.

4 Recommendation(s)/Endorsements by other Groups

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

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

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

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

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

6. Implications Against Each Option

6.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

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

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

16 **Integration(across service areas)**

16.1 The scheme contributes to relevant well-being and environment Agendas.

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

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

18. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Pest Control - Current Service Offer

Appendix 2 – Pest Control Treatment Data 19/20

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Pest Control

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

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

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

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

*All the above prices are inclusive of VAT

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

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

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

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

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

- Telephone- 01454 771515

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

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

END

Appendix 2 Pest Control 2019/20 (Q3 position)

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

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Agenda Item 23

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

Report Subject: **Community Services Workforce Sickness Absence Performance**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor G. Collier, Deputy Leader / Executive Member**

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

Reporting Pathway								
DMT	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	17.12.19				16.01.20	11.03.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the opportunity to consider and challenge relevant Directorate sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement.

2. Scope and Background

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

3 Performance Information

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

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

4. Directorate Comments/Actions for Improvement

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

Actions

- Targets and improvement objectives set for each service area
- Focussed quarterly session with Regeneration and Community Services Management Team and OD to review sickness absence and application of the Managing Attendance Policy
- Continued awareness raising with managers on the importance of application of the Managing Attendance Policy and the timely updating of ITrent
- Review of sickness absence to be added to all managers 121 sessions
- Update training for managers on managing sickness will be facilitated jointly with OD in new year

Regeneration and Community Services Management Team to monitor agreed actions – sickness absence to continue to be a regular item on the management team agenda.

5. Options for Recommendation

- 5.1 The Community Services Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 16th January 2020.

- 5.2 **Option 1**
That the Scrutiny Committee having scrutinised the sickness absence performance information and proposed arrangements to improve attendance rates within the Regeneration and Community Services Directorate identify any further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement.
- 5.3 **Option 2**
That the Executive Committee agrees the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance.
6. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 6.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**
There are direct and indirect costs of sickness absence which are a key driver in the Council's approach to effectively improve attendance at work.
- 6.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**
The underperformance in relation to the high levels of sickness absence does present a significant risk in terms of the impact on front line service delivery and continuity through lost time and staffing changes. In addition, the financial implications associated with sickness absence directly impact on the Council's financial efficiency targets and the level of financial savings that the Council needs to achieve. Mitigating actions are detailed within the report.
- 6.3 **Legal**
There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 6.4 **Human Resources**
The staffing implications are detailed within the content of the report.
7. **Supporting Evidence**
- 7.1 **Performance Information and Data**
The detailed performance evidence is detailed in appendix 1 as well as the actions taken to address the level of underperformance.
- 7.2 **Expected outcome for the public**
Information included within the report will provide opportunity for the public to scrutinise the Council's performance and provide accountability across the Council.
- 7.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)** – Trade Union have been consulted on the sickness absence performance and are committed to working with the Council to improve attendance.
- 7.4 **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
Options detailed in this report contribute directly to enabling the workforce for the future.

- 7.5 **Preventative focus**
The review of the Organisational Development Strategy will focus on prevention.
- 7.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
There are regular discussions with the national Human Resources Directors Network and regionally in terms of good practice or emerging practice in reducing sickness absence. There are early discussions with the WLGA to launch a project to learn from England any initiatives in relation to wellbeing.
- 7.7 **Integration (across service areas)**
NA
- 7.8 **EqlA**(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)
The review of sickness absence performance was carried out and included all employees of the Council.
- 8. Monitoring Arrangements**
- 8.1 Sickness absence statistics are reported to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and an annual performance report is presented to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee. Directorate positions and actions for improvement will be reported to specific scrutiny committees. Biannual workforce profiles are discussed with Managers and Headteachers.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Sickness Absence Monitoring Quarters 1 and 2

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

Corporate Director – Richard Crook

Head of Regeneration & Development – Ellie Fry

Head of Community Services – Clive Rogers Evans

Service Manager Public Protection – Dave Thompson

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

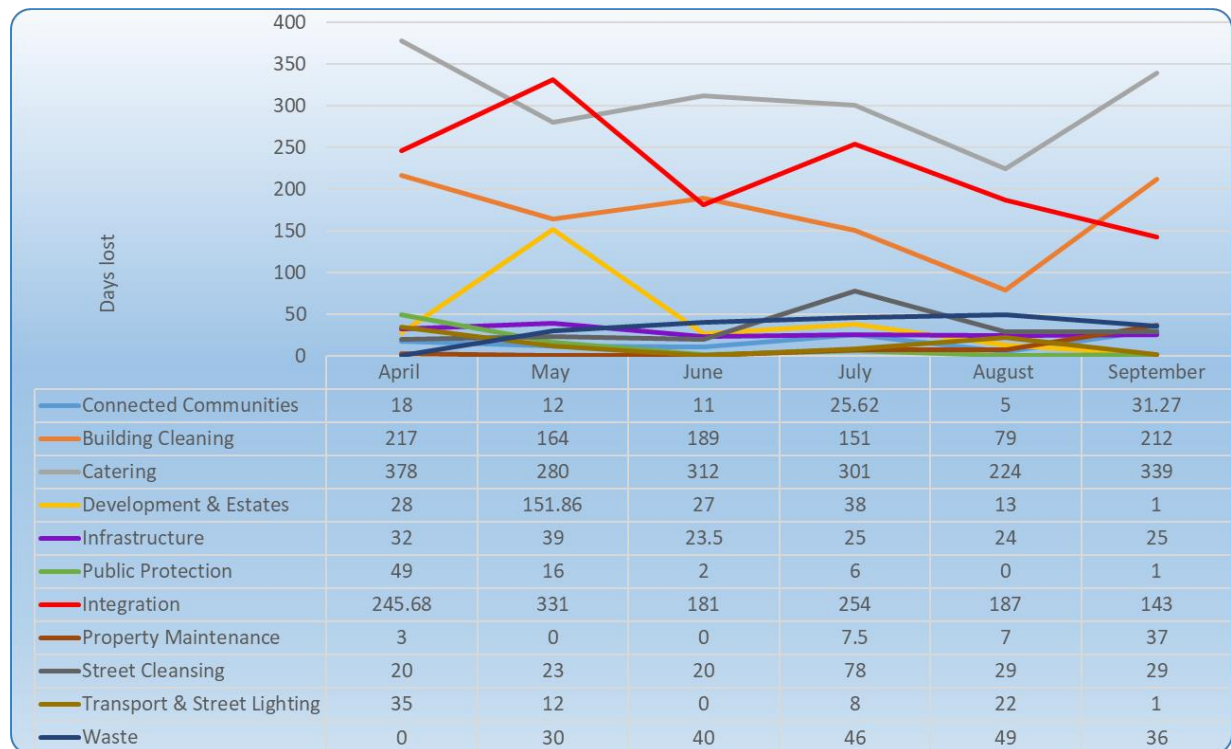
2019/20	Qtr1 (Target 2.75)	Qtr2 (Target 5.50)
Council	3.06	5.93
Corporate Services	1.71	4.34
Social Services	3.62	7.45
Education	2.84	5.09

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

- 2018/19 – Annual Review Regeneration & Community Services
- 11.21 FTE days lost (Quarter 1 – 2.93, Quarter 2 – 6.62)
 - 65.96% of absences were long term
 - 69 employees with one or more absences - mental health
 - 4706 calendar days lost - mental health
 - 16 employees with more than 6 calendar months sickness
 - 9 employees disciplined for sickness absence

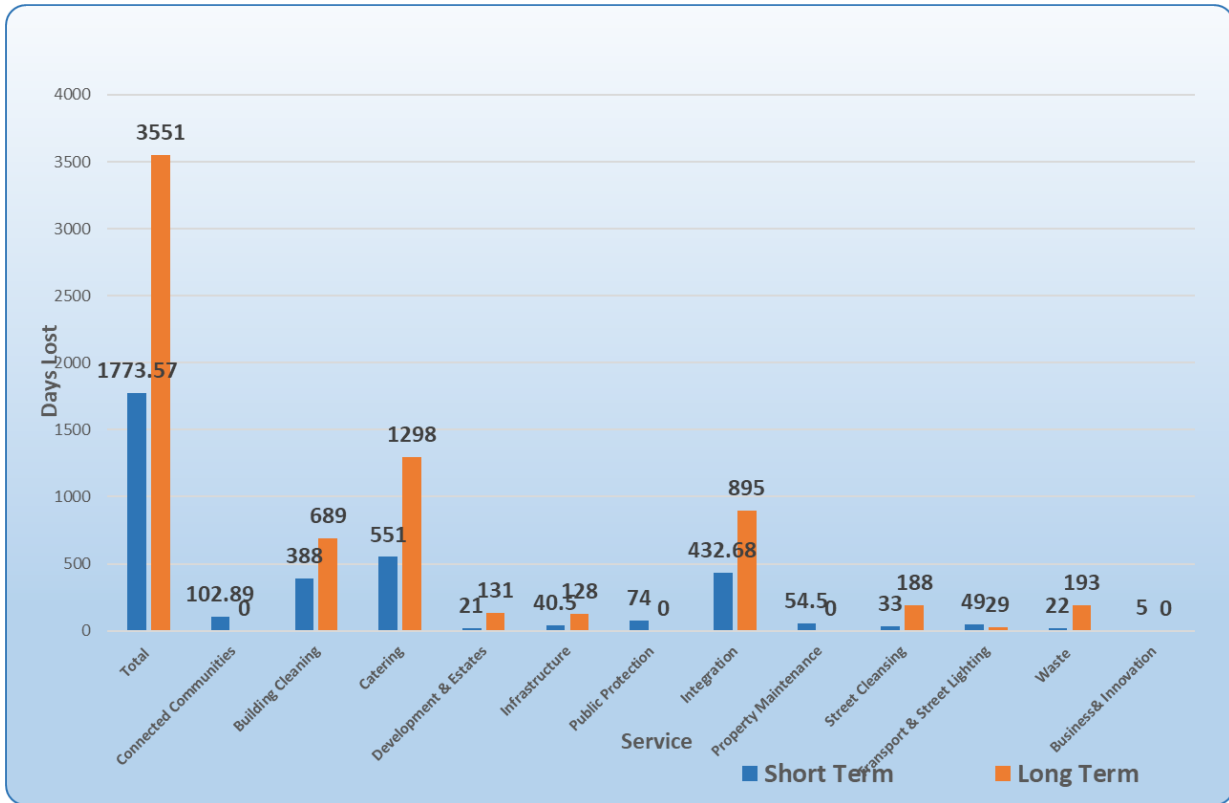
Total Working Days Lost - 01.04.19 – 30.09.19

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



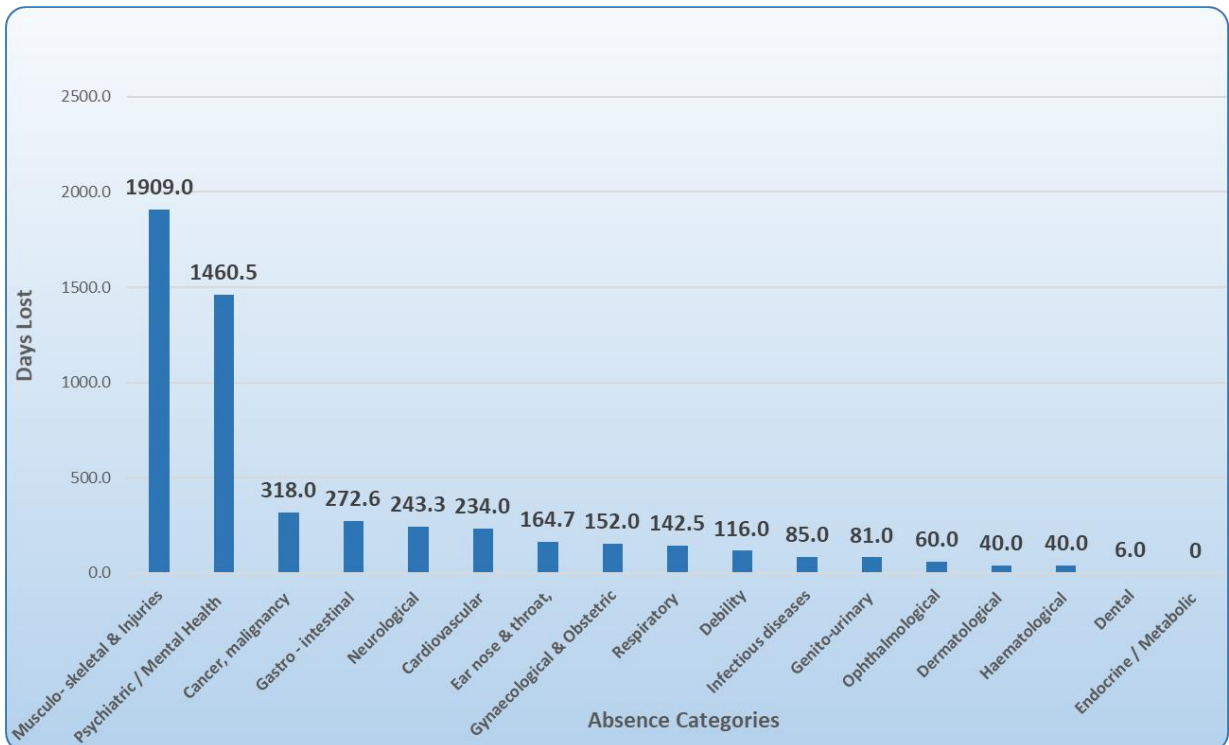
Total Working Days Lost - Short Term / Long Term

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



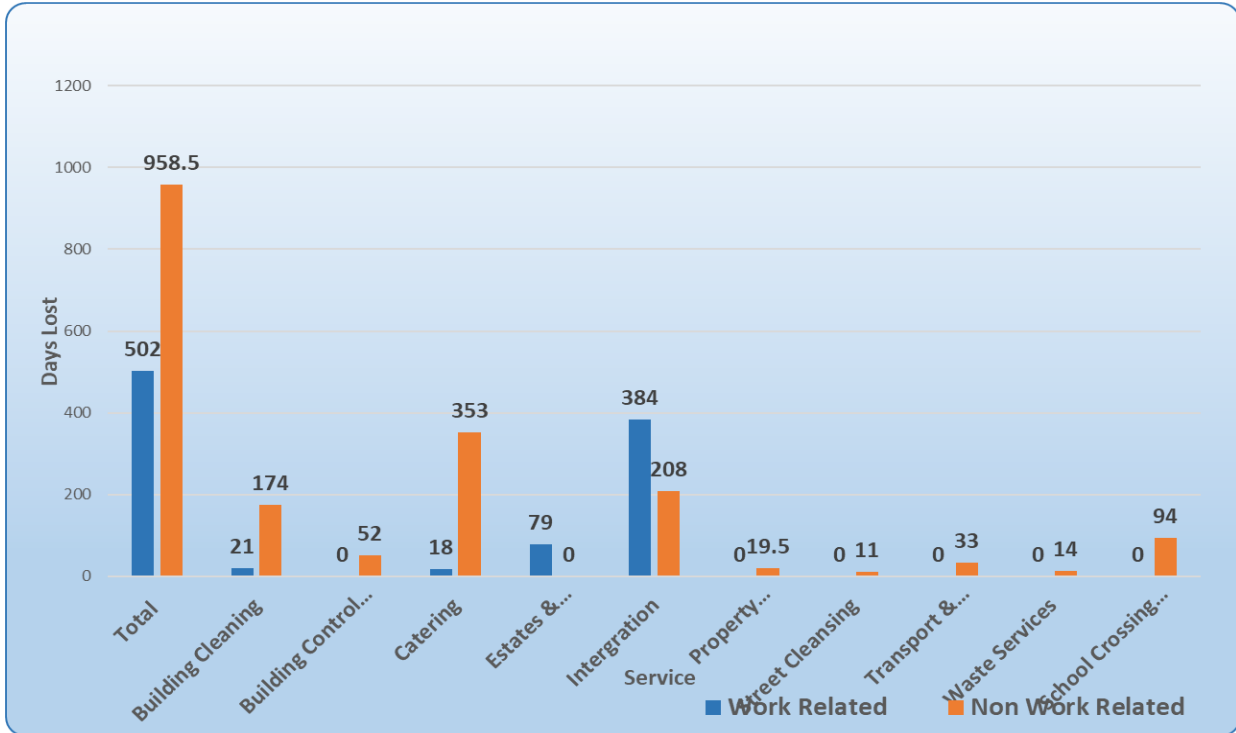
Total Working Days Lost by Reason

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



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

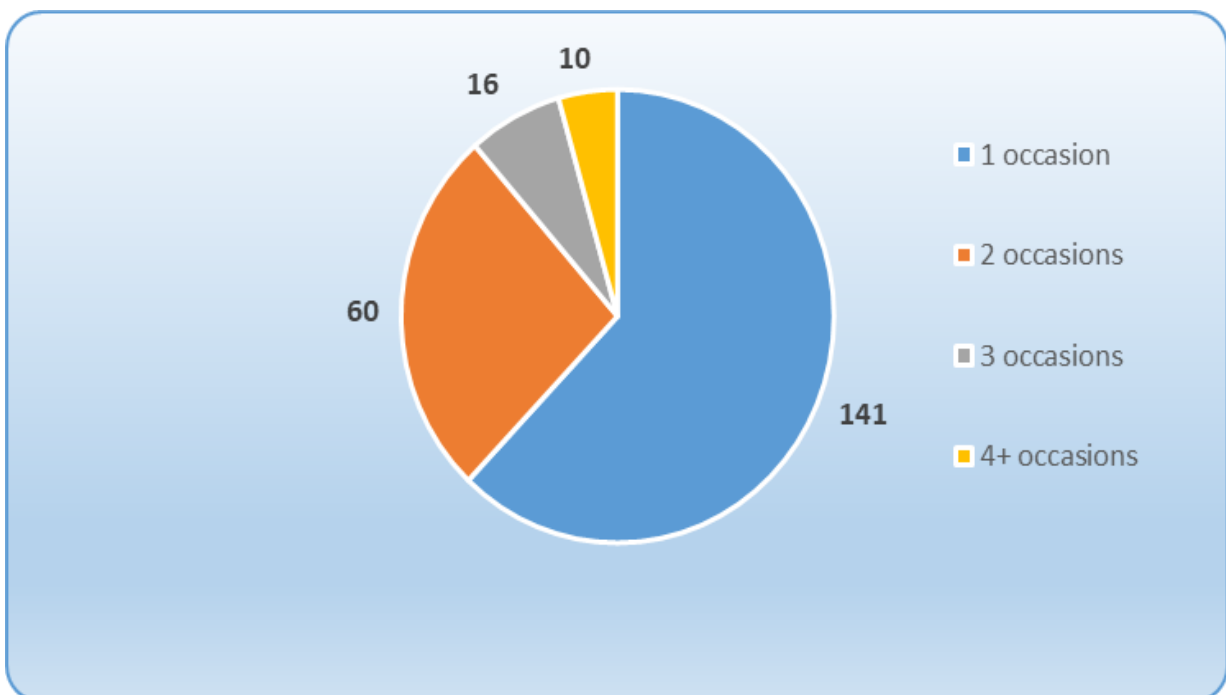
- **34%** of days lost to Psychiatric / Mental Health identified as work related
- **46** employees with one or more absences - Mental Health
- **65** occasions of absence - Mental Health



Number reporting sickness

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

Number of occasions of absence per employee



Impact - Financial / Staff Resources

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

Management of Sickness Absence

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

Agenda Item 24

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 25.02.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 26.02.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**
Report Subject: **Living Independently in the 21st Century Strategy – Annual progress update 2019/20**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**
Report Submitted by: **Alyson Hoskins – Head of Adult Services (Social Services)**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
23/01/20	28/01/20	26.02.20			13.02.20	11/03/20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview for Members on the 'Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century' Strategy. It aims to consider the progress against the 8 priorities of the Strategy over the previous 12 months, including how the strategy has been aligned to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 since its implementation in April 2016.

It also highlights how the department has utilized available external funding to support development of the priorities including challenges and barriers we have faced during the year to date.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Previous annual reports have identified the history of the Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century' strategy since it was agreed by Council back in November 2006.
- 2.2 Members are aware that it was developed with an emphasis on ensuring as a Local Authority we were in a position to address the increasing demands for services to older people over the next 15 years due to people living longer, with different aspirations and often complex illness. The strategy was developed with a strong emphasis on supporting citizens of Blaenau Gwent to live safely in their own home for as long as possible.
- 2.3 The 'Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century' Strategy was revised in 2012 in anticipation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and a further revision is due in 2020/21 at the end of the 15 year lifespan.
- 2.4 The Strategy identifies 8 priorities as part of the overarching approach to service development which are outlined below:

- **Priority 1 Long term care:** jointly with Health and other partners, make arrangements to meet the nursing, residential and dementia care needs of the older persons population
 - **Priority 2 Reablement/Enabling services:** further develop this approach and recognise the contribution of other organisations, in progressing this service
 - **Priority 3 Day Opportunities/Community Options:** continuing development of everyday activities and opportunities to learn new skills or re-acquire skills through confidence building and tuition measures
 - **Priority 4 Assistive Technology:** promote and expand assistive technology supported by a rapid response service, capable of containing situations where no family carers are available
 - **Priority 5 Direct Payments:** promote and expand direct payments and empowering people to take responsibility for arranging their own care and support requirements
 - **Priority 6 Accommodation:** recognising the key role that appropriate housing plays on the well-being of older people. Work closely with partners to develop a range of suitable housing in Blaenau
 - **Priority 7 Carers:** providing accessible and timely support services responsive to individual need
- Priority 8 Domiciliary Care:** Ensuring provision of appropriate, reliable, quality services.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The report was considered by the Social Services Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13th February 2020 and the Committee Support Option 1.
- 3.2 Members are asked to note the report and advise how in future they would wish to receive through a reporting mechanism progress of this strategy.
- 3.3 **Option 1-** Endorse the report and the evidence provided to support progress in the 8 priority areas, and for us to continue to provide progress updates on an annual basis to the scrutiny committee as outlined in this report.

Option 2 – Members to recommend any additional information and/or an alternative methodology for reporting progress, challenges and opportunities during 2019/20

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 – 2018 to 2022.** The Living Independently in the 21st Century Strategy links to the key themes of the Corporate plan and in its promotion of resilient communities.

4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being plan – *Priority area - enabling older people to feel valued and empowered to maximise their independence and lead healthy and engaged lives-*** this strategy is key in delivering this Wellbeing outcome including:

- **Thinking in the Long Term** - The strategy provides effective cooperation and partnership working between all agencies and organisations, including health, and is a key element of meeting the needs of older people living in Blaenau Gwent.
- **Taking an integrated approach** – The strategy promotes an integrated approach across Health, Social Care and the Third Sector.
- **Taking a preventative approach** – The strategy promotes preventative services including reablement and assistive technology as a model that promotes personal independence and management of a person's own wellbeing. The strategy delivers a preventative and early intervention approach to minimise the escalation of need and dependency on statutory services.
- **Collaborating** - The Strategy is clear that implementation is not only the responsibility of Social Services department but the whole Council and also of its partners including Health and Housing.
- **Involvement** - A key aspect of the strategy is ensuring people have a voice and control over their care and support to achieve the outcomes that are important to them.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Option 1** – this will result in a report for 2020/21 being developed using a similar approach and methodology to that used for 2019/20. However, it is important to note that the overarching Strategy is due for a full review during 2020 and therefore it is anticipated that the report presented to Scrutiny in January 2021 will include a revised Living Independently in the 21st Century Strategy outlining priorities for future years.

During 2020/21 updates will continue to be provided using information contained in the tier 1 and 2 business plans, team briefings, progress reports

and data from our Corporate Performance Team and feedback from any relevant regulatory reviews.

5.2 **Option 2** – the format and reporting mechanism for future reports will be amended to reflect additional information as requested by members.

5.3 **Legal** – there are no legal implications associated with this report. This strategy supports the delivery of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

5.4 **Human Resources** – there are no OD implications associated with this report. However, it is important to note that as previously reported to scrutiny we have a number of the posts funded using external funding (Integrated Care Fund/ Pace Setters funding / Transformation Funding) and we continue to have uncertainty from Welsh Government as to the availability of ongoing funding for these posts after March 2021.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

Some examples of progress and evidence in relation to the 8 priority themes are listed below:

6.1 **Priority 1 Long term care:**

During 2019/20 the Adult Services department have continued to review and develop our services that support the key areas of Long term care. As previously reported we have a Service Manager for Wellbeing and Long-term Care. The post holder has specific responsibilities for:

- Community Care Teams (West and East)
- Disability Team including Children with Disabilities and Adults with Learning Disabilities
- Adult Mental Health Service

6.2 In addition, the post holder has responsibilities for managing the allocation of resources to support Care Home placements, hospital discharge and developments to support and promote long term wellbeing and coordination of long term support to assist citizens to remain in their own homes.

6.3 The department has continued to hold weekly placement panels during 2019/20. The panels chaired by the Service Manager, are attended jointly with colleagues from the Health Board (ABUHB) including the lead nurse with responsibility for Continuing Health Care (CHC) and they consider appropriateness of applications for placement by social workers for citizens who have been assessed as being unable to remain in their own homes due to increased care and support needs.

6.4 The numbers of citizens living in a care home or supported living setting remain relatively consistent with us currently (Dec 19) supporting 276 citizens compared to 267 (31st March 19), 280 (31st March 18) and 296 (31st March 17).

6.5 **Table 1: Current placement details to end of quarter 3 report (2019/20):**

Category	Mar 2018	June 2018	Mar 2019	June 2019	Sept 2019	Dec 2019
Nursing Over 65	64	63	50	59	61	59
Nursing under 65	7	7	8	5	5	6
Residential Over 65	120	130	118	119	116	113
Residential Under 65	26	28	28	28	27	27
Supported Living Over 65	5	5	3	3	4	5
Supported Living Under 65	58	60	60	56	63	66
Total	280	293	267	270	276	276

6.6 As a department we are responsible for the monitoring of the Care Home market across Blaenau Gwent including the monitoring of care home quality, areas for improvement, identification of best practice, staff and development opportunities and financial viability. We continue to have a number of vacancies in our commissioned Care Homes. The numbers of vacancies do fluctuate over a 12 month period but as of 21st January 2020 we had:

- 24 vacant beds in care homes who support general residential / nursing needs,
- 7 vacant beds in dementia nursing care homes
- 9 vacant beds in dementia residential care homes

6.7 During 2019 / 20 we have continued to develop the support we give to patients in both our Community and Acute hospital settings though the development of an outreach team who are working within Nevill Hall Hospital 'in reaching' into patients on floor 4 of the hospital. The outcomes of this project are due to be analysed during Spring 2020 with a view to extending the model across other areas of the hospital. The project has been further enhanced during the Winter months (December 19 to Feb 20) due to the Local Authority securing additional funding from Welsh Government to support the Winter pressures. This has enabled us to increase our capacity to undertake assessments at the local hospitals through additional weekend working.

6.8 The Home First Gwent discharge scheme has been in operation since November 2018 and has been invaluable in ensuring that we are able to support patients at the 'front door' of our acute hospitals but who do not need ongoing medical support or admission, and who can return home the same

day with social care support. This can often mean the provision of information, advice and assistance(IAA) only or a follow up call once they are home. This service has been particularly important during the exceptional pressures within the NHS over the winter period and Christmas break.

6.9 As an illustration of the demand the service has supported, during the recent busy period faced at both Nevill Hall and Royal Gwent Hospitals, the Local Authority Home First Service supported the following discharges, avoiding unnecessary and often lengthy admissions to hospital:

6.10 **Table 2: Home First Discharges from Acute hospitals example**

Week ending date :	Number of discharges home from A&E / assessment units etc that week
8 th December 2019	36 discharges
15 th December 2019	32 discharges
22 nd December 2019	31 discharges
29 th December 2019	20 discharges
5 th January 2020	28 discharges
12 th January 2020	42 discharges

6.11 **Table 3: Home First Case study:**

Case study – Tom and Vera
<p>Referral/presenting issues:</p> <p>Home First Team at Nevill Hall received a call from A&E relating to Tom and Vera, married couple both in 90's. Both brought to hospital earlier in the day following an accident at home which resulted in them both falling. Neither needed to be admitted, although Tom had fractured his shoulder and had a cuff sling for support.</p> <p>They lived together in their own home. Both independently mobile, however Vera had experienced regular falls and already had a care package at home to help with personal care. Tom did the cooking and they had their medication in a dossett box delivered by local chemist. They had a son who was supportive and he did the weekly shopping and visited frequently. Tom had a pendant alarm but Vera didn't. They had been married to each other for over 60 years and had a structured routine which meant they could support each other. Vera did advise that she had been falling a fair bit, hence the injury to Tom's arm as she loses her balance and he had tried to catch her. Both were very keen to get back home as soon as possible.</p> <p>Issues: Vera was at risk of further falls so the Home First Team referred her to the community Physiotherapist in our CRT for a falls assessment in her own home environment. She was also given a pendant alarm on her return. Tom had a fractured shoulder which will affect his ability to manage some of his and his wife's daily activities. Home First worker arranged a temporary care package to assist him with his personal care in the morning and evening.</p>

Outcome:

Home First were able to arrange a restart to Vera's care package that evening and also start a temporary care package for Tom for the same evening. This enabled them to go home together from A&E. Their son was able to collect them from hospital that afternoon with reassurance that his parent's needs would be met and professional were going to follow them up the next day. This resulted in 2 beds being 'unblocked' at the emergency department and avoided the need for social admission to hospital.

6.12 Priority 2 Reablement / Enabling services:

Our Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) team based at the Vitcc Tredegar continues to focus on enabling citizens to access appropriate support including access to reablement provision that aims to promote independence and reduce dependency on traditional models of care and support. During 2019/20 we launched an integrated (Health, Social Care and Third sector) approach to IAA and we have appointed a Team Manager for IAA. She is successfully leading on developing our 'front door' services to meet the current and importantly future wellbeing needs of our communities.

Through our partnership working with ABUHB, we have been a pilot area for Compassionate Communities since April 2019. In November 2019, elected members attended a members briefing session on how we are supporting the development of alternative roles within GP practices to support the pressures faced by Primary Care in Blaenau Gwent. We have been supporting through offering social care workers in the form of Community Connectors as link workers within the GP surgery and have been participating in conversations with patients attending the surgery, post hospital discharge follows up telephone calls and weekly multidisciplinary meetings to discuss complex patients.

Our Community Resource Team (CRT) continues to be the main driver for ensuring that citizens have access to relevant and appropriate rehabilitative opportunities including therapist based interventions. Our team has this year developed a 'Better Care Project' with the main aim of supporting citizens to enhance their own strengths to manage their care for as long as possible with a particular emphasis on using the latest and most modern 'moving and handling' equipment to support them at home, reducing dependency on them needing domiciliary care staff to support them with personal care tasks and mobility transfers. Further details on the Better Care project will be presented to members as the project develops.

We continue to access revenue and capital Integrated Care Funds (ICF) to enhance the support we can offer citizens. A copy of the full allocation of ICF for Blaenau Gwent was presented to Scrutiny in October 2019. Our most recent allocation of integrated care funding (ICF) dementia funding has been an allocation of £81k annually until March 21 to further enhance our Reablement teams to support citizens and their carers living with dementia.

6.13 Priority 3 Day Opportunities/Community Options:

Our Community Options Service continues to provide a wide range of day activities to citizens across the ages from 18 to 90 years of age. During 2019/20 we completed the remodelling of our Lake View facility in Nantyglo resulting in the closure of our Quiet Minds provision with some citizens being supported in Lake View and a number of citizens transferring to Ash Parc – where we provide support for citizens living with Dementia, and others successfully accessing community or third sector networks.

Our partnership with Growing Space (third sector Mental Health group) was strengthened further in July 2019 resulting in an increase in community based learning opportunities for those attending our Community Options Green Shoots project.

Growing Space are providing opportunities for citizens to gain experience in retail by working in the furniture recycling shop in Brynmawr, building confidence in meeting new people through assisting customers when purchasing items, checking stock and re-stocking items for sale. Citizens are also participating in the furniture upcycling workshop, and maintaining and developing the gardens in Tredegar House, Newport. The participants have grown in confidence and become motivated in delivering the Growing Space programme.

6.14 Table 4: Case Study community options - Owain

Case study – Owain
<p>Owain has accessed the Green Shoots Horticultural Project for the last 6 years assisting with the gardening contracts and hanging basket orders. During the last 12 months he had become less interested in daily activities and often displayed inappropriate behaviours towards his peers and staff, displaying a lack of motivation and a reluctance to engage in activities.</p> <p>However, during recent months and through our extended links with Growing Space, Owain has been supported to work at a project which provides support to vulnerable families through the recycling used furniture and paint. In addition, through support provided as a result of the implementation of the Assisted Transport policy, Owain expressed a wish to have independent travel training so that he could access his work placement via public transport. His travel training went well and provided him with greater flexibility to access the Green Shoots service independently. During the past 6 months Owain has grown in confidence, is fully engaged with his new work placement and has become a key member of the Growing Space Team.</p>

6.15 Priority 4 Assistive Technology:

A member briefing on progress across our assistive technology agenda was well received during 2019/20. We have progressed the assistive technology

flats in extra care – see section below relating to accommodation. We continue to promote the use of technology as part of our community packages including the use of sensors and alarms including pendant alarms, falls detectors, bed/door sensors as well as bespoke solutions to meet individual health and social care needs. We have a number of monitoring tools to provide support and reassurance for carers as well as providing invaluable information to inform the assessment process and keep people safe at home. These include My Homehelper, Canary monitoring systems, Mindme alarm and Mindme locate.

Teams are actively promoting the use of our dementia therapy - dolls, cats and dogs alongside every day technologies such as use of the ‘amazon echo’ and ‘google home’ hubs. Finally, we are working with our partners in Worcester Telecare to access further funding to expand the provision we have to include the promotion of virtual reality and artificial intelligence units as part of our assessment process.

6.16 **Priority 5 Direct Payments:**

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 promotes the use of direct payments for individuals and since April 2016, our Local Authority has been responsible for undertaking and funding Criminal Record Bureau Checks on behalf of the employing individual. In line with the Act we continue to offer Direct Payments to individuals as part of our care and support assessments as this is an option for providing support to meet eligible needs. The number of adults with a direct payment has remained fairly consistent over the last few years.

- At the end of March 2019 there were 121 adult’s recipients of a direct payment in Blaenau Gwent compared to 121 at the end of March 18, 124 at the end of March 2017
- As at the end of quarter 3 (31st December 19) there are 123 Adults receiving a direct payment and 41 Children receiving a direct payment in Blaenau Gwent.

6.17 **Table 5: Direct Payment case study**

Examples of how a Direct Payment are used to support a family:
Elin is a 55-year-old woman who has been diagnosed with early onset dementia and epilepsy. She lives with her husband (Aled), daughter (Betsi) and much loved pets. She has difficulties undertaking daily tasks such as dressing, personal care, taking medication correctly and going out along and finds it difficult to accept support from Betsi as she feels that she should care for her daughter, not the other way around. Her main support is her husband and she becomes very anxious when he is not at home. Her condition is progressively getting worse and it is no longer safe for her to be left alone.

Elin wants to live with her family and pets and also wants support to remain independent and enjoy the things she used to do before becoming ill, she likes going out shopping and walking, and she takes pride in her appearance which is important to her.

Aled wants his wife to be happy, safe and hopes she can stay at home for as long as possible. He also wants to be able to continue to work full time.

Following an assessment by a social worker in Blaenau Gwent, they decided that a direct payment was the best option for them to meet Elin's care and support needs and is flexible so it meets Aled's working pattern. They have employed 3 personal assistants who get together with Aled on a weekly basis to agree a rota which fits into his shift pattern and decide how best to support Elin during that week.

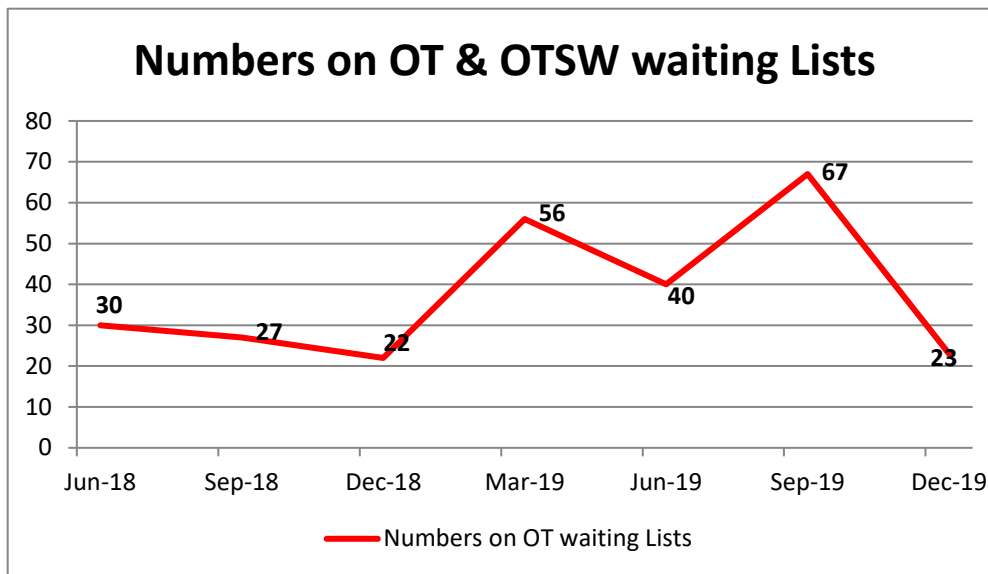
Elin is happy that she is able to meet her outcomes and she remains as independent as possible in her own home.

Aled is happy that his wife is supported, she's safe and remains with him and their daughter, and pets in the family home and he is able to remain in work which also gives him a break from his caring role.

6.18 Priority 6 Accommodation:

During 2019/20 we have continued to have good partnership and working arrangements between our RSL partners including Tai Calon, colleagues in Housing Strategy, the Supporting People Team and the Community Resource Team (CRT) ensuring that key partners are involved when allocating properties to citizens who have complex needs and mobility issues. We have made a decision to continue our secondment of an Occupational Therapy Support Worker within Tai Calon as feedback continues to demonstrate that she continues to support timely identification of suitable properties to meet specific health needs. Our frontline IAA (information, advice and assistance) staff have received training to enable them to become trusted assessors in the identification of low level equipment and this has enabled the department to focus on addressing any waiting lists. We have had significant pressures in the Occupational Therapy Team (part of the Community Resource Team) during 2019/20 due to recruitment pressures and availability of suitably qualified Occupational Therapists across (Wales and not unique to Blaenau Gwent) but despite particular pressures during the Spring and Summer 2019 our OT waiting lists have now returned to a manageable level as a result of the alternative ways of working we have adopted and is credit to the CRT manager in how referrals are prioritised ensuring our most vulnerable citizens with complex health needs are supported.

6.19 **Table 6 – Waiting lists for OT assessments (June 18 to Dec 19)**



During the Summer 2019 we officially opened our assistive technology demonstration flats at both our Extra Care Schemes. These flats provide our care management staff, our citizens and their families an opportunity to see first-hand what technologies are available that promote independence and enable people with the most complex needs to live as independently as possible. During Autumn 2019 we were notified that we had secured an additional £63k to further develop assistive technology in Blaenau Gwent and staff from Adult Services are working with Worcester Telecare to develop phase 2 of the programme.

6.20 **Priority 7 Carers:**

The Carers Strategic Partnership Board (Chaired by Corporate Director of Social Service in Blaenau Gwent) and Operational Group (Chaired by Blaenau Gwent's Head of Adult Services) continues to meet on a quarterly basis and has developed a work plan for the future development of Carers Services in Gwent.

Support for Carers continue to be a key priority both locally in Blaenau Gwent and also on a national level with Welsh Government recently publishing its plans to develop a National Strategy for Carers.

Within Blaenau Gwent we had a visit from our regulator Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in July 2019 where they met with a number of our carers as part of Carers Day Activities. Our staff continue to access support for unpaid carers from the Gwent - Carers Small Grant Scheme and Age Cymru. There has been a significant additional investment made by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) to the Gwent Small Carers Scheme and this has enabled the scheme to support many more carers including young carers with one off grant payments (up to £500) for items such as holidays, washing machines, driving lessons etc.

Our Carers Engagement Project workers continue to support carers and have maintained a robust partnership approach in all of the GP surgeries. They have a regular presence within each practice which enables the surgery staff to refer Carers directly to the Carer Engagement Officers and into the service. Recently each surgery has identified a member of staff as a Carers Champion and this staff link is proving very positive with Carers Champions referring into the service. Raising awareness through publicity materials and engaging with patients within the surgery waiting areas has also allowed our Engagement Officers to identify and interact with individuals who may not yet have recognised their role as a Carer. This ensures that individuals are given the appropriate information regarding what their rights are as a Carer as well as information on what services are available to assist and support them in their caring role. As the service is progressing, it is evident that there are real benefits being provided to Carers from offering emotional support and offering the opportunity for Carers voices and stories to be heard. Some Carers have commented that “it helps to have a good chat to somebody who understands” and “I feel better for talking to you”. Many Carers have described what their caring role entails and the pressures that this sometimes brings and, although they do not always want further support at that particular point, they often say that being able to speak to somebody about how they feel has been really helpful. These Carers are given the information and contact details for the service should they need advice or support in the future.

6.21 **Table 8: Carers Feedback:**

Feedback from Carers during quarter 3 – Carers Engagement Project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My life has changed since you supported me to claim all the benefits I was entitled to, I can now afford taxis to visit my husband in hospital rather than catch buses, thank you so much.</i> • <i>“I feel so much better now I have spent time talking to you, thank you for lending me your listening ear and not judging me”.</i> • <i>“Thank you so much for informing me that as a carer I have rights”.</i> • <i>Thank you for arranging for me to attend a training course it was very useful and also provided me with some time to myself to do the things that are important to me.”</i> • <i>“Very useful to know that you are there for the future”</i> • <i>“Thank you for organising and inviting me to your Carers Rights Day event it was very informative and gave me the chance to meet other carers”.</i> • <i>“Thank you for arranging for me to receive a grant so I could have a short break with my husband it gave us some quality time together in a different surroundings I was able to recharge my batteries”.</i>

However, despite pockets of good practice as an authority we remain concerned that we still have a low take up of carers assessments and we continually are reviewing our data collected from our Quality Assurance process alongside feedback from our Carers Citizen questionnaires to identify trends and potential solutions to increase carer engagement and participation.

6.22 **Priority 8 Domiciliary Care:**

The sustainability of the national domiciliary care market remains a concern for all Local Authorities. The monitoring of commissioned domiciliary care services continue to be undertaken and our Contracts and Commissioning Team review the call monitoring reports which includes attendance of calls; call times and call lengths. The team continues to contribute to the Gwent wide commissioning group on potential areas where concern over the sustainability of the domiciliary care market can be addressed. Regionally, events have been held with Domiciliary Care providers to enhance awareness of the benefits of working within this field and our staffs have supported a number of job fairs and development sessions.

The authority maintains good working relationships with all commissioned domiciliary care providers so that commissioning and service provision is open and transparent. Our domiciliary care agencies have worked closely with the Commissioning Team to identify market pressures and support recent requirements for registration of the domiciliary care work force from April 2020. We continue to have regular provider meetings where best practice and development issues are shared.

During 2019/20, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly CBC collaborated on a joint tender to establish a framework with a list of accredited and approved Service Providers to deliver the Support at Home service for both Adults and Children. This was in respect of 'new' business only meaning that people with a care package could keep their existing Provider and Care Workers ensuring continuity of care for those Individuals. A project team was established with Commissioning and Procurement Officers from both LAs and from June 2018 through to August 2019, work which included a Provider Engagement Event, development of the contract, terms and conditions; service specification and tender documents incorporating the Ethical Care Charter and meeting the requirements of the Social Services Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, was undertaken. The tender was concluded and contract awarded at the end of August 2019 and as a result, the number of Domiciliary Care Providers on the Blaenau Gwent framework has increased from 5 to 10.

The contract is for a period of 5 years with an option to extend for a further 5 years, with the aim of: -

- Continuity of care for Individuals
- Securing stability within the local market
- Increased choice for the citizens of Blaenau Gwent
- Strengthen capacity within a pressured market

- Support independent living and patient flow through hospital
- Movement from payment on planned hours of care delivery to payment on actual hours
- Commissioning from an increased number of Providers to support the spread of risk to the Council (as at 1st October on commencement of the new contract, BG commissioned 5,750 hours per week for care deliver to 406 people, from the existing 5 Providers)
- Community benefits such as local employment (E.G. 269 carers currently employed within the local market by the initial 5 Providers) and use of local suppliers/sustainable procurement

Joint meetings with Providers and information sessions with all Care Management Teams took place on various dates during September and meetings with Providers on an individual basis have continued to take place on a regular basis to progress commissioning under the new contract. New Providers have experienced some problems with recruitment in the area although progression has been made with establishing bases and management structure for the Blaenau Gwent branch and it is expected that commissioning will commence from January/February 2020.

Within Blaenau Gwent the numbers of packages of commissioned care have gradually reduced since March 2019 and can be attributed to the impact of our preventative approaches, however this does not identify the rising complexity of care delivered to citizens in their home often with two or more carers required at one time.

6.23 **Table 9: Numbers of citizens receiving a domiciliary care package**

Category	Mar 2018	June 2018	Mar 2019	June 2019	Sept 2019	Dec 2019
Sitting Service Over 65	33	29	30	26	27	23
Sitting Service under 65	2	2	2	2	3	2
Home Care Over 65	411	415	383	367	372	365
Home Care Under 65	86	81	79	74	73	74
Total	532	527	532	469	475	464

7. **Expected Outcomes for the public**

- 7.1 This strategy focusses on the development of services that promote Wellbeing and independence in their own homes which may or may not include a Care Home. It utilised the key principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 including:
- a. **Voice and control** – putting the individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and control over reaching the outcomes that help them achieve well-being.
 - b. **Prevention and early intervention** – increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need.
 - c. **Well-being** – supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of care and support.
 - d. **Co-production** – encouraging individuals to become more involved in the design and delivery of services.

8. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 8.1 An annual report to Scrutiny / Executive is submitted. Progress is also monitored via the Adult Service Business Plans (tier 1 and 2) and Integrated Partnership Board Action plan.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Copy of the Living Independently in the 21st Century Strategy (updated 2014)

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Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century

**Commissioning Strategy for
Older People
2008 – 2021**

Developed - 2006

Initially reviewed - 2008

Revised - November 2012

Revised – December 2014

**SOCIAL
SERVICES
DIRECTORATE**

Version number:	2	Date Written:	October 2006
		Date Approved:	October 2006
Status:	Approved	Date of Issue:	October 2006
		Initially reviewed	October 2008
	For consideration and approval	Date of current review	November 2012
Approved by:	Senior Management Team		
Author:	Paul Price - Development Officer		
Supporting documents:	"Needs Assessment 2012"		
Equality Impact Assessment	Approved by:		
	Date:		
Change history	Dates reviewed:		Outcome of review:
	October 2008		
	November 2012		
	December 2014 (statistics update)		

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper gives an overview of the progress made, the actions taken to date, and the priorities planned for the future, as Social Services continues to focus its efforts in meeting the changing expectations and needs of 'older people'.

The focus to date has been one, which builds upon service quality whilst modernising and improving services, by ensuring that:

- An assessment is person centred and services are packaged to meet individual need
- Individuals live well and receive the support and any treatment they need if their health fails or they become frail and vulnerable
- Individuals feel that the services and support they receive, albeit possibly from different sources, are "joined up", or integrated, and delivered as a package which is purposeful and avoids omissions or duplications.
- Individuals recognise that services are delivered, whether by individual agencies, or in partnerships, in ways which enable individual needs to be met in a flexible and co-ordinated way

The strategy initially developed continues to be of huge relevance and it is clear that great strides have been made in 'modernising' the services available to 'older people'. Examples of the successes to date are included in section 4 and also in the appendices.

There is now a need to decide which services need to be targeted for change, why, and what the potential return might be if we are successful in adjusting the way in which any service is delivered

1.2 The 'Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century' is a vision for the future, and from the outset, it set out to "modernise" the way in which it approaches its duties, and, in so doing, it has reflected on, and taken full account of, all emerging national

policies and strategies determined by the Wales Government, and, at the same time, determined how it is to meet the growing level of demand for service, and or, support from the 'older people's' population.

1.3 The initial fifteen year commissioning strategy developed in 2006 was formulated to cover a period of fifteen years to 2021 and set out to achieve a number of goals:

- a) to respond to the express wishes of older people and their carers, meeting their changing needs and expectations
- b) to satisfy national standards and give full implementation to the National Service Framework for Older People and the WAG 10 year strategy for social care ('Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities'), in partnership with the National Health Service
- c) to enable older people to live as independently as possible, as full and equal citizens of Blaenau Gwent and their local communities

1.4 The title of the strategy and the planned future actions sought to encapsulate Social Services vision for the future and was named '**Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century**'.

1.5 The strategy acknowledged that close collaboration between all Directorates would be required, as there were and continue to be wider Corporate implications, to enable more 'older people' to remain and be supported in their own homes.

1.6 This document both reflects on the achievements to date and highlights the future intentions as Social Services incrementally changes and delivers services to 2021.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The 'Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century' project commenced in June 2005, with a period of consultation, and then set out to:

- Develop a strategy for meeting the needs of vulnerable older people in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st century.
- Assess the level of need for vulnerable older people in Blaenau Gwent now and in the future.
- Research the range of options available to meet the assessed need.
- Consult extensively on the range of options.
- Achieve value for money and affordability.
- Confirm the future model of service.
- Where necessary to reconfigure existing services, including the Council's direct provision of residential care.

2.2 The analysis and research undertaken as part of the strategy constructed a clear vision for future service delivery that embraced the standards outlined in the above section.

In supporting these standards Blaenau Gwent has continually aimed to improve the quality of life for older people by enabling them to participate as active citizens in the community; life of Blaenau Gwent; and, when necessary to receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time, provided in the right way, by the right people.

2.3 The over-arching principle of this strategy is based on the concept that actions should be taken to “help older people to find solutions that work for them”.

2.4 As a direct result of the ‘Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century’ strategy, a ‘Commissioning’ strategy was also developed to underpin the actions specified in the ‘Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century’. The established ‘Commissioning’ strategy recognised that a coherent range of services could only be established through a combination of joint and collaborative approaches that change the status quo.

In carrying through the overall programme of change, outlined in this report, both strategies placed an emphasis on caring ‘with’ people instead of caring ‘for’ people with social care provision being seen much more as an exercise in partnership, more fully utilising the resources of individuals themselves, their families and local communities as well as those of all the other care and mainstream services.

3. PURPOSE FOR REVIEWING THE STRATEGY

3.1 This review provides an opportunity for the Authority to consider the actions taken in the past 6 years, since the initial ‘Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century’ and ‘Commissioning’ strategies were completed, and to help the Authority understand the range of changes that have been made, whether these changes have had a positive impact on the lives of people aged 65+, and, whether the plans and priorities set out in the ‘Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century’ and ‘Commissioning’ strategies are believed to be appropriate and remain relevant to the needs of the ‘older’ population.

3.2 The assessment, completed within this review, will also enable the Authority to consider what other measures should be taken in re-positioning or re-providing services for the 65+ age group.

3.3 It is important to recognise that when considering future provision, the ‘review’ can only reflect on, and, factor into any deliberations, information that is readily available at the time the assessment is updated.

3.4 In collating current information it will help determine demographic changes and accordingly help plan to meet the perceived and projected needs of people aged 65+. The assessment reflects on and takes proper account of information available at the time it was produced – (see appendix 1 “Needs Assessment”).

4. ACHIEVEMENTS MADE TO DATE IN SUPPORT OF THE ‘LIVING INDEPENDENTLY IN BLAENAU GWENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY’ STRATEGY, TOGETHER WITH THOSE OUTLINED AND SUPPORTED THROUGH THE ‘COMMISSIONING’ STRATEGY.

4.1 The vision, contained in the ‘Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century’, and ‘Commissioning’ strategies set out a number of “key over-arching” themes that were to be focused on, and these were:

The initial “key” elements to be considered and focused on included:	Outcome of the actions taken against those initial “key” elements										
<p>1. Fewer older people placed into ‘institutional’ long term care, especially ‘standard’ residential care, with the development of more specialist Elderly Mentally Infirm (EMI) care.</p>	<p>The closure of 4 of the Council owned properties resulted in a reduction of some 130 places and private providers have been encouraged and subsequently acted to transfer provision to EMI. The bed situation is as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="810 741 1430 931"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="810 741 1114 779">September 2008</th> <th data-bbox="1114 741 1430 779">November 2012</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="810 779 1114 817">221 Residential</td> <td data-bbox="1114 779 1430 817">113 Residential</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="810 817 1114 855">254 Nursing</td> <td data-bbox="1114 817 1430 855">178 Nursing</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="810 855 1114 893">46 EMI</td> <td data-bbox="1114 855 1430 893">91 EMI</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="810 893 1114 931">90 EMI Nursing</td> <td data-bbox="1114 893 1430 931">101 EMI Nursing</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	September 2008	November 2012	221 Residential	113 Residential	254 Nursing	178 Nursing	46 EMI	91 EMI	90 EMI Nursing	101 EMI Nursing
September 2008	November 2012										
221 Residential	113 Residential										
254 Nursing	178 Nursing										
46 EMI	91 EMI										
90 EMI Nursing	101 EMI Nursing										
<p>2. Developing services that help older people overcome the barriers that prevent them from getting on with their lives</p>	<p>Through the (Services for Older People – SfOP 50+ network), measures are being taken to promote positive images of older people with an emphasis on counteracting age discrimination by actively focusing on initiatives that create greater understanding and respect between the generations. Initiatives have been and are continually being considered through the 50+ network to provide learning opportunities and improve access to those opportunities for formal/ informal and non-accredited learning</p>										
<p>3. A 24-hour care at home service, 365 days per year service and strengthen ‘out of hours’ home care to support more people at home.</p>	<p>There has been a major programme of service modernisation for domiciliary care services, including both in-house and commissioned services. Domiciliary care services currently operate over a 52 week period, between 7.00 – 23.00 hours (includes the twilight service) The need for a night service was not justifiable when considering the associated costs involved. Limited need was identified for a night service and “spot” contracting arrangements exist for a night sitting service.</p>										
<p>4. Extra care housing to prevent avoidable admissions to institutional care (in particular residential care), to increase choice and flexibility and to create a more enabling person centred service</p>	<p>2 extraCare developments made with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 units at Llys Glyncoed, Ebbw Vale (opened inn 2010); and, • 44 units at Llys Nant-y-Mynydd, Nantyglo (opened in 2011) • Bid for Social Housing Grant made to the Welsh Government for a 3rd scheme 										

<p>5. A combination of borough-wide specialist services, combined with local services that reflect the 4 main communities of Blaenau Gwent - Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar.</p>	<p>Created through the development of 4 “zones” within the Community Care team and the re-modelling of specialist sensory impairment services. Each team has access to specialist CRT teams as required. Internal and external Home Care have been developed to run conterminously on the 4 zone basis.</p>
<p>6. A ‘whole-system’ approach with a range of services for a range of needs and excellent links with healthcare providers, transport, housing and leisure services to ensure the best quality of life possible</p>	<p>‘Specialist services exist and joint working with Health continues through joint team collaborations. These include the Gwent Frailty Programme. Collaborative approaches have been established between Social Services and Lifelong learning and Leisure with the specific remit of developing practices that enable a more integrated “working together” ethos to evolve.</p>
<p>7. Complementary provision with Health, combining social care commissioning intentions</p>	<p>Complementary provision exists with Health enabling the same service providers to support users and ensure care consistency. Examples include the Gwent Wide Integrated Community Equipment Stores (GWICES), and the Gwent Frailty Programme (GFP). Work is also progressing to extend the joint commissioning of services at an individual level.</p>
<p>8. An investment to improve intermediate care services to better help people recover from illness and injury and to prevent avoidable admissions to institutional care.</p>	<p>Facility developed at Llys-y-Capel, Blaina but under-used and not fully supported. Has now been replaced through the introduction of the CRT (Frailty Programme). The CRT has been established to focus specifically on this and is jointly managed with Social Services.</p>
<p>9. Increased availability of personal aids and adaptations in people’s own homes</p>	<p>Local Authority consortia created through the ‘GWICES’ service agreement which was established to improve access to aids and adaptations</p> <p>Increased year on year investment into Care and Repair for minor adaptations with joint working arrangements in place to deliver the ‘Disabled facilities Grant’.</p>
<p>10. Increased support for unpaid/family carers</p>	<p>Much work has been done to better identify and assist carers. The following elements have been included and are being focused on as a direct result of the strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Strategy • Carers Forum • Information/advice/guidance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning & development to understand key aspects of caring • Social care workforce to better understand carer needs and assessment practices • Development of carer networks • Befriending services • Providers working collaboratively
11. Working with a range of partners from the planning stage	Increased links with the voluntary sector have evolved to develop low-level support, such as 'choices'; 'Hospital Discharge Scheme'; 'ECSH'; and, 'Supporting People Floating Support' all of which enable older people to access those services they need to maintain their independence and well being.
12. A modern flexible and responsive service that enables older people to maximise their independence and live with appropriate support in their communities.	The proposed service model (see appendix 2) is designed to reflect this with the emphasis on mobilising the support of community based organisations, agencies and groups operating in a defined area to create stronger communities to meet the needs of vulnerable people.

5. THE VISION FOR FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY

5.1 In reviewing the strategy, 'Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century', Social Services have worked towards achieving the aims and objectives that are consistent with, and support, the overarching strategic aims, namely to:

- Maximise Independence
- Minimise Dependence
- Intervene Where Appropriate

By:

- Promoting independence
- Preventing dependence
- Protecting children and vulnerable adults
- Understanding what people want and need
- Managing our affairs
- Valuing our staff
- Promoting partnership
- Being clear about roles and responsibilities

5.2 The strategy initially developed continues to be of huge relevance and it is clear that great strides have been made in 'modernising' the services available to 'older people', in accordance with the above 'philosophy and principles'.

5.3 Central to the philosophy of all developments in Health, is the “key” aim, “to develop innovative proposals for improving the integration and seamlessness of Health & Social Care provision”. Actions proposed are based on the following principles:

- The recognition to invest in the future health and wellbeing of the people of Blaenau Gwent, through reducing the incidence of preventable disease and empowering people to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing;
- The need to transform the existing health and social care services and workforce to provide integrated services, which focus on maximising independence and where all care interventions are based on assessed needs, with all goals identified and subsequent outcomes continually evaluated;
- The need to involve staff at all levels to address cultural differences between staff groups, to ensure ownership and deliverability through effective communication and full collaboration.
- There have been some significant improvements associated with the ‘integration’ approach, namely:
 - ‘Frailty’ programme
 - Neighbourhood Care Networks and the creation of an integrated approach and service
 - Integration of Mental Health and Learning Disability Services

5.4 With the changes in demography, the emerging strategies from Wales Government that all impact of the delivery of service and the changing expectations of older people, there is now a need to re-assert, or, re-prioritise our plans and priorities to ensure they continue to have a major influence on the development of social care provision. Importantly, the manner in which these priorities are integrated with health care provision and, those of organisations that have a community presence, will enable greater collaboration to evolve so that each can draw on the expertise of one another. A ‘working together’ approach as outlined below is viewed as being critical to the success of the strategy, together with all community based developments.

Future Service model (proposed)

The model is intended to help create greater clarity about what it is that the Department is trying to promote or prevent in support of its community citizens.

The model will help staff to understand why changes are being promoted and what the potential return might be as a result of a different approach.

The service model creates 4 distinct groups of people and is intended to create more diverse, focused and integrated pathway of service delivery.

Focus

Community Support

Working with community based organisations to develop an enabling, early intervention approach.

Prevention

Low level care targeted towards enhancing independence and diverting individuals away from direct service provision.

Intermediate Level

Reablement process, helping individual's regain confidence/skills and keeping people out of social care provision with outcome focused interventions.

Complex Care

Provision where there is little opportunity for people to gain good health and or skills to regain independence.

Challenges

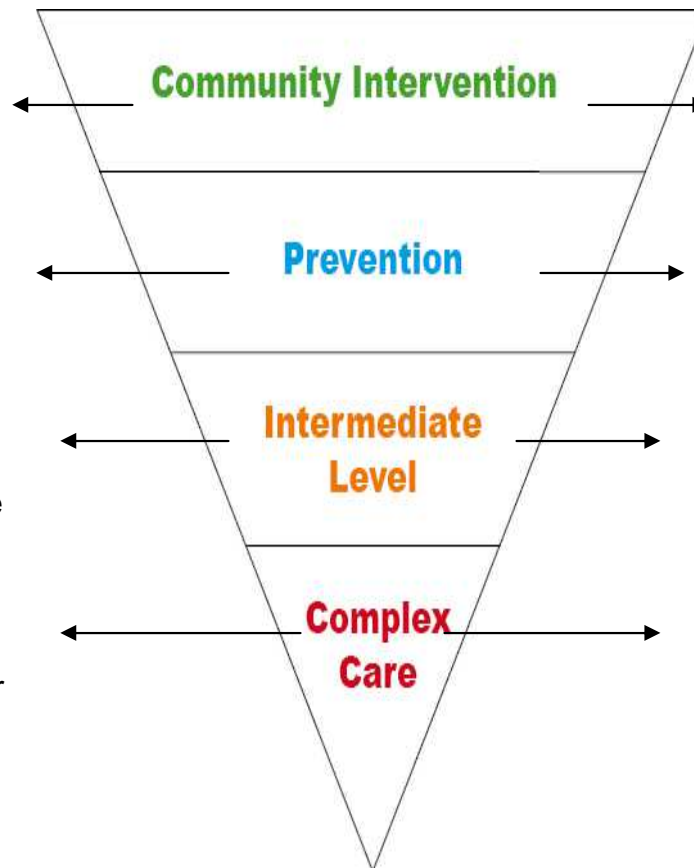
Divert demand – early identification

Mobilise organisations and groups operating in a defined area to create stronger communities to meet the needs of vulnerable people.

Reduce demand – identify what are the key 'trigger' points along that pathway that lead to the inability/capacity of the individual to care for themselves; what interventions may change or divert that outcome.

Promote independence – determine whether services provided actually promote independence or create dependency and what alternatives might be available.

Manage the demand that remains better and more efficiently - identify success through outcomes achieved. Current incentives are perverse, i.e., the provider benefits from people's needs increasing rather than diminishing. How can providers be encouraged not by the volume of provision but by the outcomes they have achieved.



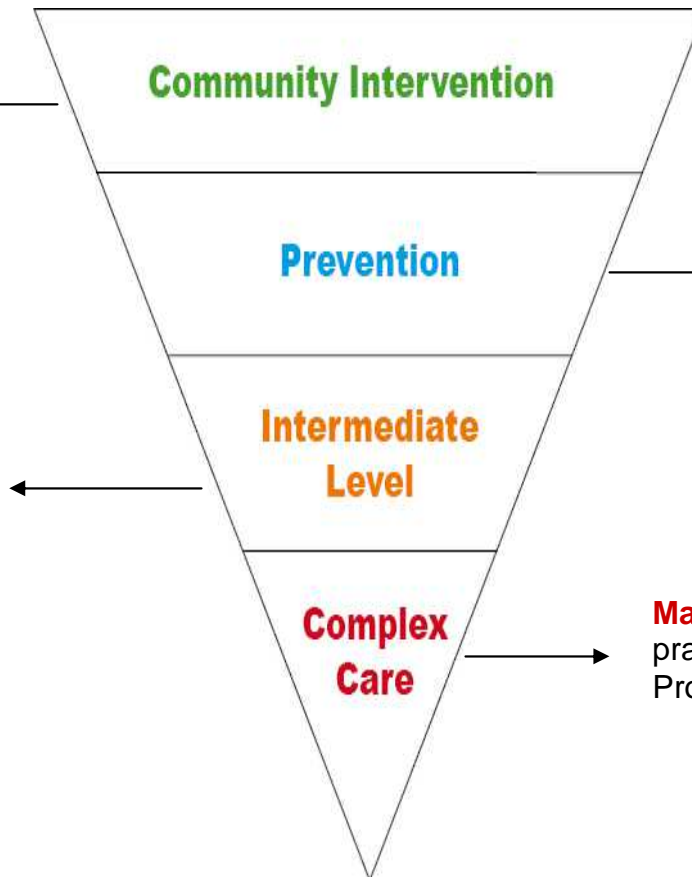
Common challenges which straddle all four of the above categories include:

- **Understand demand and supply** - understand the key drivers behind demand and how can these be managed, lessened or deferred.
- **Stimulate the development of a more diverse market** – outcome-based specifications for all contracts with perhaps a reduction of block contracts through the promotion of direct payments.
- **Generate efficiencies through more effective partnership working** – the identification of multi-disciplined organisations capable of tackling a broader range of health and social care issues
- **Capacity/resources** – to be delivered by workers with the relevant skills and knowledge.

The 'core' principles required to help fulfil the service model include:

Provide **information** about the purpose of and the accessibility to local services
Ensure there is **clarity about service responsibility** within partnerships
Promote **social inclusion** and empowerment

Prevent increasing dependency
Promote recovery and re-ablement
Provide **specialist interventions** in responding to individual need



Provide pro-active **early intervention**
Prevent ill health and **promote health & well-being**
Promote **independence** and life controls

Maintain people in their own homes wherever practical
Promote and **protect the dignity** of the individual

5.5 This model reinforces the 'Wales Government challenge' of the next 10 years which is to:

- “create a Wales where full participation is within the reach of all older people and their contribution is recognised and valued. Developing communities that are age-friendly while ensuring older people have the resources they need to live, will improve participation and individual wellbeing”;
- “ensure that future generations of older people are well equipped for later life by encouraging recognition of the changes and demands that may be faced and taking action early in preparation. Population ageing is a permanent feature of our modern society. There is a need to work collectively and embrace this reality for the opportunities and challenges it brings”.

6. THE NATIONAL VISION IN PROGRESSING SERVICES TO OLDER/DISABLED PEOPLE

6.1 Local authorities are at the forefront of dealing with the implications of an ageing population. The need to re-define our role and place within their local communities is becoming increasingly more important in the current economic climate and through times of austerity.

6.2 If Social Services is to cope with the many demands expected of it then there needs to be a fundamental change in attitude towards old age, moving away from the negative stereotypes of dependence and loss, to a more positive appreciation of the knowledge, coping skills and experience, possessed by older people. These attributes equip older people to make a significant contribution to the well-being of their local communities.

6.3 While good physical and mental health is an important contributor to individual wellbeing, the presence of chronic or disabling health conditions need not stand in the way of life satisfaction or personal well-being. Services that support individuals and address the disabling effects of health conditions can play a major role in enabling a good quality of life.

6.4 Social Services will undoubtedly need to reduce demand on its services and if it is to achieve this it needs to identify what the key 'trigger' points are for older people along a pathway that leads to the inability/incapacity of the individual to care for themselves and what interventions may change or divert that outcome. As a consequence there is a growing emphasis to move to a more health and well-being focus as opposed to the traditional 'welfare' approach. This focus has to gain prominence in the way in which Social Services is organised and responds in the future.

6.5 The expectation outlined in '*Sustainable Social Services- A Framework for Action:*'

states that “Social Services need to take better account of individual requirements and to achieve this they must act in ways that:

- strengthen the voice of older/disabled people;
- allow older/disabled people to have maximum control over their lives;
- build on the strengths of older/disabled people;
- sustain and strengthen older/disabled people and enable them to make a full contribution to the community and importantly to draw on it for support”.

6.6 This in effect means that in setting out plans for improvement the following ‘themes’ are identified as being critical:

- **Getting Help (Access to Services and Quality of Services provided)**
 - Offer, with health, a rapid, community based assessment and response service
 - Provide mechanisms to ensure prompt access to specialist diagnostic and/or emergency services when required.

- **The Effect on People’s Lives**
 - Respond to individuals’ changing social and clinical needs.
 - Protecting vulnerable people,
 - Promoting independence and social inclusion

- **Shaping Services**
 - Planning and Partnerships, Commissioning and Contracting Resources
 - Making optimum use of available diagnostic and therapeutic technologies.

- **Delivering Social Services (Workforce; Performance Management)**
 - Ensuring staff are appropriately trained in preparation for the ‘culture’ change as it emerges.
 - Ensuring the appropriate balance of staff is achieved to support the priority service activities

- **Providing Direction (Leadership and Culture; Corporate and Political Support and Scrutiny)**
 - Preparing the political and corporate agenda to meet the challenges identified within national policy
 - Developing a shared understanding of need and commitment to future developments and changes in service delivery.

6.7 The Local Authority has a leading role in responding to these challenges and also in promoting economic, social and environmental well-being within the context of a strategic community partnership involving a broad range of statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations.

6.8 Our work, to date, reinforces this approach and the need to create standards within the communities of Blaenau Gwent where older people (**taken from the Community Plan**):

- Are valued citizens
- Do not suffer from health inequalities
- Contribute to, and share in, the prosperity and resources of the community
- Live safely and feel safe at home and outside
- Are financially secure
- Learn, achieve and share their skills, experience and knowledge with others
- Live as independently as possible, with choice and control over their lives
- Live well and receive the support and any treatment they need if their health fails or they become frail and vulnerable

6.9 Using these principles, the work of Social Services has to now, be more focused on maximising the abilities and potential of older people and, to only provide “care” related

services to those individuals who are unable to benefit from rehabilitation/reablement services.

In maximising the abilities and potential of older people and in promoting and enabling people to live as independently as possible, a broader approach is needed and it is believed the following aims must now come into focus as we lead the work of Social Services:

- Services to promote social inclusion
- Services to support individuals at times of difficulty and protect them from harm.
- Services to assist individuals to recover independence where this has been threatened;
- Services to promote and protect the dignity of the individual.
(refer to the proposed service mode - above)

7. DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

7.1 Over recent years there have been a number of developments both locally and nationally that have required a review of existing service provision, these include:

- The key strategic aims and core themes of the Council, including the aim for individuals to live as independently as possible with access to services that are local, high quality, efficient, safe, timely and delivered in modern facilities.
- Key national strategies all emphasise the need to promote health and social care policies which enable older people to live at home with appropriate support as long as is possible. These strategies include:
 - ‘Social Services (Wales) Bill’;
 - the Community Plan;
 - the Health Social Care and Well Being Strategy;
 - ‘Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities’
 - “Making the Connections”
 - ‘Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action’;
 - Evolving joint commissioning strategies with Health partners e.g. CHC Domiciliary Commissioning.
 - ‘The ‘Strategy for Older People in Wales’;
 - ‘The ‘National Service Framework for Older People’; and,

The common ‘theme’ across all national strategies is to:

- provide services, opportunities and activities in a timely and appropriate way;
- promote and ensure health and well-being; and,
- enables people to maximise their independence, potential and participation as valued members in society”.

7.2 With the changes in demography, the emerging strategies from Wales Government that all impact of the delivery of service and the changing expectations of older people, there is now a need to re-assert, or, re-prioritise our plans and priorities to ensure they continue to have a major influence on the development of social care provision. Importantly, the manner in which these priorities are integrated with health care provision and, those of organisations that have a community presence, will enable greater collaboration to evolve so that each can draw on the expertise of one another

7.3 The need to review and adjust service provision to meet the changing expectations of older people, in the future, is paramount. The commissioning strategy needs to respond to the above whilst recognising that a coherent range of services will only be established through a combination of joint and collaborative approaches that change the status quo.

7.4 In carrying through the programme of change, outlined in this report, Social Services will place an emphasis on facilitating responses to people who are vulnerable or “at risk”, in partnership, fully utilising the resources of individuals themselves, their families and local communities as well as those of all the other ‘mainstream’ services, and will only make longer-term social care provision available, after all rehabilitation programmes have been exhausted.

7.5 By taking forward this work the aim of the strategy is to bring about radical change that fundamentally shifts the way we all think about, talk about and respond to the needs and aspirations of older people.

8. PROFILE OF BLAENAU GWENT’S OLDER CITIZENS

8.1 The strategy for future service development has to take full account of the projected demographic changes in the future. A ‘needs analysis’ has been undertaken to try and assess likely levels of future demand (see appendix 1).

8.2 The number of people aged over 80 in Blaenau Gwent, is reported to have consistently increased, year on year, since 1991. In 2014 the number of people aged 80+ in the Borough is 1,470 and is projected to increase by 230 in 6 years and by 1,070 in 16 years.

**Table 1:
Population projections**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2020	2025	2030
Age 65+	11,840	11,960	12,100	12,180	12,350	12,870	13,620
Age 80+	1,470	1,500	1,500	1,540	1,700	2,260	2,550

Source: <http://www.daffodilcymru.org.uk>;

8.3 Proportion of older people with limiting long-term illness.

In the 2001 Census 11,566 people in Blaenau Gwent declared their health to be ‘not good’ with some 19, 838 stated they had a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limited daily activities or work.

More recent indications using the “Daffodil” projection of care services in Wales system are that in 2014 there were 4,646 people, aged 65 and over, with ‘limiting long-term illness’. This compares to the Wales position where in 2014 there are 217,242 people with ‘limiting long-term illness’ aged 65 and over.

**Table 2:
Population with limiting long-term illness**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2020	2025	2030
People aged 65-74 (Blaenau Gwent)	2,101	2,119	2,137	2,124	2,076	2,022	2,232
Figures for Wales population aged 65-74	92,803	94,773	96,406	97,346	98,218	96,644	105,095
People aged 75+ (Blaenau Gwent)	2,545	2,579	2,617	2,688	2,911	3,382	3,598
Figures for Wales population aged 75+	124,439	126,558	128,626	131,561	143,740	171,662	189,351

Source: <http://www.daffodilcymru.org.uk>;

While medical advances and improved standards of living are continuing to increase life expectancy, those same factors are combining to increase the period of time that people live in a state of ill-health, requiring higher levels of health and social care. This trend is evident from the national statistics for the last 20 years:

8.4 The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation study of 2008 a number of electoral wards in Blaenau Gwent, have been awarded Communities First status on the basis that these wards face significant economic and social deprivation. Some statistics in addition to those already reported include: -

- Lowest average property values in the United Kingdom.
- High proportion of persons providing unpaid care to disabled family members;
- High unemployment levels in comparison to the rest of Wales;
- Low gross weekly earnings in comparison to the rest of Wales;
-

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2005) comparisons show that people in Blaenau Gwent have a greater degree of disadvantage than in other areas of Wales and the UK. The impact of income and wealth on health is liable to mean that despite the decrease in heavy industry the older population of Blaenau Gwent will still have poorer than average health.

**Table 3:
Life expectancy at Birth in Blaenau Gwent**

	Between 2001-03	Between 2008-09	2022/23
Males	73.6	75.6	79.0
Females	78.4	78.2	81.0

Source: Population census

A growing proportion of this ill-health in old age is attributable to dementia. Based on national estimates that 20% of people over 80 live with dementia, it can be estimated that there are over 1,000 Blaenau Gwent residents living with this condition now.

Table 4:
People aged 65 and over predicted to have dementia, by age and gender, projected to 2030

	2014	2015	2020	2025	2030
People aged 65-79	284	295	319	332	324
People aged 80+	547	554	617	732	888

Source: <http://www.daffodilcymru.org.uk>;

8.5 As of March 2006, there were, in Blaenau Gwent, 3,091 care packages open to adults; 2,228 service users were aged 65 plus, 673 of this total, related to people aged over 80 years and there were 863 packages to people under 65 years of age.

As of September 2014, there were 2,741 care packages open to adults; 1,587 service users were aged 65 plus, with 494 of this total related to people aged over 80 years and 1,154 packages to people under 65 years of age.

The table below reflects the fact that services have been targeted on those with the most significant needs, and although there is a fluctuating situation over the period 2008 to 2014, overall there has been a reduction in actual numbers receiving community care packages, although there is evidence to indicate that the total packages of care are starting to rise (up by 36 cases) in the period 2012 to 2014.

Interestingly, the complexity of their care needs throughout the period March 2006 to September 2014 has increased.

Table 5
Service users supported through community care packages

Service user numbers	March 2006	March 2012	September 2012	September 2014
Total number of users supported	3,091	2,792	2,723	2,741
Service users 85+	673	544	501	494
Service users aged between 65 - 84	1,555	1,227	1,221	1,093
Service users aged 18 -64	863	1,021	1,001	1,154

Source for the above information in table 5:
Business Management Team, Social Services

9. FUTURE SERVICE PRIORITIES AND COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS

9.1 The strategy acknowledges that in the face of severe financial restraints now, and, particularly in the future, new sets of challenges are likely to emerge and one of those challenges relates to the level and type of services the Authority is able to deliver. Different options for services, in this era of growing scale and complexity of need, will be required with some of the services gaining in prominence at the expense of others, purely and simply because of affordability, due to the ever changing demands as the population ages.

9.2 The needs analysis has identified the likely demographic pressures that have to be faced in the future, analysed current service provision, and identified a 'service model' that will need to be established if Social Services is to combat and divert demand.

9.3 In an attempt to overcome many of the concerns for the future, Social Services is proposing to change some of its current focus and concentrate time and effort in the early identification of vulnerable, or, potentially vulnerable people so that staff can intervene early in an attempt to remedy concerns at an early stage and delay or prevent the individual's circumstances or personal health from deteriorating to the extent that the only option is intensive support through a 'care' package.

9.4 The 'service model' proposed is based on a broader definition of help and facilitation with the services and support individuals receive, albeit possibly from different sources, being "joined up", or integrated, and delivered as a package which is purposeful to the individual, avoids omissions and focuses specifically on outcomes that will benefit the individual.

9.5 The challenge is to ensure that sufficient resources are made available to meet our statutory responsibilities and create sufficient capacity to focus on diverting demand. Integral to the success of this challenge is the action of mobilising organisations and groups operating in a defined area, to work collaboratively with Social Services, to create a more 'joined-up' approach in generating stronger communities that will better meet the needs of vulnerable people.

9.6 The framework established in the "Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century Strategy for Older People aged 65+" clearly outlines developments proposed over a fifteen year period 2006–2021 and this document, in the earlier section, outlines the achievements to date.

9.7 The intention is to continue the work that has brought significant change and success to the citizens of Blaenau Gwent, albeit by strengthening our work with partner and 'like-minded' organisations which will "add value" to the work of the Department. The service model proposed continues to be based on already stated and evolving health, social care, accommodation, transport and voluntary sector developments.

9.8 In addition to these wider 'social service developments', the following 'service provision' will be targeted as priority, all of which are part of the overarching "Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century Strategy for Older People".

- **Priority 1. Long term care:** jointly with Health and other partners, make arrangements to meet the nursing, residential and dementia care needs of the older persons population
- **Priority 2. Reablement/Enabling services:** further develop this approach and recognise the contribution of other organisations, in progressing this service

- **Priority 3. Day Opportunities/Community Options:** continuing development of everyday activities and opportunities to learn new skills or re-acquire skills through confidence building and tuition measures
- **Priority 4. Assistive Technology:** promote and expand assistive technology supported by a rapid response service, capable of containing situations where no family carers are available.
- **Priority 5. Direct Payments:** promote and expand direct payments and empowering people to take responsibility for arranging their own care and support requirements
- **Priority 6. Accommodation:** recognising the key role that appropriate housing plays on the well-being of older people. Work closely with partners to develop a range of suitable housing in Blaenau
- **Priority 7. Carers:** providing accessible and timely support services responsive to individual need
- **Priority 8. Domiciliary Care:** Ensuring provision of appropriate, reliable, quality services.

9.9 Taking forward the above priorities is considered critical, and these priorities need to be reconciled with the integration agenda with Caerphilly County Borough Council, so that the respective Authorities:

- Develop more appropriate care and support arrangements
- Enable people to live independently for as long as possible

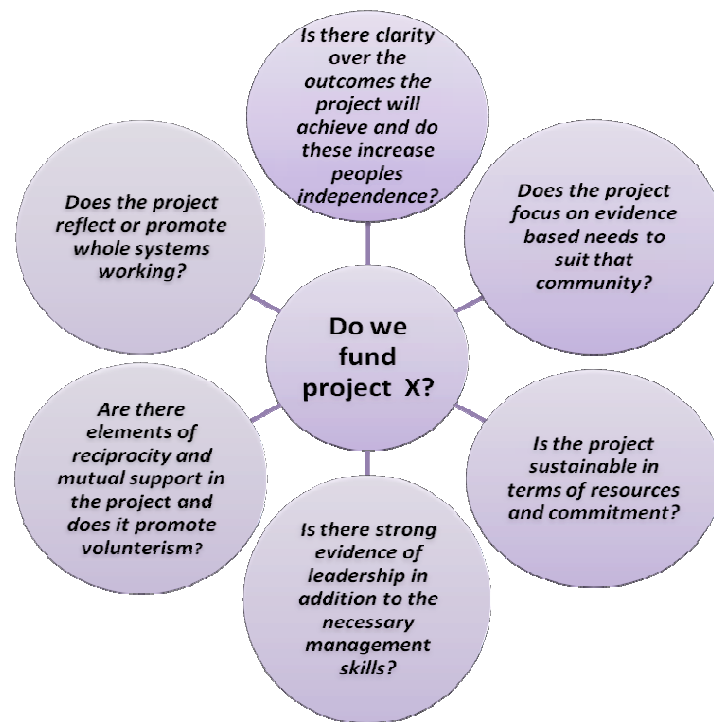
To achieve this there is a need to

- Ensure consistent outcome focused assessment & care management arrangements exist
- An early identification and intervention service exists with appropriate

10. Commissioning for future services

10.1 The key issue is, what services are we to invest in, that will maximise better outcomes for service users, provide efficiency and value for money, minimise risks to users and limit pressures on budgets. There is a need to remove the often perverse nature of commissioning services, so that providers are paid on outcomes achieved, as opposed to the amount of 'care' provided. In working to this approach it reinforces the practice principle of 'enabling' people to become more independent through programmes that help people recover self-help skills.

10.2 In order to assess and determine the services we will invest in, and those we need to de-commission. The following criteria is recommended **(taken from framework of services to older people):**



10.3 In with including

working partners, service

providers, there will be a need to develop a shared understanding, a commitment to change and in the way services are delivered. This is particularly important because in moving to this proposed model there will in many instances need to be a cross departmental/multi agency undertaking and or agreement. In addition the Council will need to consider how services are delivered, working closely with a range of partners, including the voluntary and independent sector to secure the most effective methods to deliver services. The proposed social services integration programme with Caerphilly Council will require that future commissioning intentions converge and complement each other.

10.4 In considering the developmental service aspirations, it should be noted that there will be a limit to what can be achieved at any one time, therefore immediate priorities have been established. Listed below are details of the work priorities:

Range of “Core” Community and Borough-wide services:

- Integrated social care and Health services
- Assessment & Care Management/Community Care Team
- Primary and secondary mental health services
- Domiciliary care services
- Joint Frailty Community Resource Team (including Occupational Therapy and Re-ablement services) that support people to regain skills and confidence
- Accommodation options to support people with high dependency needs e.g. people with dementia / extra care)
- Supporting People Floating Support Services that help people to keep their our accommodation
- Community Options (Day Care provision)
- Carer Support
- Long-term care
- Respite care

The specific actions that are required to underpin and support the development and or, re-positioning of services are set out below:

- **Long term care:**
 - Fewer older people being placed into institutional care, including standard residential care;
 - Increased availability of specialist residential (high dependency), dual nursing and dementia care.
 - Projections on the need for future long-term care provision, based on population and dementia trends, reveals the following (red type indicates pressure points):

Calendar Year	Residential Care	EMI Residential Care	Dual Residential/ Nursing Care	Nursing Care	EMI Nursing Care
2012	113	91	New category	178	101
Beds available at the end of 2014	84	90	75	113	54
2015	70	92	79	94	54
2016	68	102	79	90	61
2020	72	109	84	96	
2025	78	117	89	104	71
2030	86	135	102	116	81

- **Accommodation:**
 - Development of Extra Care Sheltered Housing, a bid has already been submitted for Tredegar, in addition to the 2 existing schemes
 - Housing – appropriate housing choices
 - Housing and repairs – long-term maintenance of private dwellings; energy schemes; handyman services
- **Domiciliary Care:** with'
 - Personalised enabling domiciliary service that maximises independence;
 - Increased specialism for those who are elderly mentally infirm;
- **Increased support for carers;**
 - Carer assessments appropriately reflect carer needs and properly signpost
 - Flexible respite care to include 'sitting service';
 - Sustaining the caring role over a longer period without direct help and support.
 - Mobile response services as an increased support for carers
- **Facilitation and promotion of Low-level (preventative) support,** addressing issues of social inclusion such as shopping, low-level maintenance:
 - Good quality information to the public - crucial to helping individuals and families make informed decisions. Older people can benefit hugely from having help to 'navigate' around the system

- Practical help with things like shopping, gardening, minor repairs and adaptations in the home etc
 - Advocacy/Floating support – helping people to navigate through any issues and concerns
 - Social connections/social networks/befriending – avoiding isolation and re-establishing or building contacts
 - Welfare advice
 - Healthy living advice and support – e.g. exercise classes, diet advice, risky lifestyle, issues awareness etc
 - Community safety – fire safety, antisocial behaviour, victim support, crime prevention etc
- **Increased usage of assistive technology;**
 - Increased use of Telecare to enable older and vulnerable people to remain independent in their own homes
 - Formal assessments as part of assessment & care management – use of demonstration/assessment facility
 - Falls prevention that help minimise risk
 - Digital inclusion to promote social inclusion
- **Increased availability of personal aids and adaptations in people’s own homes;**
 - Continue to work with Care & Repair, GWICES and other providers to ensure needs are met
- **Universal day opportunities for older people; need to**
 - Find more financially sustainable models for delivering services, thus allowing us to spend our resources on those in most need.
 - Continue to look for value for money by working in partnership and sharing resources.
 - Design specialist services to meet the growing demand.
 - Consider options for developing some of our existing projects through the social firm or social enterprise route.
 - Develop pathways to progression beyond the service
- **Increased rehabilitative services**
 - Outcome focused rehabilitation/reablement delivery
 - Community care packages – with an emphasis on getting people to do as much as they can for themselves
- **Extended links with voluntary sector support;**
 - Undertake an audit of the work of the voluntary sector and determine commissioning opportunities
 - Explore how the voluntary sector are able to assist ‘older people’ to have meaningful contacts with and be active in the community
 - Identify how the sector can deliver low-level practical services

References:

1. Framework of Services for Older People: Wales Government 2012
2. The Strategy for Older People in Wales, 2008-2013 - (“**Living longer, living better**”)

3. Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action
4. Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities'
5. The Community Plan;
6. Improving Social Care in Wales - SSIA
7. "Basics of efficiency in Adult Care" – John Bolton
8. Together for Health: A Five Year Vision for the NHS in Wales

Agenda Item 25

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **11th March 2020**

Report Subject: **Social Services Workforce Sickness Absence Performance**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**

Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Director of Social Services
Andrea J Prosser, Head of Organisational Development**

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

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the opportunity to consider and challenge relevant Directorate sickness absence performance and the proposed actions for improvement.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Staff attendance is critical in delivering services and the Council's priorities and is a key performance indicator reflected in the quarterly Finance and Performance report. Improving attendance remains a key priority for the Council and is linked to the need to create efficiencies and improve service delivery.

- 2.2 Sickness absence within the Authority is identified as a key risk and it is acknowledged that high levels of sickness absence will have a detrimental impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively. Therefore, the need to reduce the impact and cost of sickness absence has been identified as a corporate priority.

2.3 Performance Information

- 2.3.1 The overall year end outturn figure for 2018/19 the Council was 12.66 days per full time equivalent (FTE) employee. An increase from the previous year's outturn of 11.2 days and exceeds the target set of 8.5 days.

- 2.3.4 Whilst sickness levels remain high it is important to note that the majority of employees have little or no sickness absence and attend work regularly. The vast majority of Council employees have excellent attendance levels as data indicates that 2463 employees attended work every day during the period from April 2018 to March 2019 with the Council having an attendance level of 94.3%.

2.3.5 A report reviewing workforce Sickness Absence Performance for the Council that went to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on the 19th November 2019. The Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations for improvement and also recommend the following; that processes be put in place for individual Directorates to report quarterly to their specific scrutiny committees for challenge and scrutiny on Directorate's sickness absence performance; and that the Executive Committee also have the opportunity to review this report.

2.3.6 **Appendix 1** outlines the sickness performance information for the Social Services Directorate for quarter 1 and 2 of 2019/20 as well as summarising the position in 2018/19.

3. **Directorate Comments/Actions for Improvement For discussion at Social Services management team**

3.1 **Comments**

- Evidence of managerial action in managing sickness
- Provider Services sickness absence performance is high for all Councils in the Gwent region

Actions

- Targets and improvement objectives set for each Head of Service area
- Case conferences to be held with Head of Adults and Children's with Head of OD to review long term sick
- Provider Services identified as a 'hotspot' – monthly meetings Head of Service/Team Manager and OD to focus on reducing sickness absence
- Focussed quarterly session Social Services Management Team and OD to review sickness absence and application of the Managing Attendance Policy
- Continued awareness raising with managers at Directorate manager's briefings on the critical importance of application of the Managing Attendance Policy and the timely updating of ITrent
- Review of sickness absence to be added to all managers 121 sessions
- Training for managers on managing sickness will be facilitated jointly with OD in new year
- Review of staffing structure in Adult Services and redefining of roles – continued priority to manage sickness
- Social Services Senior Management Team to monitor agreed actions – sickness absence to be a regular item on the management team agenda

4. **Options for Recommendation**

4.1 This report was considered by the Social Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 13th January 2020.

- 4.1 **Option 1**
That the Executive Committee having considered the sickness absence performance information and proposed arrangements to improve attendance rates within the Social Services Directorate identify any further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement.
- 4.2 **Option 2**
That the Executive Committee agrees the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 ***Impact on Budget*** (short and long term impact)
There are direct and indirect costs of sickness absence which are a key driver in the Council's approach to effectively improve attendance at work.
- 4.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
The underperformance in relation to the high levels of sickness absence does present a significant risk in terms of the impact on front line service delivery and continuity through lost time and staffing changes. In addition, the financial implications associated with sickness absence directly impact on the Council's financial efficiency targets and the level of financial savings that the Council needs to achieve. Mitigating actions are detailed within the report.
- 4.3 ***Legal***
There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 4.4 ***Human Resources***
The staffing implications are detailed within the content of the report.
5. **Supporting Evidence**
- 5.1 ***Performance Information and Data***
The detailed performance evidence is detailed in appendix 1 as well as the actions taken to address the level of underperformance.
- 5.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
Information included within the report will provide opportunity for the public to scrutinise the Council's performance and provide accountability across the Council.
- 5.3 ***Involvement*** (consultation, engagement, participation) – Trade Union have been consulted on the sickness absence performance and are committed to working with the Council to improve attendance.
- 5.4 ***Thinking for the Long term*** (forward planning)
Options detailed in this report contribute directly to enabling the workforce for the future.

- 5.5 ***Preventative focus***
The review of the Organisational Development Strategy will focus on prevention.
- 5.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
There are regular discussions with the national Human Resources Directors Network and regionally in terms of good practice or emerging practice in reducing sickness absence. There are early discussions with the WLGA to launch a project to learn from England any initiatives in relation to wellbeing.
- 5.7 ***Integration*** (across service areas)
NA
- 5.8 ***EqlA*** (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)
The review of sickness absence performance was carried out and included all employees of the Council.
6. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 6.1 Sickness absence statistics are reported to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and an annual performance report is presented to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee. Directorate positions and actions for improvement will be reported to specific scrutiny committees. Biannual workforce profiles are discussed with Managers and Headteachers.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Sickness Absence Monitoring Quarters 1 and 2

Sickness Absence 2019/20 (Quarter 1 & 2) - Social Services Directorate

Corporate Director - Damien McCann
 Head of Adult Services – Alyson Hoskins
 Head of Children’s Services - Tanya Evans

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

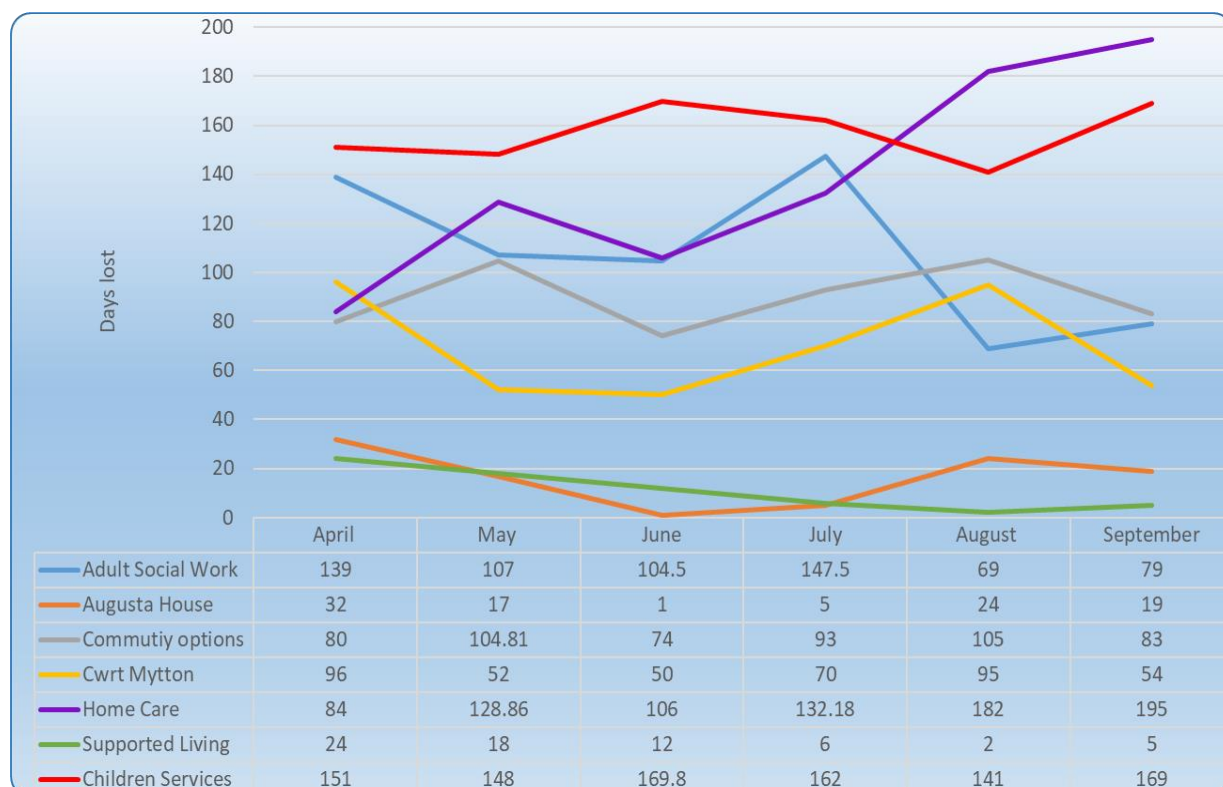
2019/20	Qtr1 (Target 2.75)	Qtr2 (Target 5.50)
Council	3.06	5.93
Corporate Services	1.71	4.34
Regeneration & Community Services	3.78	7.09
Education	2.84	5.09

2019/20	Qtr1 (Target 2.75)	Qtr2 (Target 5.50)
Social Services	3.62	7.45
Adult Services	4.34	9.16
Children’s Services	2.57	5.03
Senior Management	0.00	0.00

- 2018/19 – Annual Review Social Services
- 18.19 FTE days lost (Quarter 1 - 4.46, Quarter 2 - 9.80)
 - 61.6% of absences were long term
 - 93 employees with one or more absences - mental health
 - 3917 calendar days lost - mental health
 - 12 employees with more than 6 calendar months sickness
 - 5 employees disciplined for sickness absence

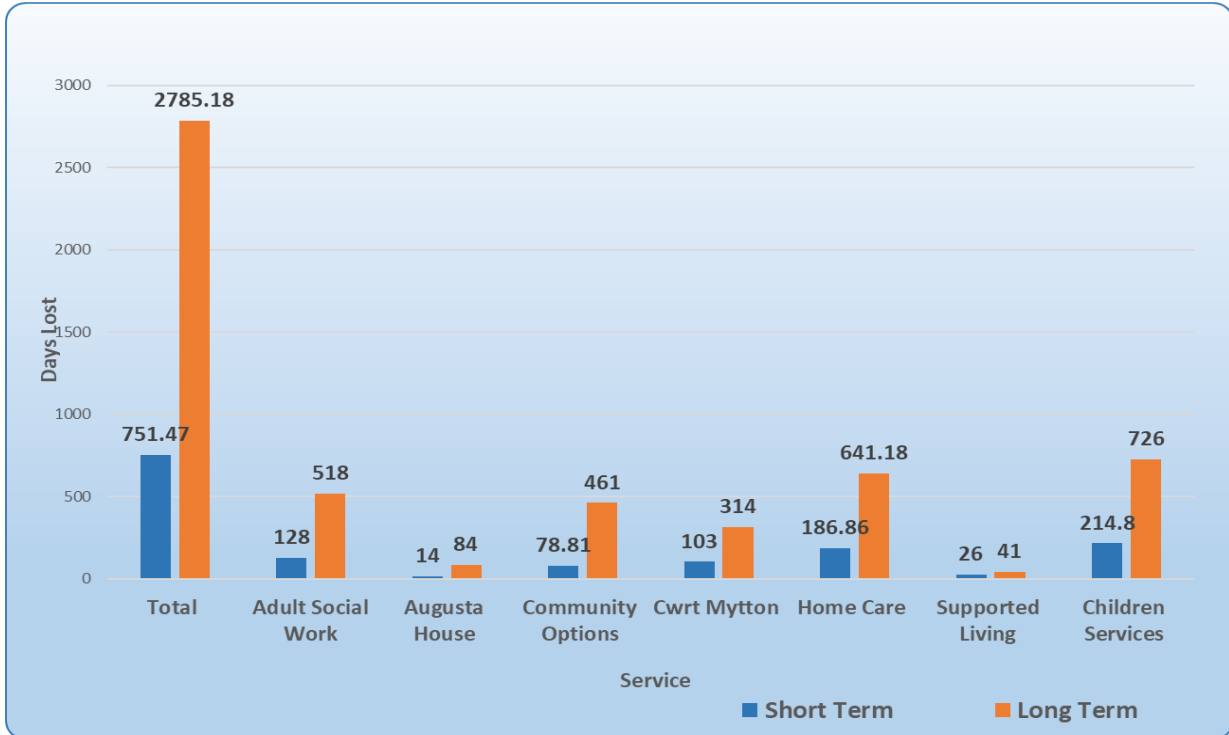
Total Working Days Lost - 01.04.19 – 30.09.19

- 3536.65 working days lost to sickness absence (25606.71 hours)



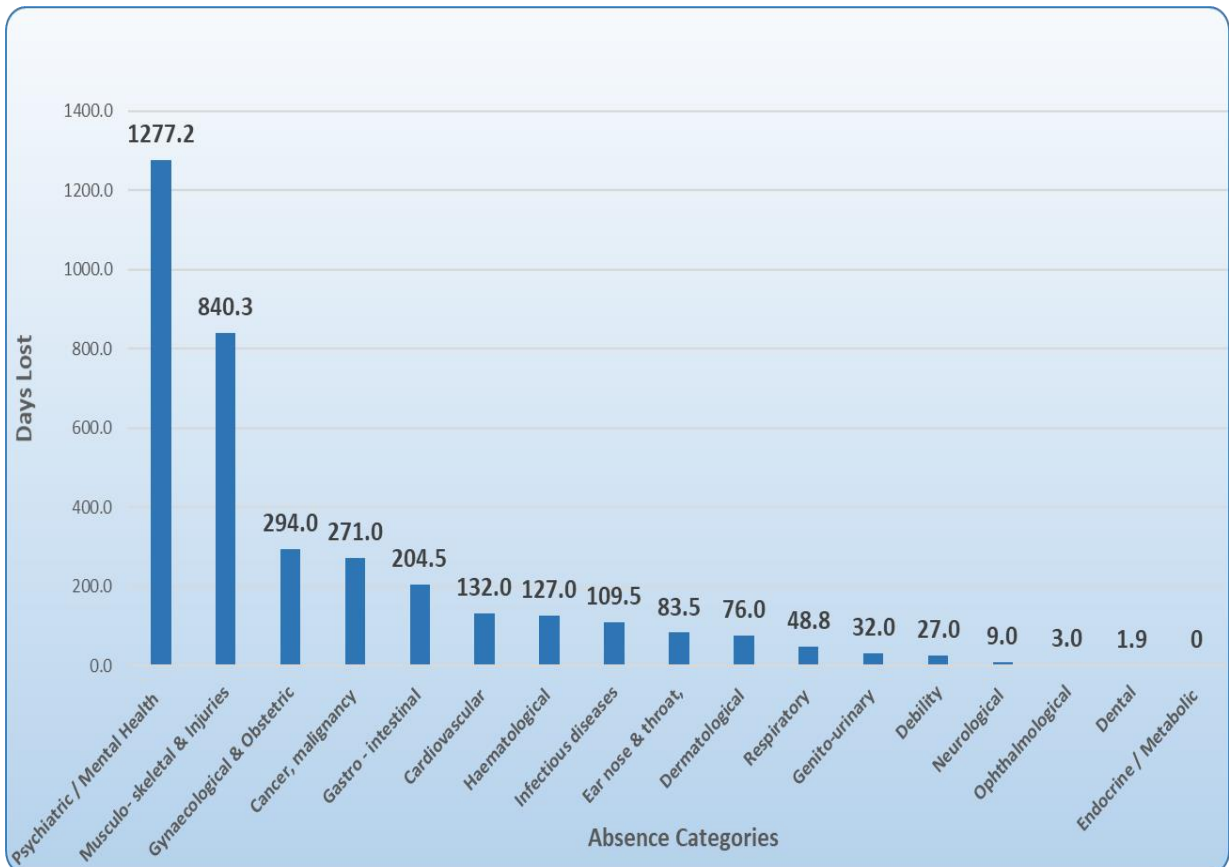
Total Working Days Lost - Short Term / Long Term

- 78.8% of absence is long term



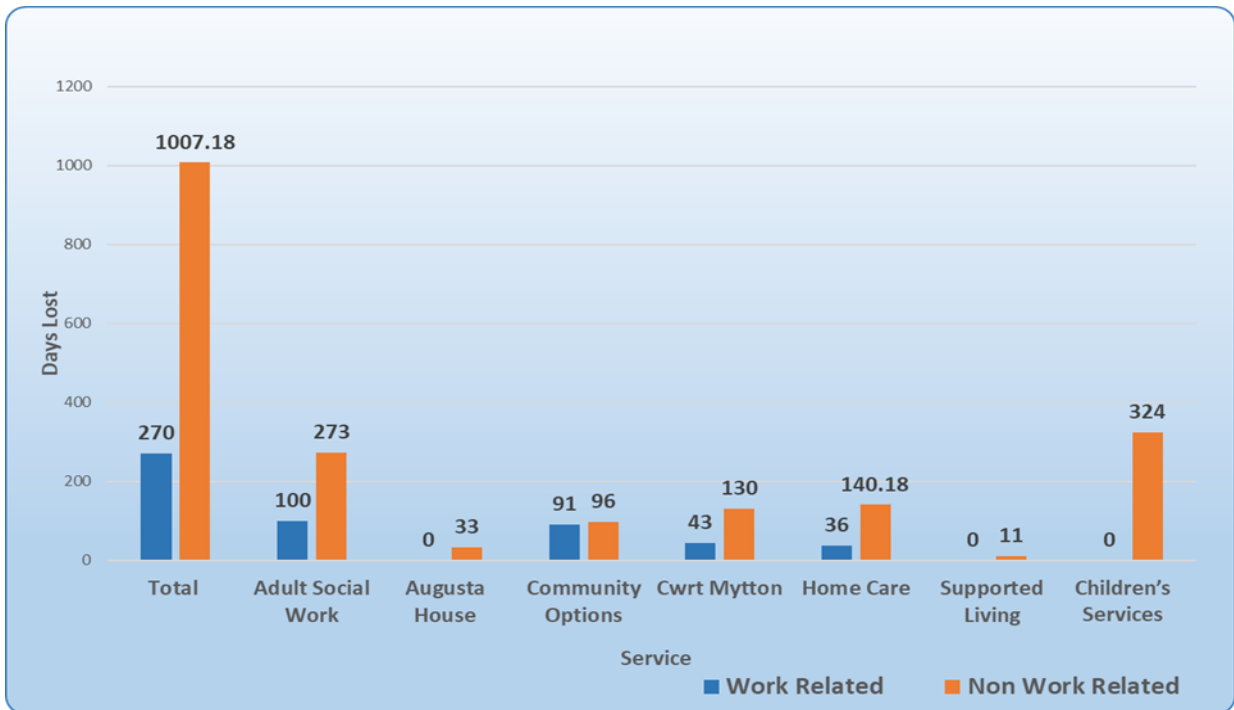
Total Working Days Lost by Reason

- Top 3 reasons - Psychiatric/Mental Health, Musculo-Skeletal & Injuries, Gynaecological
- 1277.2 working days lost to Psychiatric / Mental Health



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

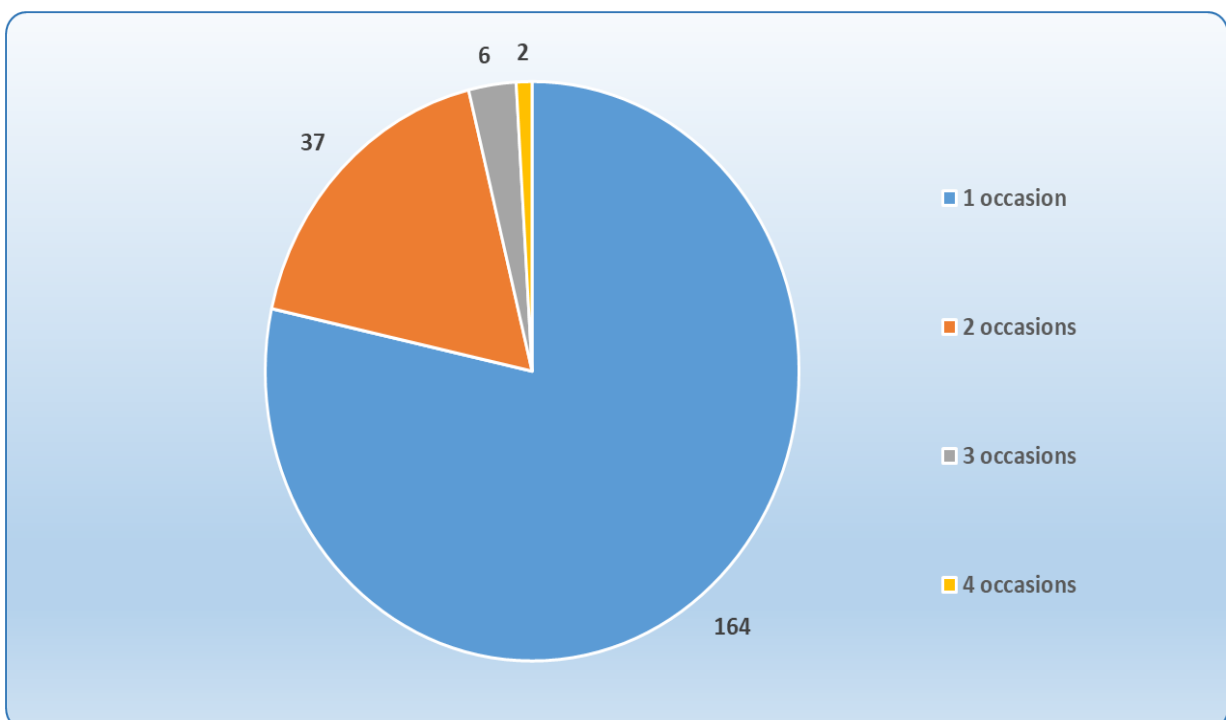
- **21%** of days lost to Psychiatric / Mental Health identified as work related
- **43** employees with one or more absences - Mental Health
- **47** occasions of absence - Mental Health



Number reporting sickness

- Number of staff reporting sick – **209**
- Number of occasions of sickness absence - **264**

Number of occasions of absence per employee



Impact - Financial / Staff Resources

- The cost of lost time for the six-month period is estimated at **£306,768** based on an average salary of **£23,107.11 – £11.98** per hour (Average Salary - Pay Policy calculation excluding staff on the Teachers pay and conditions). These costs do not include on-costs, cover arrangements or management time to manage the sickness.
- This equates to **26 FTE** employees being absent for the full 6 months.

Management of Sickness Absence

- **30** open sickness cases as at 30.09.19
- **57** Occupational health referrals made during the period
- Number of Trigger Breaks based on the most recent absence in the period for each employee (however they may have broken more than one trigger in the rolling year)
 - **13 employees - 3 or more occasions**
 - **59 employees - 10 or more days absence**
 - **62 employees - 3 or more occasions & 10 or more days**
 - **75 employees - Did not hit a trigger**
- **45.5%** of Return to Work meetings required have been recorded on iTrent
- **5** Written Warnings issued
- **1** Dismissal on Medical Capability

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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