

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 11TH MARCH, 2020

REPORT OF:

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR N. DANIELS (CHAIR)

Councillors G. Collier
D. Davies
J. Mason

WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Education
Corporate Director Social Services
Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
Chief Officer Resources
Chief Officer Commercial
Service Manager Accountancy
Solicitor
Press Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were received for: Councillor J. Collins, Executive Member – Education	

	Andrea Jones, Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The Leader of the Council declared an interest in Item 26 - Service Review and upon seeking legal advice remained in the meeting.</p>	
	<u>MINUTES</u>	
No. 4	<p><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 29th January, 2020 were submitted.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
	<u>GENERAL MATTERS</u>	
No. 5	<p><u>COURSES, CONFERENCES, EVENTS AND INVITATIONS</u></p> <p>To consider invitations to attend the following:-</p> <p>Launch of the Capital Ambition 2.0 at Cardiff & Vale College, Cardiff – Thursday, 6th February, 2020</p> <p>RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor D. Davies, Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, to attend.</p> <p>Overseas Trip to Turkey – 10th-12th February, 2020</p> <p>RESOLVED that approval be granted 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.</p> <p>St. David’s Concert, St. Michael’s Church, Abertillery – Sunday, 1st March, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that approval be granted for Councillor M. Moore, Chair of the Council to attend.</p>	

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

Military Preparation School Award Ceremony – 13th April, 2020

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

DECISION ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS

No. 6 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - 22ND APRIL 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 22nd April, 2020 be noted.

No. 7 GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS

Consideration was given to report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The following additional grants were reported:-

ABERTILLERY

Llanhilleth Ward- Councillor H. McCarthy

Llanhilleth Bowls Club - £150
Ebbw Fach Aberbeeg
Community Group - £119.71
Aberbeeg Community Centre
- £100
Llanhilleth Institute Food
Bank - £300

EBBW VALE

Badminton Ward – Councillor G. Paulsen

One Life Autism Group -
£100

NANTYGLO & BLAINA

**Blaina Ward – Councillor G.
Collier**

Cwmcelyn Tenants &
Residents Association - £200
Abertillery BG RFC –
Under 8s Rugby Team - £100

**Blaina Ward – Councillor J.
Morgan**

Nantyglo FC - £200
Blaina Bowls Club - £200
Blaina Community Sports
Club - £100
Blaina Community Centre -
£135
Nantyglo & Blaina
Air Training Corps - £150
Aberystroth History
& Archaeology Society - £100
Monday Night Dance Club
£50
Ystroth Ladies Hut - £50
Riverside Flats - £50
Ystroth Primary PTA - £250

TREDEGAR

**Georgetown & Central &
West Ward – Councillor
K. Hayden & J. Morgan & S.
Thomas & H. Trollope & B.
Willis**

Glanhowy PTA (Autism) -

	<p>£300 Tredegar Women & Girls AFC - £200 Reliance Bus Preservation Society - £300 Planet Fitness - £200 Tredegar Methodist Church - £200 St Georges Luncheon Club - £400 Saron Chapel - £838.55 Tredegar Central Baptist Church - £400</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2020 TO 2024</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Governance & Partnerships; Service Manager, Policy & Partnerships and the Professional Lead for Engagement, Equality & Welsh Language.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee endorses the proposed Strategic Equality Plan prior to approval by Council (Option 1).</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>COMMERCIAL STRATEGY</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial.</p> <p>At the invitation of the Leader, the Chief Officer Commercial presented the report and outlined the critical themes to being like a commercial organisation. Focussing on the customer experience for existing and new services and to reduce inefficiencies in the system for customers. Delivering quality services and ensure that the supply chain worked effectively to help control costs and enhance the Council's reputation.</p> <p>From a commercial perspective there was a need to explore new opportunities, commission the right services in the right way to</p>	

ensure value for money and delivering better outcomes for the benefit of communities.

With regard to reviewing and monitoring arrangements the Chief Officer Commercial made a correction to paragraph 2.6 of the report and confirmed that reporting on delivery of the work programme would be presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and not on an annual basis as stated in the report.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development welcomed the report and said that it was good to see the Commercial Strategy come to fruition with focus on an efficient Council and shaping the investment portfolio.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agrees the Commercial Strategy and associated work programme (Option 1).

No. 10

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial and Communications and Marketing Manager.

The Chief Officer Commercial presented the report which was aligned to the Council's Commercial Strategy and was designed to support the delivery of the Council's priorities, vision and values.

The Chief Officer Commercial made a correction to paragraph 2.7 of the report and confirmed that reporting on delivery of the work programme would be presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and not an annual basis as stated in the report.

The Chief Officer Commercial reported that the communications landscape had changed significantly over recent years and it was critical that the strategy reflected customer expectations. There were now multiple channels to reach audiences, including the traditional press, and stressed that it was important to use the best channels in the best possible way to reach customers.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agrees the Communications Strategy and associated work programme (Option 1).

	<u>DECISION ITEMS - REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u>	
No. 11	<p><u>EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLAN 2020-2023</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and the Team Manager Connected Communities.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development presented the report and gave an update on the development of the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan.</p> <p>Enhancing the skills and work readiness of individuals was critical to gain employment through initiatives such as City Deal and Tech Valleys. Predicting skills for the future was challenging and necessary to capitalise on opportunities, future proof employment and significantly improve the economy in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>The Plan focused on five priority areas namely;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and Enterprise • Learning and Skills • Social Mobility, Inclusion and Employability • Education and Schools • Procurement and Community Benefits <p>The Corporate Director for Regeneration & Community Services commented on the benefits of engagement with partners and the opportunity to incorporate their comments into the plan as appropriate.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee approve the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan (Option 2).</p>	
	<u>DECISION ITEMS - ENVIRONMENT MATTERS</u>	
No. 12	<u>LOCAL NATURE RESERVE DESIGNATION AND DECLARATION</u>	

	<p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Environment presented the report.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services said that Blaenau Gwent had seven designated Local Nature Reserves and were bringing five forward for designation and declaration.</p> <p>Declaration and designation would contribute to the Council's Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan and help restore the impact of climate change to improve the environment.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee designate and declare five Local Nature Reserves: Sirhowy Hill Woodlands, Beaufort Hill Ponds & Woodland, Parc Bryn Bach, Garden City and Central Valley (Option 2).</p>	
<p>No. 13</p>	<p><u>STREET LIGHTING SERVICE REVIEW</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Environment presented the report and gave an update on the Street Lighting Review.</p> <p>The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services commented that there was a challenging financial position, however, in response to industry need, street lighting had been increased at some industrial estates. Insurance claims were now being pursued regarding damage to street furniture and a new solar lantern pilot system was being explored.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee accept the information contained in the report (Option 1).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES</u></p>	
<p>No. 14</p>	<p><u>REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - 2019/20, FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH 2020</u></p>	

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources spoke to the report which provided the forecast financial outturn position across all Portfolios for the financial year 2019/2020 (as forecast at 31st December 2020) and referred to the information related to the actions taken forward to move towards a balanced out turn position.

The Chief Officer said that a comparison between Corporate Services Quarter 3 and 4 showed a favourable variance due to the increase in forecast expenditure for Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Education showed a favourable variance. Social Services showed the forecast variance had reduced due to an increase in the number of placements with independent Fostering agencies. Education showed a reduced forecast adverse variance. Economy showed a slight reduction in variance due to the temporary solicitor post being extended to March 2020. Environment showed a slight improvement due to additional fees & charges and the reallocation of costs for asbestos works.

The Managing Director commented on the improved position from last year but figures still showed vulnerabilities. It was important to keep focus into the new financial year to move towards balancing the budget.

The Leader welcomed the good position of the budget which showed excellent collective budgetary control.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes was received. The action plans attached at Appendix 4 to address the forecast adverse variances as at the end of December 2019 be noted.

No. 15

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2019/2020 FINANCIAL YEAR

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

The Chief Officer Resources provided Members with an overview of each Portfolio's actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2019/20 financial year as at 31st December 2019.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee support Option 1; namely:-

- the appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report be provided;
- the appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council be continued; and
- the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding be noted.

No. 16

USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2019/20

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee:-

- Note the planned forecast increase of the General Reserve to 4.54% (above 4% target level) for 2019/2020 and future years strengthening the Council's Financial Resilience.
- Considered 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.

No. 17

POSITION STATEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S CCTV SYSTEM

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources, the Head of Community Services and the Head of Governance and Partnerships.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee support Option 1; namely:-

- Consider the position statement on the overt CCTV function;
- Include the draft Policy and Strategy Framework for CCTV on the 2020/21 Forward Work Programme for endorsement; and
- Receives the annual monitoring report.

No. 18	<p><u>CORPORATE SERVICES WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Managing Director and the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agree the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance (Option 2).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS - REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</u></p>	
No. 19	<p><u>TECH VALLEYS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee note and endorse the work of the Tech Valleys Programme (Option 1).</p>	
No. 20	<p><u>REGENERATION WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services and the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agrees the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance (Option 2).</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS - ENVIRONMENT</u></p>	
No. 21	<p><u>FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME FOCUSED AUDIT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Public Protection.</p>	

	RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee approves the content of the action plan detailed in Appendix 2 (Option 1).	
No. 22	<p><u>ACTIVITIES REPORT - PEST CONTROL TREATMENT SERVICE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Public Protection.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee approve the report as provided (Option 2).</p>	
No. 23	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Community Services and the Head of Organisational Development.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agrees the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance (Option 2).</p>	
	<u>MONITORING ITEMS - SOCIAL SERVICES</u>	
No. 24	<p><u>LIVING INDEPENDENTLY IN THE 21ST CENTURY STRATEGY - ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE 2019/20</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Adult Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive 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 (Option1).</p>	
No. 25	<p><u>SOCIAL SERVICES WORKFORCE SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Social Services and the Head of Organisational Development.</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive Committee agrees the report and proposed arrangements to support the improvement in attendance (Option 2).</p>	
<p>No. 26</p>	<p><u>SERVICE REVIEW</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>The Leader of the Council declared an interest in this item but upon seeking legal advice remained in the meeting.</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Commercial.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Commercial spoke to the report and highlighted the main points contained within the report.</p> <p>The Deputy Leader commented that with the improved working relationships and a clear way forward he supported option 2.</p> <p>The Leader said that the creation of the Strategic Partnership Board would be key to the successful delivery of the service and go a long way to eradicate past issues.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and option 2, namely that Executive Committee scrutinised the report and attached appendices and make recommendations to pursue Route B.</p>	
<p>No. 27</p>	<p><u>CEMETERY BURIAL CAPACITY</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public</p>	

interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.

RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager (Leisure & Street Scene).

The Executive Member Environment presented the report which was to establish a medium to long term approach to cemetery provision in Blaenau Gwent.

RESOLVED that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and option 2, namely that a more detailed feasibility appraisal including costs and land options at cemeteries with limited burial capacity be undertaken. This relates to cemeteries with identified capacity less than 20 years.