

# DRAFT AGENDA

ID	2058
Committee	Pwllgor Craffu Adfywio
Date	09/12/2019
Attendees	<p>Gemma Wasley (Swyddog)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Lee Parsons (Cadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr John Hill (Is-gadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Malcolm Cross (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Gareth A. Davies (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Gareth L. Davies (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Malcolm Day (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Phil Edwards (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Mark Holland (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Hedley McCarthy (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Jonathan Millard (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Amanda Moore (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr John C. Morgan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Keith Pritchard (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Keri Rowson (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Bernard Willis (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Richard Crook (Swyddog)</p> <p>Ellie Fry (Swyddog)</p> <p>Paul Miles (Swyddog)</p> <p>Muhammad Forouzan (Swyddog)</p> <p>Amy Taylor (Swyddog)</p> <p>Bethan McPherson (Swyddog)</p> <p>Liz Thomas (Swyddog)</p> <p>Andrea Jones (Swyddog)</p> <p>Steve Berry (Swyddog)</p> <p>Deborah Jones (Secretary)</p> <p>Gwasanaethau Democrataidd (Notify)</p> <p>Pob Cynghorydd (Notify)</p> <p>Louise Bishop (Notify)</p> <p>Anne-Louise Clark (Notify)</p> <p>Rhian Hayden (Notify)</p> <p>Lynette Jones (Notify)</p> <p>Damien McCann (Notify)</p> <p>Michelle Morris (Notify)</p> <p>Sean Scannell (Notify)</p>

Item ID	1869
Item Title	Cyfieithu ar y Pryd
Summary	Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, ac mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o

	hysbysiad ymlaen llaw os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y cyd os gwneir cais.
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Item ID	1870
Item Title	Ymddiheuriadau
Summary	Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

Item ID	1871
Item Title	Datganiadau Buddiant a Goddefebau
Summary	Derbyn datganiadau buddiant a goddefebau.

Item ID	1983
Item Title	Pwyllgor Craffu Adfywio
Summary	Derbyn cofnodion cyfarfod y Pwyllgor Craffu Adfywio a gynhaliwyd ar 14 Tachwedd 2019.  (Dylid nodi y cyflwynir y cofnodion er pwyntiau cywirdeb yn unig.)

Item ID	1974
Item Title	Dalen Weithredu - 14 Tachwedd 2019
Summary	Derbyn dalen weithredu.

Item ID	1976
Item Title	Prosbectws Ynni
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad Rheolwr Tîm Cyfleoedd Adfywio.

Item ID	1978
Item Title	Adolygu'r Strategaeth Tai Leol
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

Item ID	1980
Item Title	Perfformiad Chwe Mis Adfywio a Datblygu Economaidd
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Adfywio.

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Item ID	1981
Item Title	Grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen Canol Trefi
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Datblygu Economaidd.

Item ID	1982
Item Title	Blaenraglen Gwaith - 23 Ionawr 2020
Summary	Derbyn yr adroddiad.

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**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

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

**SUBJECT: REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2019**

**REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

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

Councillors J. Hill  
 M. Cross  
 G.A. Davies  
 G.L. Davies  
 M. Day  
 P. Edwards  
 J. Millard  
 J.C. Morgan  
 K. Pritchard  
 K. Rowson  
 B. Willis

**AND:** Managing Director  
 Corporate Director Regeneration & Community  
 Services  
 Head of Regeneration  
 Service Manager Development & Estates  
 Team Manager Building Control & Development Plans  
 Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities  
 Communications, Marketing and Customer Access  
 Manager  
 Enterprise Facilitation Officer  
 Principal Planning Officer  
 Scrutiny Officer

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<b><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></b>	

	It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
<b>No. 2</b>	<b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b>  Apology for absence was reported for Councillor M. Moore	
<b>No. 3</b>	<b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b>  No declarations of interest and dispensations reported.	
<b>No. 4</b>	<b><u>ENVIRONMENT, REGENERATION &amp; ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b>  The minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 23 <sup>rd</sup> September, 2019 were submitted.  Councillor K. Pritchard reported that he had been in attendance at the meeting.  The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.	
<b>No. 5</b>	<b><u>ACTION SHEET – 23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2019</u></b>  The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 23 <sup>rd</sup> September, 2019 was submitted, whereupon:-  <i><u>Blaenau Gwent Consumer Brochure</u></i>  A Member expressed concern that the Chair had ‘signed off’ the brochure, as Members requested that a draft copy of the brochure be brought back to Committee for consideration.  The Chair said at the last meeting Members requested sight of the brochure, and he had ‘signed off’ the draft brochure for circulation to Members for comments.  The Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services confirmed that in the Executive Member Briefing referred to, the Chair had ‘signed off’ the document for circulation to Members for comments.	

	<p>A brief discussion ensued when the Enterprise Facilitation Officer said the document had been considered by DMT and very positive feedback had been received. A number of changes were proposed and these would be incorporated into the final document. Members feedback had also been noted from previous discussions, and work had been done with the Communications Section around the design to ensure it was in-keeping with corporate branding. The Officer said he was pleased with the overall result.</p> <p>A Member said he was very disappointed with the brochure and felt it was repetitive of previous publications.</p> <p>The Chair offered to meet with Members outside of the Committee to discuss the brochure. He said this had been ongoing for some time, but hopefully would be ready for publication by January 2020.</p> <p><u>Forward Work Programme 2019-20 (Leisure Services Review)</u></p> <p>A Member referred to the request for future reports on the Leisure Services Review to be considered by a Joint Scrutiny Committee and asked whether this had been discussed with the Head of Democratic Services.</p> <p>In response the Scrutiny Officer said the issue had been raised, and explained that the only constitutional Joint Committees was Safeguarding and Budget Monitoring. However, it was possible to convene Joint Committees to consider other, but voting rights would be restricted to the host Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The Member asked the Scrutiny Officer to look into this, as he believed that at the two Joint Committees convened to consider the Leisure Services Review, all Members had voting rights.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the action sheet be noted.</p>	<p><b>Scrutiny Officer</b></p>
<p><b>No. 6</b></p>	<p><b><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET FOR REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b></p>	

	<p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	
<p><b>No. 7</b></p>	<p><b><u>BRIDGING THE GAP – LOW CARBON BLAENAU GWENT</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Managing Director.</p> <p>The Managing Director presented the report which provided an update on progress of the Low Carbon BG project to develop an ambitious Low Carbon Plan for Blaenau Gwent. The review was part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Bridging the Gap programme.</p> <p>The Managing Director went through the report and highlighted points contained therein. She said climate change was a really important issue, and clear targets have been set at UK and Wales level to reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>In terms of progress, some very good work had been identified across the Council, and this project would bring that work together in order to deliver a more efficient Council, and reduce our carbon emissions. It was intended to hold further engagement with Members by way of Member workshops, and present the Low Carbon Plan to Council by the end of March 2020.</p> <p>The Managing Director also referred to the scope of the plan detailed at section 2.5 of the report, particularly the work being done with the community and our partner organisations, through the Public Service Board, with the view of achieving a ‘Whole Borough’ approach to reducing carbon emissions.</p> <p>A Member said he welcomed the report, particularly with the challenges facing future generations around global warming, and said the Council should pledge to achieve a target of zero carbon emissions by 2030 in line with the all Wales target.</p> <p>A Member asked whether any calculations had been done to establish the impact of increased traffic as a result of the dualling of the Heads of the Valleys road. Whilst the project was much needed in order to draw investment into the area,</p>	

	<p>it would be interesting to see the environmental impact of the project.</p> <p>Another Member asked whether the Authority would be working with Tai Calon to secure grant funding to support the reduction of carbon emissions.</p> <p>In response the Managing Director said the Council had been following NRW 'Carbon Positive Futures' model to calculate the Council's carbon footprint, but this did not allow for the type of calculations needed to assess the impact of the HoV, however this could be part of the Council's broader work with the PSB. She pointed out that following NRW's calculations, they came out as a carbon positive organisation due to the amount of forestry land they owned; and this was also something that the Council and partners will also explore to ensure that where possible carbon emissions can be off-set.</p> <p>In terms of funding, the Managing Director confirmed that Tai Calon were part of the PSB, so the Council would be working with them and other partner organisations. Internally, the Council would be looking at invest to save initiatives, and Officers would also be exploring various grant funding opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Scrutiny Committee made comments and recommendations regarding the proposed approach (Option 2); and</li> <li>ii. That the Council pledges to achieve a target of zero carbon emissions by 2030 in line with the all Wales target.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>No. 8</b></p>	<p><b><u>BRIDGING THE GAP – GROWTH PLAN</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration &amp; Community Services.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration &amp; Community Services presented the report which set out the aims and objectives of the Growth Plan.</p>	

The Corporate Director spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein. The Plan had the clear intention to support more people working, earning more money living in Blaenau Gwent and pulled together actions contained in the Council's Housing Prospectus, Skills and Employment Plan (Draft) and Enterprise Framework along with the review of the Industrial Units portfolio. In addition, the Plan looked to take forward the opportunities around the growing interest that the private sector was showing in housing delivery in the Borough, and the growing interest in the Heads of the Valleys corridor following the dualling programme, the proposed increase in frequency of the Ebbw Valley rail link and the initiatives such as Tech Valleys.

The Corporate Director referred to the table at section 2.11 of the report and pointed out that the £170,000 Realigned Council Tax Policy should be in the 2020/21 column.

A Member referred to the aims of the Plan highlighted at section 2.3, namely to increase the Council's Council Tax base/recovery, and enquired as to the current Council Tax recovery figures.

In response the Corporate Director confirmed that these figures were reported through the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee. However, in relation to the Council's current policy of offering a Council Tax discount on vacant properties, a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to support a change in that policy to no longer offer this discount.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the number of vacant properties in the Borough, when a Member asked whether a survey had been done to establish how many of the vacant properties were up for sale.

The Corporate Director said this had not been undertaken, however, the report would also outline work intended to maximise the support available for those residents finding difficult in paying their Council Tax.

A Member said he welcomed the report, particularly looking at growth along the Heads of the Valleys corridor. He also referred to section 2.7 of the report which referred to the

	<p>loans scheme available in order to bring empty properties back into use, and hoped this could be offered to first time buyers as they often struggled with mortgage retentions when trying to buy properties that had been vacant for some time and in need total renovation.</p> <p>A Member referred to the approximate number of vacant properties in the Borough and asked how many of these were privately owned and RSL properties. The Corporate Director said approximately 85% were privately owned, as RSL's had worked very hard to reduce the amounts of voids within the Borough.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and Members support the Growth Plan as presented and recommend to Council for approval (Option 1).</p>	
<p><b>No. 9</b></p>	<p><b><u>REPLACEMENT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PREFERRED STRATEGY</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Building Control &amp; Development Plans.</p> <p>Team Manager Building Control &amp; Development Plans presented the report which sought approval of the Preferred Strategy, attached at Appendix 1, to be taken forward for consultation. This was a key document in the process and sets the strategic framework for the new replacement LDP.</p> <p>The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member said there was potential for housing all along the Heads of the Valleys corridor, but stressed the importance of identifying sustainable sites in areas that people wanted to live. He then referred to P.15 of the report, particularly supporting sustainable transport, and expressed concern regarding the lack of transport links to the Borough's Industrial Estates, and said this needed to be addressed particularly when looking to increase growth in the area. He also expressed concern that Members had not had sight of the Nash Report.</p>	

	<p>In response the Officer agreed that housing sites should be the best sites, and confirmed that a very thorough assessment was being undertaken, and improved transport links were also needed to our employment sites, particularly across the Northern Corridor. In relation to the Nash Report, the Officer confirmed that this would be taken into account as part of the work being done on the role of Town Centres.</p> <p>The Service Manager Development &amp; Estates said we need to be confident that the housing sites identified within the Plan can be delivered.</p> <p>A Member referred to section 3.17 on page 18 of the report and it felt it was appropriate that the words ‘Circuit of Wales’ be amended. He commended the Officer on an excellent report.</p> <p>Councillor J. Millard left the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p>Another Member asked whether the Borough’s infrastructure and services were able to meet the demands that new housing sites would bring.</p> <p>In response the Officer confirmed that Aneurin Bevan LHB had been consulted in relation to future needs and requirements and this would be fed into the Plan, and also working with Education to plan for those changes.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Members support amendments to the Preferred Strategy to be referred on for approval by Council (Option 2).</p>	
<p><b>No. 10</b></p>	<p><b><u>CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2018/19 – QUARTER 4</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Regeneration.</p> <p>The Head of Regeneration presented the performance report for the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal during 2018/19. The report was presented to the CCR Cabinet in June 2019, and highlighted key programmes of work the Authority was engaged in and issues of interest to Blaenau Gwent.</p>	



	<p>The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein, and the Service Manager Development &amp; Estates presented the Strategic Development Plan element of the report.</p> <p>A Member referred to section 2.11 of the report and reiterated the need for improved transport links to the Borough's Industrial Estates as this was critical to our plans moving forward. He also referred to the Ebbw Vale Rail Line, and the potential for 2 trains per hour to both Ebbw Vale and Abertillery, and requested more information on the figures.</p> <p>In response the Corporate Director explained that the guidance used was the WelTAG assessment, and the methodology included within that guidance was used across the UK.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Scrutiny Committee considered overall progress and made comments, before the report goes to Council (Option 2).</p>	
<p><b>No. 11</b></p>	<p><b><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2019</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2019.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the Performance Information on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal had now been considered.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted.</p>	
<p><b>No. 12</b></p>	<p><b><u>BRIDGING THE GAP – INDUSTRIAL PORTFOLIO REVIEW</u></b></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>	

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, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to report of the Head of Regeneration which set out the purpose of the review of the Industrial Portfolio. The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein.

A discussion ensued when the Officer clarified points raised by a Member regarding the Brexit Resilience Fund and the investment in Rosehyworth.

A Member said the profile of our Industrial Estates needed to be raised, and asked whether the monies gained from the sale of some units could be reinvested in others.

In response the Officer confirmed that the monies would be used for existing stock, and it was also intended to move towards full repairing leases in the future. She said a change in the financial management of the units was also needed to ensure they were maintained, and confirmed that all cost effective options were being considered.

Another Member referred to units on privately owned Estates and the Officer confirmed that Welsh Government were already considering options to upgrade a unit on the Rassau Industrial Estate. Hopefully when these improvements were seen others will follow.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted; and continue with the review and actions, and present the recommendations for the Council to consider. To continue the review would allow the Council to make informed decisions that help us move towards a more commercial way of managing the portfolio maximising the income we receive and improving the service for our business tenants (Option 1).

**No. 13**

**EBBW VALE HI TECH TEST FACILITY**

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.

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, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services.

The Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services presented the report which informed Members of the current position of the work around the development of the Hi Tech Facility at the Rassau.

A discussion ensued when the Corporate Director clarified points raised by Members. A Member also asked that future briefings be held jointly with all political groups.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted; and the Executive agree to undertake market testing to identify a private sector partner and develop the scheme in partnership to a position where it can be determined whether there is a business case to proceed.

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**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

**Action Sheet**

**Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action to be Taken</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
5	<b><u>Action Sheet – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019</u></b>  Re: Request for a Joint Committee to consider future Leisure Services reports - A Member referred to a previous Joint Committee held to discuss the Leisure Services Review and requested clarification if all Scrutiny Members invited had voting rights.	Scrutiny and Democratic Officer	There are two constituted Joint Scrutiny Committees, i.e. Safeguarding and Budget Monitoring at which all Members of the committee have voting rights. However, any other committee meetings that are 'opened up' to all Scrutiny Members, those Members who are not members of the host committee will be invited in a non-voting capacity. See attached previous invitation to members to a meeting where a Leisure Service report was discussed.

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T: 01495 355100

DX: 43956 Ebbw Vale E: committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Our Ref./Ein Cyf. PE/LT

Your Ref./Eich Cyf.

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Mrs. L. Turner

3rd October, 2018

Dear Councillor,

**ENVIRONMENT, REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

I write to advise that reports relating to the Review of Leisure Services will shortly be submitted to the above named meeting for consideration, i.e.

**Paper 1 (Evaluation Matrix and Strategy)**

Will be presented to the Environment, Regeneration & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee on 18th October at 9.30 a.m.

**Paper 2 (options appraisal)**

Will be presented to a Special Environment, Regeneration & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee on 20th November at 9.30 a.m.

I am, therefore, writing to extend an invitation for you to attend these meetings (**in a non-voting capacity**) to consider and discuss these particular reports. These reports will be considered as the first item on each of the agendas.

Please note: that the paperwork for these meetings will be available for collection on Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> October and Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> November respectively from the Member pigeon holes.

Yours sincerely

**P. EDWARDS**  
**CHAIR OF ENVIRONMENT, REGENERATION &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

1

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.

To: Councillors D. Bevan, J. Collins, M. Cook, M. Cross, G.A. Davies,  
M. Day, L. Elias, K. Hayden, S. Healy, J. Hill, J. Holt, J.P. Morgan,  
K. Pritchard, T. Smith, B. Summers, S. Thomas, H. Trollope,  
J. Wilkins, D. Wilkshire



# Agenda Item 6

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

## **Committee: Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **26<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

Report Subject: **Energy Prospectus**

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

Report Submitted by: **Amy Taylor, Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities & Bridget Powell, Principal Regeneration Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
18.06.19	03.09.19				04.11.19	18.12.19		

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1. To present the draft Energy Prospectus to the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and to seek Members support to recommend that the Executive Committee approve for the prospectus to be released and marketed to potential project partners and investors. It is hoped that the prospectus will demonstrate the proactive approach being taken by the Council to increase local energy generation and offer a significant contribution towards the reduction of our carbon footprint.

### **2. Scope and Background**

2.1. In October 2015, the Council's Executive Committee received a report on the proposed development of a Regeneration Energy Projects Programme and agreed to support the proposal for the Environment and Regeneration Directorate to continue the development of a series of Projects.

2.2. The series of Projects were to be designed in order to address a number of challenges including:

- Supply of lower cost energy (smarter selection of providers);
- Supply of Low Carbon Energy (reducing our carbon footprint);
- Reducing energy losses (such as improvements to building fabric);
- Reduced usage through behavioural change (using less); and
- Potentially through the generation (and movement) of energy.

2.3. Aligned to this, Regeneration has a commitment to managing a sustainable future energy delivery programme to allow a choice of affordable energy and to reduce fuel poverty for future generations, with the aim of:

- Improving the choice of supply;
- Developing models that enable community ownership of energy; and
- Meeting the energy needs of vulnerable households.

- 2.4. A range of measures are in place, as part of efforts to mitigate these key challenges and meet the aims set out within the Corporate Plan, including:
- Development of a local energy prospectus, as a tool to prompt and stimulate proactive engagement within the energy sector;
  - Managing a research and development programme, to support delivery of affordable renewable energy provision for business, commercial and communities; and
  - Exploring collaborative working opportunities to stimulate development including partnership working across the commercial, industrial, private and public sector.
- 2.5. The projects contained within the prospectus are also being fed into the Bridging the Gap, Low Carbon Business Review which is looking at our current Carbon Footprint and how we can put in place measures to reduce it in the future.
- 2.6. The energy prospectus attached to the report as Appendix 1, seeks to highlight the many benefits to developing within Blaenau Gwent, including:
- Capitalising wider regeneration opportunities such as Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Enterprise Zone Status, Tech Valleys and Valleys Task Force,
  - Key transport infrastructure through METRO, Heads of the Valleys A465 duelling and M4 corridor connections
- 2.7. The prospectus document provides a mechanism through which, a range of available development opportunities within Blaenau Gwent can be promoted; and as a means of engaging proactively with potential investors, scheme developers, other Local Authorities and community groups in an effort to stimulate local energy development and supply. This will in turn address the fuel poverty challenges we currently face.
- 2.8. The document lists the major development opportunities, focused on sites large enough to deliver the greatest impact and contribution to our Borough's local renewable energy targets.
- 2.9. The available sites are presented by renewable energy opportunity, providing key information relating to:
- Technology – method of renewable energy generation
  - Anticipated Lifecycle Revenue
  - A communication plan will be developed in consultation with the Communications Team, to outline the broad methods to be utilised in promoting the prospectus and the sites within it. This will include:
    - Energy events and conferences;
    - BGCBC website;

- Social Media;
- Existing energy developer contacts and networks; and
- Local Authority, Welsh Government and other Stakeholder meetings

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

#### **Option 1 – Do Nothing**

- 3.1. A decision not to support the energy prospectus would result in a reliance on existing documents, limiting the methods through which to proactively promote available energy development, with potential developers.

#### **Option 2 – Support the Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus and recommend approval by the Executive Committee.**

- 3.2. Approval of the energy prospectus (including associated communication plan), enabling a proactive approach in the councils efforts to increase the reliance on renewable sources of energy and associated business and community energy models developed.

#### **Preferred Option**

- 3.3. Option two is the preferred option as this provides us with basis to engage with potential project partners and investors to deliver some of the opportunities we have already identified. The prospectus demonstrates our ambition and commitment provides assurance that we are taking steps to contribute more positively to the environment.

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

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

- To create strong and environmentally smart communities we are taking a strategic approach to the management of buildings;
- To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits; and
- To develop a more commercial organisation to generate income and deliver cost reductions to make local services sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities.

- 4.2. The work contained within the energy prospectus cuts across a number of the current Strategic Business Reviews being progressed through the Bridging the Gap programme including:

- Commercial activity, investment and new income;
- Assets and property;
- Growth Strategy; and

- Low Carbon

## 5. Implications Against Each Option

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

- 5.1.1. There are no short term budget implications associated with the options presented within the report. All of the feasibility work carried out to date has been completed with either external grant funding or support from the Welsh Government Funded, Welsh Government Energy Service.
- 5.1.2. The long term impact of option 2 outlined within this report, is the opportunity to increase the amount of locally generated energy, generate income from working with energy suppliers and community energy groups.
- 5.1.3. Within the energy prospectus we have provided a snapshot of the level of investment required to deliver each of the projects together with some high level projections of the level of return per annum that could be achieved once completed. Further financial modelling has been carried out for the projects where possible and this will be built into business cases for investment over the coming months.
- 5.1.4. By way of example, the type of investment and return potential for one of the projects is listed below:

Wind Generation Opportunity Two – To provide up to 2MW of wind energy generation

Capital Investment required	£3.58m
Project Internal Rate of Return	5.03%
Project Payback	13.4 Years
Total Project cash surplus	£1.39m (£69,500 per annum)
Carbon savings	circa. 1942 tonnes per annum

- 5.1.5. The typical design life of a wind turbine is 20 years and in some cases the turbine could last longer than this (up to 25 years +). There will however be costs associated with maintenance and parts replacement but this will be built into the business cases that are prepared.
- 5.1.6. For each business case that is prepared we will utilise the information above together with any other potential costs that may be incurred throughout the life of the turbine (or other technology) to form a picture of the potential return on investment.
- 5.1.7. Work at the CCRC, aligned with the Development Bank for Wales, may unlock financial investment to enable energy developments take place and to promote and encourage community energy development locally.
- 5.1.8. Salix funding would continue to present an opportunity for interest free loans to support investment in energy initiatives. The main criteria for securing such

funding would be that investments must achieve carbon savings and have a return on investment of below eight years.

- 5.1.9. There are also some more modern forms of generating funding which offer the local community a chance to become involved in creating a better future for Blaenau Gwent. Platforms such as crowdfunding or green bonds.
- 5.1.10. Green bonds are those where the proceeds of their purchase are utilised to fund environmentally friendly projects.
- 5.1.11. Even though we would be looking for potential investors to assist in delivering the projects within the energy prospectus the Council will continue to investigate the opportunities to find the investment required to progress the projects and any benefits that such projects may bring.

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

- 5.2.1. The risks associated with option 1 outlined within the report is that energy development within Blaenau Gwent remains low, especially relating to private open market development.
- 5.2.2. The absence of a prospectus would limit available material and mechanisms through which to promote the sites and engage with potential developers.
- 5.2.3. The risks associated with option 2 outlined within the report are minimal. There is a risk that the prospectus fails to stimulate interest; utilising the prospectus as a method through which relationships with a range of interested parties within the Welsh energy sector would reduce this risk.
- 5.2.4. A further risk is the pressure on staff resources to facilitate and manage enquiries should there be a significant level of interest. Where possible we will continue to utilise the support of the Welsh Government Energy Service.

## 5.3. ***Legal***

- 5.3.1. There are no legal implications associated with this report. The potential projects identified within the prospectus are located on sites within the ownership of Blaenau Gwent.
- 5.3.2. Any update to the Local Development Plan would also take account of any changes in proposed land use on these sites and potential investors would be notified of any resulting changes to the LDP in advance of project commencement.

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

- 5.4.1. Enquiries will be managed by the Strategic Projects Team, with input from relevant departments as necessary, not least planning policy and Estates, Legal Services and Asset Management.

5.4.2. Promotion of the prospectus and developing and maintaining proactive relationships with developers and other interested parties within the energy sector and community energy projects will require staff resource.

## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

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

6.1.1. The impact of the prospectus could be measured in a number of ways, including enquiries received, planning applications submitted and ultimately carbon reduction methods through projects delivered.

6.1.2. Approving the prospectus will demonstrate the Council's commitment towards achieving the Welsh Government target of generating 70% of energy from renewable sources by 2030 and 1GW of renewable electricity capacity to be locally owned in Wales by 2030.

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

- 6.2.1.
- Increased energy choices (private/social rented/business/industrial)
  - More efficient homes and communities
  - Reduction in carbon emissions and improved air quality
  - Stimulation of other related benefits including green transport

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

6.3.1. Officers from across Regeneration and Community Services have been involved in development of the prospectus. In addition project development support has been received from the Welsh Government Energy Service.

6.3.2. Proactive engagement with potential energy developers will be essential to maximising the impact of the prospectus. A Blaenau Gwent Energy Event is being considered for Autumn 2019. To bring Smart Living Catalyst partners together from Welsh Government, AECOM and Miller Research to further engage with local businesses to develop Phase 3 of the R&D programme to expand renewable energy generation to the industrial sector and commence community engagement in moving and sharing locally produced energy.

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

6.4.1. The prospectus is designed to be a method to stimulate interest and appetite to undertake energy development within Blaenau Gwent that in turn will facilitate a supply of renewable energy that will meet the changing and future energy needs of Blaenau Gwent.

### 6.5. ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.5.1. Maximising the impact of the prospectus will be dependent on strong collaboration and partnership working with communities, the public and private

sector and businesses. Progressing opportunities from the prospectus would require partnership working across the Council.

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

- 6.6.1. Stimulating interest in available energy project sites, especially BG owned land would potentially have an impact on the planning division, technical services, estates and assets management and legal.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

*Appendix 1 – Energy Prospectus*

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# Discover Energy Generation Opportunities

in Blaenau Gwent



ENERGY  
PROSPECTUS

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**Cover Image:** Ebbw Vale

Bedwellty House and Park, Tredegar

View of Ebbw Fach from St. Illtyd's Church, Abertillery

## BLAENAU GWENT - A SENSE OF PLACE

**Blaenau Gwent is an area steeped in industrial heritage, surrounded by areas of outstanding natural beauty and home to friendly and passionate communities in South East Wales; it offers a wealth of untapped potential, which alongside a range of emerging opportunities, makes it an ideal time to consider investing. We have a population of circa 70,000 residents or 31,000 households.**

**We are at the start of our energy journey, building upon the successful heritage of our former steel and coal mining industry. With Welsh Government support, collaborative partnership ventures including the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal of £1.25Bn and Tech Valleys investment we are in a strong position to support future energy growth.**

We want to create an environmentally friendly and sustainable retail and business environment, diversifying the evening and night time economy, creating improved transport connectivity through the County Borough and energy is central to our ambitious programme. We have experience in low carbon heat and power networks, improving energy efficiency of homes, public and commercial buildings and highways infrastructure.

The Council's core vision reflects upon who we are as a Council, how we do things and how we can shape the future by ensuring that these values apply to everything we do.

In Blaenau Gwent we recognise that increasing the choice of energy provision and security of renewable energy supply is integral to our wider social and economic regeneration plans. Having a strong environmental programme not only meets Welsh Government carbon reduction targets but is essential to creating sustainable and vibrant communities for the future.

Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone Status has enabled Blaenau Gwent to confirm its position as a strategically important area in the region with a focus on advanced manufacturing, automotive, pharmaceutical and food businesses. Investment through the Enterprise Zone has provided a platform on which further opportunities can be explored not least through City Deal and Tech Valleys. Heavy investment in connectivity through road and rail infrastructure mean we are only a 1 hour drive from Cardiff International Airport, 1 ¾ hour drive from Birmingham and 2 ½ hour drive from London.





# OUR PLANS

**Our plans are ambitious and challenging but we believe that the time is right to capitalise on the exciting opportunities that lie before us including Cardiff Capital City Region, South Wales Metro and Tech Valleys investment. Not least to capitalise on the proximity to our beautiful natural landscape and clean energy potential.**

**Our prospectus offers a range of opportunities for collaboration with forward thinking and innovative partners from across the UK and Europe. From conceptual and speculative projects through to immediately available projects we are able to offer something for everyone who has an appetite for investing or becoming involved in creating a Low Carbon Future.**

In Wales the Welsh Government have set an ambitious target to achieve a 30% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. We aim to meet this target and the opportunities contained within this Prospectus will help us achieve it.

The prospectus' aim is to support the Council to achieve it's ambitious targets for Blaenau Gwent to become a local Low Carbon Borough.

- Enhance energy and carbon efficiency
- A reduction in fuel poverty
- An improvement in the resilience of the local distribution network
- Maximise revenue generation potential

In November 2018, Britain's electricity grid reached a major green milestone. For the first time total energy capacity from renewable energy sources overtook capacity from fossil fuels. (Drax Electric Insights Quarterly, July to September 2018).





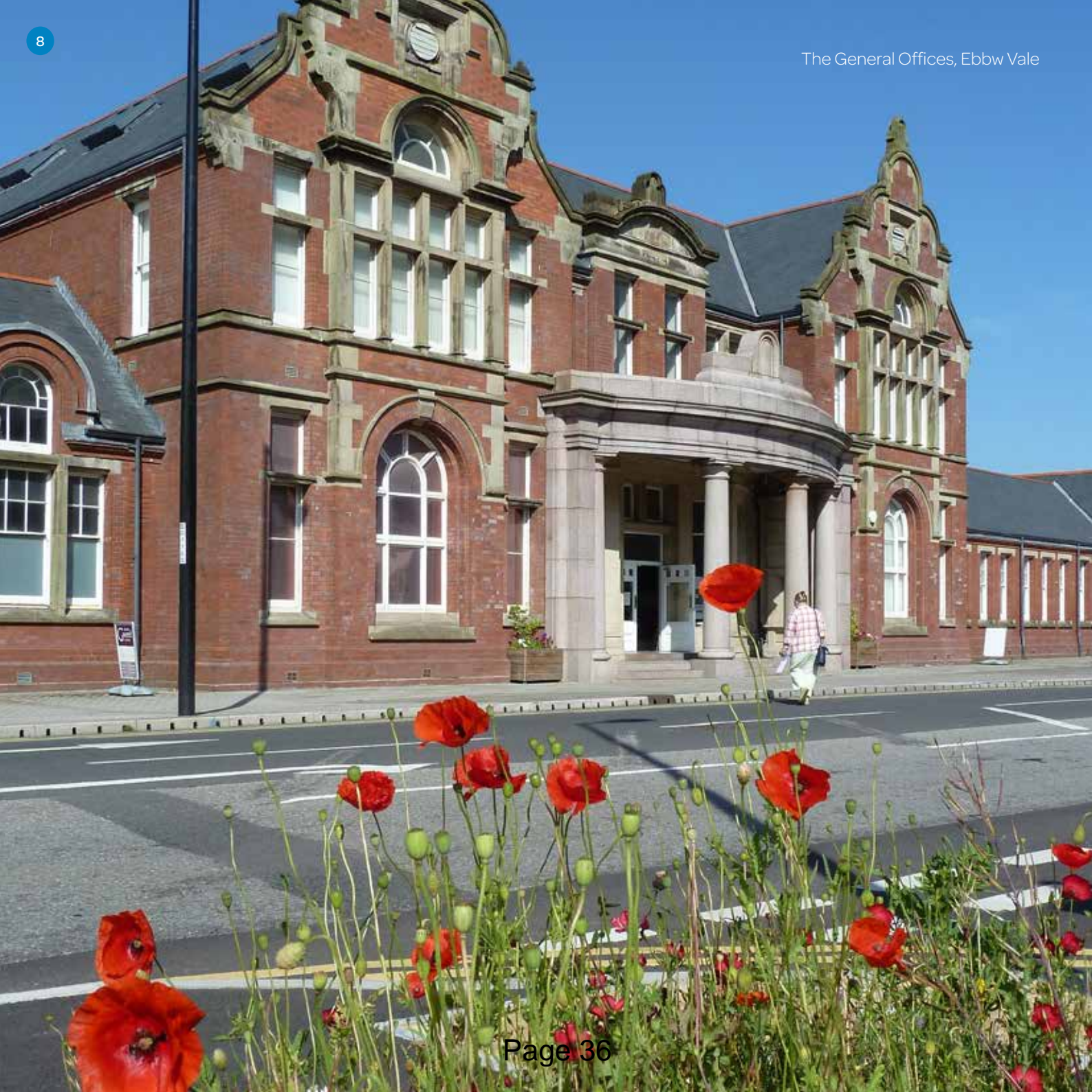


## PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

The table provides a quick reference of the current project opportunities. Each of the projects are still subject to further project development therefore it is possible that costs etc. may be subject to change.

Project Name	Technology	Lifecycle Revenue	Total Cost / Capex	Payback / Years	Investment Opportunity
*RE:FIT	Lighting, CHP, Solar, PV et al.	£518k annum	£4.1m	8 Years	Salix Loan
The Works Expansion	Gas CHP, Biomass Boilers	£80k annum	£1.24m	15 Years	Private sector Council & Community
District Energy Network Development	Gas CHP	£2.5m annum	£9m	3.5 Years	Private sector Council & Community
Opportunity One Wind Project	Wind	£65k annum	£1.05m	10 Years	Prudential Borrowing
Opportunity Two Wind Project	Wind	£69,500k per annum	£3.58m	13.4 Years	Prudential Borrowing
Hydro Generation	Hydro	£3.5k annum	£500k	10 Years	Private sector & Community
Pentagon	Power to gas	N/A	£324k	N/A	EU Commission H2020
Drive	Demand Response	N/A	£300k	N/A	EU Commission H2020
Energy Brokering	Energy Purchase and Sale	£1.2m per annum saving to businesses	TBC	TBC	Council & Blaenau Gwent Businesses
Material Broker	Solar Lighting	£3.9m one off cost saving to businesses	TBC	TBC	Council, Private sector & Blaenau Gwent Businesses
Regional Collaboration	Electric Vehicle Charging	Subject to Procurement	£636k	TBC	OLEV, Local Authorities
Council Fleet Review	Transport	Subject to Procurement	TBC	TBC	Public / Private Partnership







# ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Council is actively seeking to reduce both energy costs and carbon emissions across our property portfolio. We have considered a range of alternative delivery models to improve our buildings. Adopting the RE:FIT model offers the Council a commercial model to achieve financial savings, improve energy performance of buildings and importantly reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> footprint – typically range in the order of 10-35%.

By using the RE:FIT model the Council will place an obligation on the contractor installing energy conservation measures to guarantee potential energy savings the specific technologies will bring through robust monitoring, measurement and verification measures to assess savings performance.

A portfolio of buildings across the Council portfolio have been selected as having potential to benefit from the RE:FIT model. These include Council Buildings, Leisure Trust Locations and Schools.

To achieve the annual energy and carbon savings the Council has agreed to work with our Preferred Supplier, E.ON Solutions Limited to investigate the retrofitting of a range of Energy Conservation Measures across the selected estate.

Current project estimates indicate that the project will cost in the region of £4.1m to deliver. Capital funding for this project has been secured through the Welsh Government Salix Interest Free Loan scheme for Local Authorities.

Monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the Energy Conservation Measures is an essential requirement of the Contract and through this we will be able to monitor the success and improved energy efficiency that the measures bring to the portfolio.

Although not an immediate project opportunity, inclusion of this project within this prospectus demonstrates the Council's commitment to developing a portfolio of energy projects offering both immediate savings and long term investment in our estate.









## DISTRICT ENERGY NETWORKS

### OPPORTUNITY: EXPANSION OF THE WORKS DISTRICT HEATING NETWORK

The Works development in Ebbw Vale is a 200 acre site with a capital investment of over £200M incorporating a district energy network. The Network is a centralised energy system that provides electricity and heat to buildings throughout the site.

- Leisure Centre – heat supply
- General Offices and Gwent Archives – heat supply
- Secondary School – heat supply
- Multi Story Car Park – electricity supply
- Learning Zone – heat and electricity supply
- Funicular Railway – electricity supply

The district energy network is owned and operated by the Local Authority. It is run by a 375kW Gas Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Unit, 2x495kW Biomass Pellet Boilers along with 4 x 1,750 kW Gas Boilers.

Existing technology within the Energy Centre has sufficient capacity to meet future opportunities offering potential housing, industrial and commercial developers an investment which would gain the environmental and economic benefits of being linked to a district energy network through provision of over 250 homes per annum up to 2021. We are also developing new industrial premises on site which will connect to the network and demonstrate the benefits of district energy to businesses.

### OPPORTUNITY: DISTRICT ENERGY NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Following on from the success of The Works Network, the Council secured up to £155,000 of funding via the Heat Network's Delivery Unit of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone Board, Welsh Government and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to investigate further opportunities to develop district energy across Blaenau Gwent.

The opportunities have been investigated in a series of stages including:

- Heat demand mapping
- Master-planning and Project Prioritisation
- Feasibility Study
- Business Case Development

To date we have completed heat demand mapping throughout Blaenau Gwent and utilised the masterplanning and project prioritisation stage to identify Northern Ebbw Vale as a site with potential for development of a new network.

This area has been investigated through a feasibility study. This alongside the Welsh Government announcement to invest up to £100m over the next 10 years in Blaenau Gwent means we have the opportunity to meet future energy demands and deliver in a sustainable way. The next stage is to undertake soft market testing to identify potential project partners and funding sources to find the investment required to take a project forward.

**We therefore present this speculative opportunity to developers and investors seeking prospective opportunities in the area through district energy network development network.**



# FUTURE RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION

## OPPORTUNITY: WIND GENERATION

In 2016, we reviewed energy installations across Blaenau Gwent and found we have the lowest rate of renewable energy development in Wales. We are a small Welsh Local Authority but ambitious, and have a small percentage of land that is suitable for large-scale renewable energy installations.

However, the Council are active research partners in the Welsh Government Smart Living Initiative and we are fully committed to investigating all opportunities to increase the level of locally generated electricity and we hope that this is highlighted in our prospectus.

At our highest point, we are 1,300 metres above sea level and have identified two Council owned sites that could be suitable wind generation opportunities.

## OPPORTUNITY ONE

The first site being presented is in excess of 50 acres and is used for a range of activities. The Council has explored a range of options and feels that the site offers potential for a wind project consisting of a 1.3MW single new or refurbished turbine of circa 80m subject to planning consent being obtained.

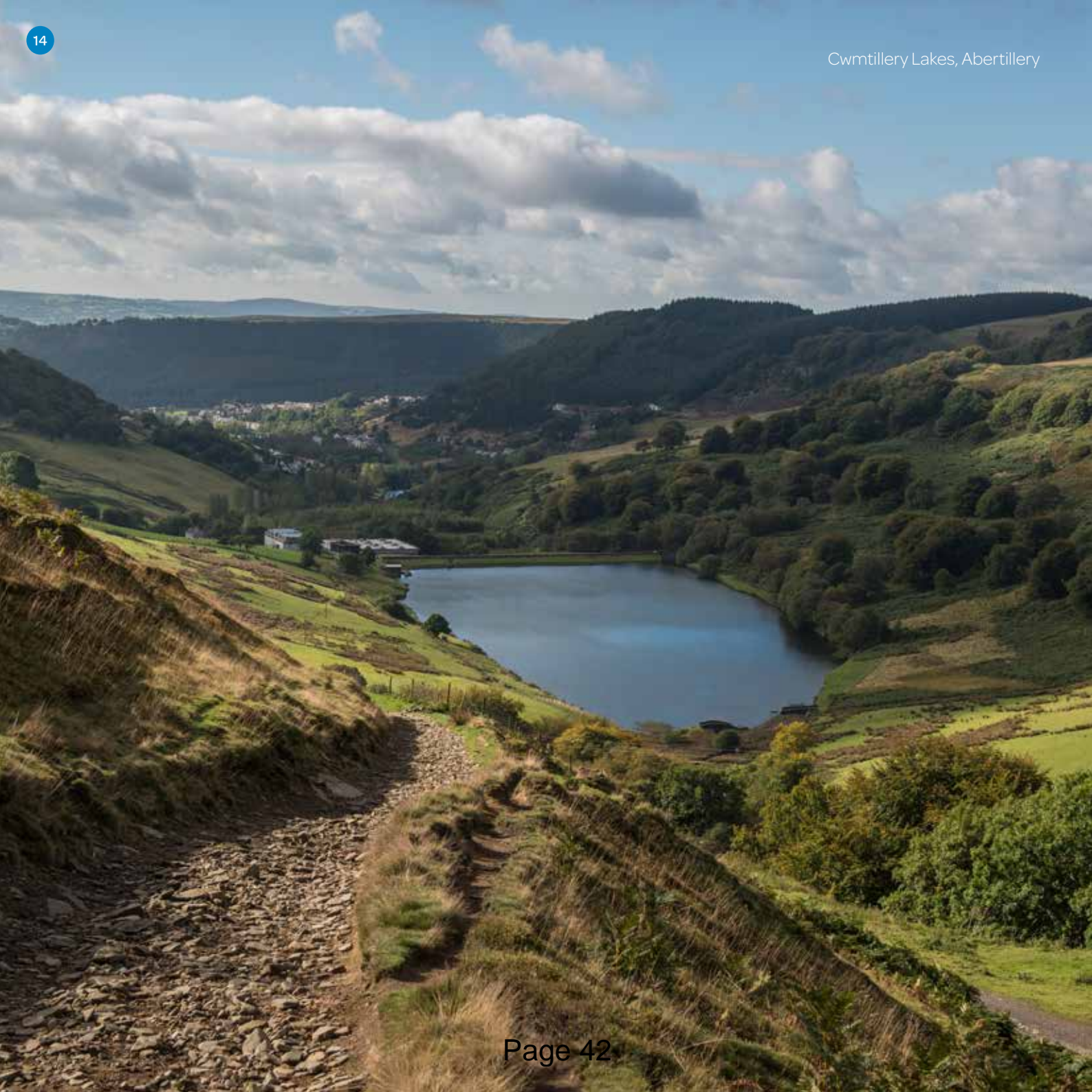
## OPPORTUNITY TWO

The second site also owned by the Council offers high wind speeds, easy access from an adjoining A-road and sufficient separation distance from residential properties to develop up to 2MW of wind energy generation, including two medium-scale wind turbines with a wind turbine blade tip height of no more than 80m with an installed capacity of up to 2MW.

The site offers potential for an annual average generation of up to 4,517MWh based on 1.7MW project made up of 2x850KW turbines subject to planning consent.







## OPPORTUNITY: HYDRO POWERED ENERGY GENERATION

In collaboration with Cardiff University, opportunities for small scale hydro schemes have been investigated and several micro-hydro schemes in the range of 6kW system with a maximum usable energy output of 3kW have been identified across the Borough.

Examples of some of the sites have been included below:

	Town	Location	Power Output (kw)	Total Estimated Investment (GBP)	Payback Years
1	Abertillery	Anvil Court Culvert	8 – 16	25,000	8
2	Abertillery	Cwmtillery Lake	1 – 5	15,000	16
3	Blaina	Waun Pond	6	41,000	34
4	Blaina	Tanglewood Stream	6	21,000	16
5	Ebbw Vale	Rassau Industrial Estate Culvert (a, b)	8	12,000	8
6	Ebbw Vale	Carno Reservoir Rassau runoff	2	6,000	15
7	Ebbw Vale	Carno Reservoir	10	15,000	8
8	Tredegar	Sirhowy Tributary (b)	38	64,000	8
9	Tredegar	Culvert off Parc Bryn Bach	5	20,000	18

The list of sites listed above is not exhaustive and it is possible that further sites will be investigated in the future.

Guardian, Six Bells, Abertillery  
Waterfall, Rassau, Ebbw Vale





## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**The Council is committed to delivering low carbon heat to our residents and businesses. We can only achieve this in the future if research and innovation in how our energy is delivered is carried out. We want to play a role in undertaking such research and through established partner relationships we have been successful in securing participation in a number of EU Research and Innovation funded projects.**

The first of these projects, RESILIENT was a four-year project, which commenced in 2012 and included 14 Partners from 5 European countries, including Italy, Belgium, France, UK and Spain with a budget of €8.1 million. The project designed, developed and installed a system of interconnectivity between buildings, Distributed Energy Resources (DER), grids and other networks at a district level, assessing the associated energy and environmental benefits.

### ONGOING: PENTAGON

Upon completion of RESILIENT the Council secured additional European Research opportunities funded through the Horizon 2020 programme. PENTAGON is a consortium consisting of 10 partners from 5 different Countries across Europe including the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Belgium, France and Italy.

PENTAGON is creating the next generation of eco-districts, leveraging on enhanced energy conversion systems and a fully fledged integrated management platform simultaneously acting on different energy carriers (thermal, gas and electric).

The core of the project focuses on two ground-breaking technologies:

- An innovative power to gas technology at the district level;
- An intelligent versatile and service based IoT (Internet of Things) platform for holistic, multi-vector energy management.

Our district energy network on the Works Site is key partner in this project and provides data and information about the operation of our network to assist in development of computer simulation models that will be used to simulate and test future renewable technologies.

**Power to gas is one of the most promising future smart grid technologies because it has the potential to solve the problem of renewable energy curtailments.**





# RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

## ONGOING: DRIVE

DRIVE, a consortium of 8 partners representing 7 EU countries are exploring flexibility in Variable Renewable Energy Sources (VRES), or the ability of a power system to maintain continuous service during rapid and large swings in supply and demand from the grid.

It is the second project funded through the Horizon 2020 programme and again we are using our District Energy Network at the Works to act as the demonstration site to provide data and information to build the models that will enable demand response in to practice

DRIVE will unlock the Demand Response potential of residential and tertiary buildings which represent 70% of the total Demand Response in the distribution grid through a full-fledge platform bridging seamlessly the value-chain from planning and design of assets/buildings towards optimal operations in the next generation Smart Grids.

**We are always seeking businesses and Research Organisations within the UK and across Europe with an interest in collaborating with us. In return we bring both our experience of European research-led projects together with the assets and equipment available in our demonstration site at The Works.**



## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

### BLAENAU GWENT SMART LIVING ENERGY CATALYST MODEL

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is continually assessing opportunities to reduce its costs whilst at the same time looking to provide real benefits for its communities and residents. An illustration of this is the Blaenau Gwent Energy Catalyst Model, one of seven demonstrator projects across Wales identified under the Smart Living Framework developed by Welsh Government.

The aspiration is to alleviate fuel poverty in the Borough, encouraging industry and commerce to invest in the region, improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions across Blaenau Gwent. Our ultimate ambition is to become an area which generates sufficient energy through renewable sources to meet the power demands of the Borough.

To do this we have developed collaborative methods of working with energy researchers, business, the public sector and academia. Investors will be able to build upon and invest in these relationships pursuing the potential for developing an 'Energy Catalyst' model for the district.

By creating smart platforms for energy demand management we can connect commercial and business premises and private and social housing, leading to the bundling of resources or services to residents and businesses. Communication and education about energy behaviours will also form a key element of the project.

Recognising this, the Council and Welsh Government through the Smart Living Framework sought to investigate current demand and supply requirements from four identifiable groups in the area: **Public Sector Buildings, Industrial and Commercial, Private and Social Housing.**

The aspiration of Blaenau Gwent is to create the first energy catalyst model in the district that will create, move and use energy and bundle with other services to encourage equality of support for residents. As part of this research we have mapped key characteristics of our industrial estates and business parks which include a "model business park" tool. We will create a series of smart platforms for energy which would connect commercial and business premises and private and social housing. This will offer investment opportunities for the bundling of services to residents and educating businesses about energy behaviours have formed a key element of the wider project.

Research to date has illustrated businesses are interested in energy generation, simplification of acquisition of energy and bulk purchase of energy. Phase two of the research has built upon the initial thoughts to investigate opportunities including:

- Energy Brokering
- Material Brokering e.g. lighting, solar PV etc

Such opportunities could make savings for those participating but further engagement with businesses and key stakeholders is needed to help inform our ideas and test opportunities.

## COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

### ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

The five Local Authorities in Gwent jointly commissioned a feasibility study across the region to investigate the potential to provide electric vehicle charging points across the Gwent area with the aim of working towards a greener, cleaner environment.

The consortium of Local Authorities includes:

- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council;
- Caerphilly County Borough Council;
- Monmouthshire County Council;
- Newport City Council; and
- Torfaen County Borough Council

The Authorities were successful in obtaining funding from the Office for Low Electric Vehicles (OLEV) to purchase and install On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme infrastructure in June 2019. The funding of £450,000 together with funding from the Local Authorities will be used to install a total of 73 charge points across 33 sites in the Gwent region.

Proposed locations were chosen to meet the current defined needs and future demands of residents, ensuring we have a coordinated approach across Gwent, so residents can easily charge their vehicles as they travel between the five Local Authorities.

Further funds have been announced by OLEV and the consortium will continue to develop proposals and consider bidding for funding to expand the electric vehicle charging network as part of regional working to develop low carbon travel solutions in South East Wales.

Transport Minister, Ken Skates announced up to £1m for 4 trials to look at innovative forms of demand responsive bus travel. Blaenau Gwent has been chosen as one of the locations.

### REVIEW OF COUNCIL FLEET

The Gwent Local Authorities have also recently commissioned a carbon reduction – fleet review and this included collecting data about mileage driven, fuel used by the directly operated fleets (owned, leased and rented) along with the business mileage driven by the staff owned grey fleet. Each of the Authorities received a report for their area alongside a Gwent wide report.

Alongside current targets in Wales for us all to reduce carbon emissions by 95% by 2050 there is also a target whereby Welsh Public Sector Fleets should transition to Ultra Low Emissions vehicles by 2025 for cars and small vans, 2030 for all other vehicles and 2040 is the target date for ending the sale of new petrol or diesel vehicles.

Next steps following the review are to develop a plan for the transition of our current fleet to ultra-low emission vehicles when making decisions around the purchase or new or replacement fleet.



## The Regeneration Opportunities Team

welcomes the opportunity to provide you with Energy Project Development advice. Guidance on what we expect from you and what we can provide is contained on the Blaenau Gwent website.

[www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)



## Regeneration & Community Services

Municipal Offices, Civic Centre,  
Ebbw Vale. NP23 6XB

Tel: 01495 311556

Email: [regeneration-projects@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration-projects@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)



# Agenda Item 7

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**  
Date of meeting: **9<sup>th</sup> December 2019**  
Report Subject: **Local Housing Strategy Review**  
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)
19.11.19	26.11.19	29.11.19			09.12.19	29.01.20		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to:

- 1.1 Inform Regeneration Scrutiny Committee of the requirement to update and revise the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) in line with Welsh Government guidance.
- 1.2 Seek the views of Scrutiny Committee prior to Executive approval, to engage in developing a new local housing strategy.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The scope of the report is to outline the key principles and requirements of the guidance from Welsh Government in preparing a Local Housing Strategy.
- 2.2 Further to this, the report highlights potential opportunity for collaborative working with other local authorities on a regional level.
- 2.3 Performance outcomes associated with the aims contained within the current Housing Strategy are outside the scope of this report and will be presented in a separate report at the end of the current financial year 2019/20, following a members briefing in the New Year.

### Background

- 2.4 Within the revised guidance to local authorities in Wales, Welsh Government, state:

***“The primary purpose of a Local Housing Strategy is to articulate a locally agreed direction for addressing the housing requirements, problems and opportunities of an area, taking into account national policies and priorities..... to provide a strategic vision which is capable of directing the activity of partners”.***

- 2.5 Overall the LHS should set out a long term “housing vision” with housing related objectives and key target areas, based upon findings within the Local Housing Market Assessment.
- 2.6 It must be framed within the context of the overarching vision for the economic, environmental and social well-being of its area and inhabitants set out in the Authority’s corporate strategy.
- 2.7 The strategy should be framed for the next five year period, although the ‘vision’ should be longer term, within the context of the corporate strategy. The current BGCBC Housing Strategy has ran for the period 2014 – 2018. Following on from a strategy document an operational plan should set out how the objectives and targets in the strategy will be met.
- 2.8 Blaenau Gwent has a positive and proven working relationship with its strategic housing partners across the region.
- 2.9 Recently and in recognition that the population’s needs are not solely met within single county boundaries, the Gwent local authorities agreed to collectively formulate The Gwent Regional Homelessness Strategy. With Operational Plans at a local level; with the support of Welsh Government.
- 2.10 The Blaenau Gwent Housing Delivery Group has met to discuss the requirement to review the Blaenau Gwent Local Housing Strategy and consider the opportunity to pursure a regional approach, to which the officer group were supportive. Initial dialogue with housing officers within the region indicates that other authorities may be receptive to a regional approach.
- 2.11 Traditionally BGCBC has produced its own Local Housing Strategy internally, specific to the Local Authority,
- 2.12 By working collaboratively there are a number of opportunities:
  - To identify and share of exemplars of good practice and further partnership working opportunities.
  - To comprehensively consider the population’s needs and aspirations in a holistic manner.
  - To understand possible inward migration opportunities and population transience.
  - To identify and encourage residential development opportunities to meet the aspirations of the population.
  - Assit in leveraging investment and/or funding opportunities.
- 2.13 In order to undertake a Regional Housing Strategy the Gwent local authorities would need to establish an Officer Working Group, with representatives from each local authority, with an identified lead authority to commission the work.
- 2.14 The group would then consider the most effective method of developing a regional strategy. Consideration could be given to the appointment of a

single, dedicated Regional Research Officer, hosted by the lead authority, or alternatively the commissioning of external consultants.

2.15

Following the development of a draft Regional Housing Strategy and public consultation the Officer Working Group would inform regional and local action plans.

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

RCSLT have considered the report and support to a regional approach (option 2).

#### 3.1 **Option 1**

Do nothing; the decision not to proceed with carrying out a Local Housing Strategy.

#### 3.2 **Option 2 (Preferred option)**

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.

#### 3.3 **Option 3**

BGCBC to develop a Blaenau Gwent Local Housing Strategy.

### 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 Priorities**

Economic Development and Regeneration is a priority within the 2018 to 2022 Corporate Plan, with a specific focus on working with private developers and RSL partners to provide a variety of homes.

#### 4.2 **Blaenau Gwent Well Being Plan**

In taking a strategic view to meeting the aspirations of the demographic, thus providing safe, appropriate and affordable housing to local residents will underpin the five objectives outlined within the Wellbeing plan.

#### 4.3 **Local Development Plan**

The emerging LDP has an annual target of 117 per annum with an aspirational target of 144. A RHS would align with the emerging LDP.

4.4 Further to this housing is also a Regeneration Priority to encourage inward migration.

#### 4.5 **Regeneration**

Further to the above Housing is an identified Regeneration priority and is also a significant contributor to delivering the emerging Growth and Investment Strategy.

## 5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Do nothing; The decision not to engage in developing a Local Housing Strategy could reduce the focus and strategic vision of new residential developments for Blaenau Gwent, our approach to housing regeneration more broadly and may also generate a negative response from stakeholders.

5.2 Option 2; The primary implication associated with this option is that there would not be a specific BGCBC housing strategy; a detailed local action plan would however be developed, providing both regional and local context.

5.3 Option 3; The opportunity for Blaenau Gwent LA to investigate the development of a Regional Housing Strategy with the Gwent LA partners would be lost; dropping the collective pool of knowledge and resources to develop a housing strategy.

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

#### 5.5 Do Nothing Option

There would be no short term impact to the budget, if a strategy was not produced. Without a strategic vision the impact to the longer term budget is very difficult to estimate. The lack of a housing strategy may negatively impact efforts to secure internal/external funding or investment to support development. Further to this not having a housing strategy could result in an adhoc approach to development, which may occur in areas where there is no demonstrated need or demand.

5.6 If an external consultant or dedicated officer was employed to undertake the housing strategy review there would be a financial implication. A regional approach may offer economies of scale, compared to individual authority commissions.

#### 5.7 Indicative costs:

If a regional strategy was agreed and developed, a contribution circa £5k would be required per participating Local Authority.

A local strategy approach bespoke to BGCBC would cost circa £20k to undertake.

Internal funding would be required to meet these costs.

### 5.8 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

#### 5.9 Option 1 Do Nothing

The main risks associated with not developing a Local Housing Strategy are:

- Limited focus of a strategic housing vision for BGCBC.



- The risk would be mitigated in part by the Housing Delivery Group along with wider internal and external partners taking a focus from the updated, Local Housing Market Assessment, the revised Local Development Plan and information collated from the Common Housing Register.

#### 5.10 Option 2 (Preferred option)

The main risk associated with option 2 is:

- A local focus to the strategy may become diluted. A mitigating factor could be to ensure that a local focus is developed within the Operational Plan, complementing a wider regional strategic overview.

#### 5.11 Option 3

The main risks associated with option 3 are:

- If a local housing strategy was devised without local authority partners in the wider Gwent area the opportunity of a cohesive vision at a cross boundary level would be lost. The risk would be mitigated through ensuring consideration was made to the regional context and further to this, through maintaining regional partnerships and initiatives.
- Potential opportunities at a regional level may be lost, eg. The potential for SMEs to work across defined areas.

#### 5.12 **Legal**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

#### 5.13 **Human Resources**

Delivering agreed housing priorities including associated development, will require input from a range of officers within the Environment Directorate, including Housing Strategy, Planning Officers and Estates Officers.

Consideration to undertake the strategy review in house, however, the work involved, associated timeline and resource commitment may negatively impact broader housing strategy activity and delivery.

### 6. **Supporting Evidence**

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

Following the formulation of a LHS, the outcomes and targets held within local operational plans will be reported annually to RCSLT/CLT/Scrutiny and Executive for information. This does include the target of encouraging inward migration to Blaenau Gwent.

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

To effectively forward plan and ensure that resources are in place to meet future housing need and demand. Ensuring sustainable communities are maintained within Blaenau Gwent, by affording the opportunity of access to a variety of homes within the borough, through a strategic vision and partnership working with a variety of stakeholders.

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

The development of a RHS involves input and data from a range of internal and external partners including; regeneration, housing solutions, planning policy, estates and wider Gwent partners. Officers have made initial contact with Gwent partners to ascertain interest in possible collaboration.

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

The primary purpose of the document is to ensure a future strategic housing vision is formulated.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

The primary purpose of the document is to ensure future housing demand is met through a variety of options which is appropriate for Blaenau Gwent as a whole.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

To ensure the collaboration of effective partnerships working with stakeholders and Gwent wide partners. Safeguarding the demand for a variety of homes is met by ensuring partnership working is maintained.

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

Delivery of the recommendations and bringing development forward, requires close integrated working e.g. regeneration, planning, estates, public protection etc.

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

The report is open to all and is fully inclusive.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 There is a number of agreed housing KPIs which are reported to Welsh Government. This data will be reported annually to RCSLT/CLT/Scrutiny and Executive for information.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

<https://gweddill.gov.wales/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/localhouseguideforlase/index9ed2.html?lang=en>

# Agenda Item 8

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny**  
Date of meeting: **9<sup>th</sup> December 2019**  
Report Subject: **Regeneration & Economic Development 6 Month Performance Report**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**  
Report Submitted by: **Ellie Fry, Head of Regeneration**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
26.11.19	26.11.19	29.11.19			09.12.19	Info Item 29.01.20		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To present the six month service activity from April 2019 to September 2019 and highlight how the Department is contributing to four of the Council's Corporate aims of delivering a:
- Resilient Wales
  - Healthier Wales
  - More equal Wales, and
  - A Wales of more cohesive communities.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. The Regeneration and Economic Development Department has gone through a year of changes and restructure to enable the teams to focus on delivering a more structured program of work based around the priority areas identified in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22.
- Housing
  - Employment and Skills
  - Destination Management and Tourism
  - Energy and Digital
  - Town centres
- 2.2. The performance report makes reference to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which not only underpins the Council's aims, but also guides the ways in which sustainable development can be delivered through:
- Collaboration
  - Integration
  - Involvement
  - Long term
  - Prevention

- 2.3. From the report the achievements around the Housing priority show a marked improvement in numbers of affordable and private homes delivered and delivery of new sites for housing; with high numbers of homes accessing funding for making them more energy efficient. The Housing Prospectus, launched in Cardiff has had a positive effect on enquiries and interest in sites and the LDP review is identifying new sites. Alongside this the early intervention for homelessness means 41 out of 59 households were prevented from being homeless.
- 2.4. Employment and Skills showcases the Aspire shared apprenticeship scheme with 13 apprentices already being trained; the employment liaison project and stakeholder events looking at needs and opportunities for local businesses. The Council's industrial portfolio is at 86% occupancy rate with projects developed to build out new units in 2020. Start-ups in BG higher than this time last year by 45.9% and community benefits to a number of communities delivered through physical projects. STEM delivery in schools is increasing with a bid to Tech Valleys for more resource and the future skills academy being progressed for the former Monwell building.
- 2.5. A number of key documents prepared for Destination Management and Tourism across BG. The Destination Management Plan and walking trails leaflet. Work with individual businesses to help them maximise their tourism potential and working across the Head of the Valleys on events and festivals.
- 2.6. The research and development behind the Energy Prospectus has been completed and the prospectus document is being drafted. Funding for electric charging points in BG is being sought to enable more charging points to be available for the community and visitors. Work on the Refit program of works has commenced – this is a £4.1million fit out of public buildings and will generate energy savings for the Council. The GovTech Catalyst project is in the first stages of development and will enable BG's fleet vehicles to collect and report data as they travel around the Borough. Thales are working with us and Welsh Government to develop a £20million National Digital Exploitation Centre (NDEC) to assist SMEs and micro businesses with cyber security and digital design – the first R&D facility of its kind in Wales.
- 2.7. Heritage Lottery Funding of £3.6million is being spent in Tredegar Town Centre alongside town centre loans and grants. A number of key buildings have been brought forward like the Territorial Arms Boutique Hotel with the NCB Grade 2 listed building next. The LDP review is identifying sustainable developments around towns to support the wellbeing of future generations.
- 2.8. A series of case studies are included to highlight some of the work that has been outlined in the performance report.

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

#### 3.1 Option 1:

That Members consider the information provided and make specific comments / recommendations to the Executive Committee.

#### Option 2:

That Members accept the report as provided.

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

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

##### Economic Development and Regeneration

- To work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords and private developers to provide a variety of homes;
- To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development;
- To increase the start-up business rate, retention and growth of local businesses and attract new inward investment;
- To develop digital infrastructure and improve connectivity by promoting digital participation;
- To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits; and
- To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future.

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

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

There are no short term budget implications associated with the report.

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

There are no risks directly associated with this report

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

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

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

There are no additional implications for human resources.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

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

The Six Month Performance report is attached.

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

Improved economy and community benefits from the work undertaken in the last 6 months

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

The strategy and action plan is designed to be a method to organise support to target areas of need identified through business and take account of changing and future business needs of Blaenau Gwent.

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

The areas of collaboration are outlined in the performance report.

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

Integration is outlined in the performance report

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

Monitoring will be done through the Council's Corporate Plan and Service business plan

8. **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

*Appendix 1 – Economic Development & Regeneration Q1 and 2  
Performance Report*



# Economic Development and Regeneration

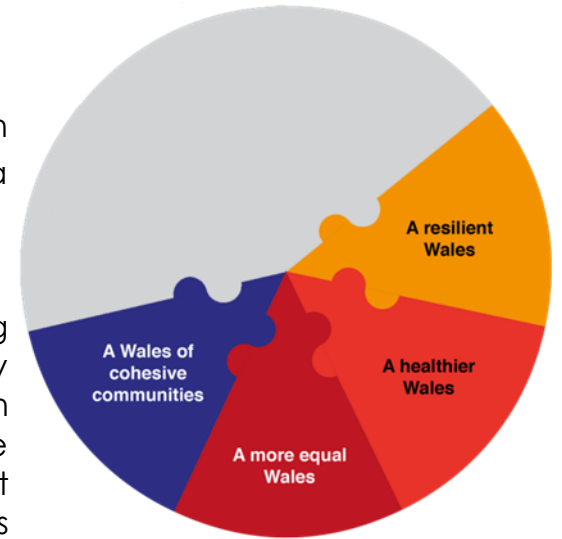
## Quarter 1 & 2 (April - September 2019) Performance Report





# Foreword

The purpose of this report is to present service activity from April 2019 to September 2019 which highlights how we are contributing to the Council's overall aim of delivering a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales and a Wales of more cohesive communities.



The following overview pages set out our performance for the period along with some associated achievements and challenges aligned to the priority areas identified in the Corporate Plan 2018/22, which are: ► To work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords and private developers to provide a variety of homes, ► To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development, ► To increase the start-up business rate, retention and growth of local businesses and attract new inward investment, ► To develop digital infrastructure and improve connectivity by promoting digital participation, ► To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits, and ► To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future.

This report is broken down into the themes below which have been identified for the Regeneration and Economic Development Service area and support delivery of the priority areas above:

- Housing;
- Employment and Skills;
- Destination Management and Tourism;
- Energy and Digital; and
- Town Centres.

We will continue to invest in our neighbourhoods so that they are places where people are proud to live. We have prioritised economic development and regeneration in order to bring jobs, growth and opportunity to local people and businesses.

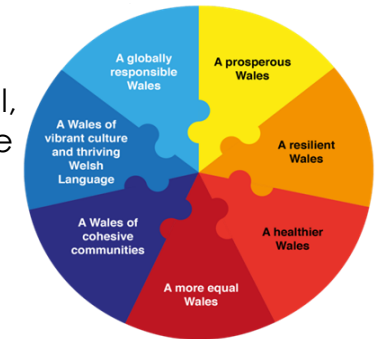
Increasing employability makes a fundamental contribution to reducing and tackling poverty and the economic status of the area. Supporting people to obtain and retain employment reduces reliance upon support services aligned to social well-being and poverty.





# Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is legislation which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The vision of this legislation is expressed in the seven National well-being goals.



The Act also puts a duty on public bodies to apply the sustainable development principle which states they 'must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

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The sustainable development principle is made up of the following five ways of working, pictured below:



**Collaboration**



**Integration**



**Involvement**



**Long Term**



**Prevention**

Throughout this report some areas of performance that meet these ways of working are demonstrated by the above images.

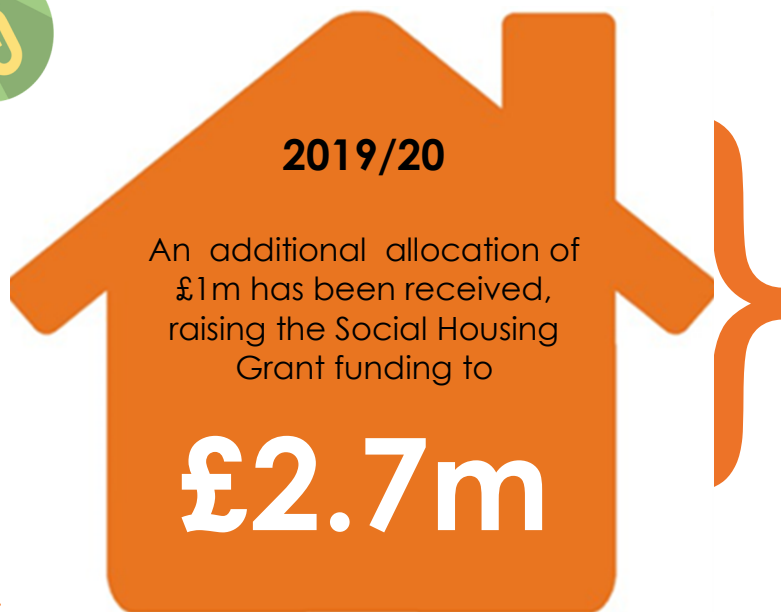
# Housing



► **The Social Housing Grant Programme** supports delivery of affordable housing provision within Blaenau Gwent

Bridging the Gap

Positive work to support the **housing delivery element of the Growth and Investment Strategy** has continued to include projected development numbers and associated council tax return.



There are six schemes on site and two at development stage, as part of the Housing Programme Delivery Plan which will deliver approximately

**188**

affordable homes over the life span of the projects

Tai Calon have also now been brought into the programme and will deliver

**23 Units**

which are

**social rental housing**

On the former Glanffrwyd Site.

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## The Council works to improve homes across Blaenau Gwent with the aim of increasing energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty.

The following two schemes target improvements to homes where households are more likely to be living in severe fuel poverty. The scheme also provides a range of advice to help householders reduce their energy usage and utility bills:



► **ECO/LAFlex Energy Efficiency scheme** - progressing well with

**191** enquiries received.

**93** successful applications now completed and in receipt of Improvements.

► **The Arbed 3 scheme** -

Consultation was completed to identify fuel poverty areas where the greatest impact can be made and the area identified was **Lower Ebbw Fach**. An assessment on each property was carried out and individual works to properties is ongoing with approximately

**100**

**Properties being improved so far.**

# Housing

The Discover Blaenau Gwent Housing Prospectus was successfully launched in May 2019 by the Executive Member for Regeneration. The event was attended by over 20 representatives from the housing sector including Registered Social Landlords, Private Limited Companies, Small Medium Enterprises and planning consultants. The launch has generated land enquiries from perspective developers and continued liaison is being undertaken to investigate the possibility of bringing forward developments, by the Housing Delivery Group.



**Collaboration** - We continue to explore collaborative working opportunities to stimulate development opportunities, including new developments, self build opportunity and empty properties. Following the launch of the Housing Prospectus one of the sites (BKF Plastics) identified within the prospectus sits directly adjacent to authority owned land and is now being progressed through a partnership approach to increase the overall size of the development site. A number of surveys have been commissioned, to support the sales particulars which are currently being prepared and will be released to the market in the near future.

The LDP identifies where new developments such as housing, employment, community facilities and roads, will go. A review of our plan is underway with the following progress being made in the reporting period -

- ▶ *Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, Habitat Regulation Assessment, and Population and Household consultants appointed and work progressing.*
- ▶ *Pre Deposit Engagement including 2 sets of workshops has been completed.*
- ▶ *Population and Employment Land Reviews have been completed.*
- ▶ *Integrated Sustainability appraisal of the options has been completed.*
- ▶ *Work has now commenced on expert assessments of all Candidate Sites.*



**27** Completed house builds



Planning applications determined within timescales **99%**

59 households met the threshold for being threatened with homelessness. Of these, 41 were successfully prevented from losing their accommodation - **69.5%** This high prevention rate has been achieved by targeting early intervention initiatives to prevent homelessness at a very early stage.

# Employment and Skills

**Are you looking for an APPRENTICE?**

Exciting opportunities have arisen through Aspire Blaenau Gwent Shared Apprenticeship Programme for Blaenau Gwent Manufacturing Employers.

The Shared Apprenticeship Programme is a strategic partnership between the Ebbs Vale Enterprise Zone, Education, Industry and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to increase skills within manufacturing and engineering companies.

It aims to enhance business growth, wider training opportunities and also to provide aspirational opportunities for young people within the Local Authority.

Engineering Apprenticeships typically take between two and four years, depending on the type of Apprenticeship and the level. There is no set time to complete an Apprenticeship, as they vary widely in content and size. The length of time taken will depend on the ability of the individual apprentice and the employer's requirements.

An Apprenticeship is essentially a set of qualifications called a 'framework' developed by what are known as sector skills councils. The relevant council for engineering is SCIFA sector skills council for science, engineering and manufacturing technologies.

**HOW WILL IT BENEFIT YOU AS A HOST EMPLOYER?**

- Apprentices will bring expertise, passion, drive and an excellent work ethic to your organisation for the duration of their apprenticeship (2-3 years) following a period of initial training.
- Aspire will provide recruitment and employment of the apprentice.
- Aspire will provide the opportunity for host companies to increase business capacity using the services of employees.

**Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme -** Recruitment and induction of apprentices has been successful, including a team building event at Glyn Neath Waterfall for all current Aspire Apprentices.

**13** have commenced the programme and their joint employment with host companies.

**3** new host companies are also engaged on the programme,

**2** of which are **Small Medium Enterprises**.

4

**Internal Apprenticeships,** within Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, are being delivered through **Aspire** and a further 4 are planned.

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**Involvement** - Blaenau Gwent annual stakeholder event took place in July 2019 which included a session focused on looking to the Future- Maximising opportunities for prosperity. The **Employment and Skills Stakeholder Event** followed on and complemented this, proving to be a successful and interactive session which involved over **70 attendees**, with representation from Education, Further / Higher Education, Business, Employment and the Public Service Board, who's input will feed into the final employment and skills strategy and associated action plan.

**17**  
Companies engaged

**31**  
Signposted to training

**12**  
individuals took up internal training

**12**  
individuals took up external training

**Employment Liaison Project**  
WHAT IS THE EMPLOYMENT LIAISON PROJECT?

The Employment Liaison Project (ELP) is funded by the Welsh Government and supported by the Ebbs Vale Enterprise Zone. The purpose of the project is to establish a demand led, work ready employment pool that meets the needs of the local manufacturing and engineering sector. The Employment Liaison Officer, based within the Council's Regeneration Service, is responsible for delivering recruitment and training support for existing businesses and future inward investors.

**FOR EMPLOYERS THE ELP CAN:**

- Provide free support to meet recruitment requirements
- Match local skilled workers to business opportunities
- Provide local labour via a Blaenau Gwent Skills Database
- Offer advice on finding, identifying, training to upskill the existing workforce, and make workplace referrals
- Provide options for commercial training specific to business needs
- Monitor progression of placed employees
- Refer to wider business support and networks



# Employment and Skills

Industrial units, office accommodation and commercial land property portfolio is currently operating at an **86%**

**occupancy rate.**

Effect Grant assistance of up to £2,000 can be offered towards business start-up costs for someone who is thinking of starting up a new business in Blaenau Gwent.

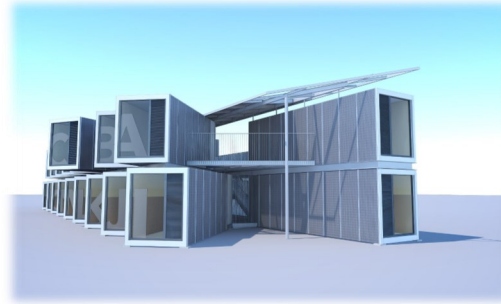
**The Effect grant scheme has supported 25 new business and 31 full time position start-ups** in Blaenau Gwent since the start of the grant programme in 2017/18.

These vary from sole traders in beauty, photography and financial services to community gyms, food and allergy testing and energy procurement providers.



**45.9%** more businesses started up in Blaenau Gwent during the first four months of this year, compared with the corresponding period of last year.. This growth rate ranks Blaenau Gwent **second** out of the 22 Welsh districts.

## The Box Works project is ongoing, currently at the tender stage.



When completed 23 modified shipping containers will act as a technical hub for knowledge-based businesses in the creative industries, digital technologies, research and development, energy, technical and professional business services. These 'Enterprise pods' will be unique, innovative and reflect a change in the Council's product offering, compared to traditional industrial workshops/units and office

accommodation. The units will act as a hub for businesses to develop and then graduate into the higher value office provision.

The proposed **Lime Avenue Business Unit development** aims to provide high quality hybrid style business units on land just north of the Regain Building on the Works. The proposed project will provide new accommodation to support the development of small and medium enterprise (SMEs). Key project outcomes will include new enterprise and job creation. Works will commence on site from mid-February 2020 over a 10 month duration.

This proposed operation aims to contribute the following;

- Land Developed – 0.7 Ha
- Premises created 2000 m2
- Jobs Accommodated – 50
- SME's Accommodated – 8



# Employment and Skills

A **Collaborative** approach has been taken to develop and deliver a draft Enterprise & Innovation Plan for Blaenau Gwent. The final plan will encourage business innovation aligned to wider strategies such as Tech Valleys, Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, and Prosperity for All: economic action plan.



## Aneurin Bevan Stones – TAFY/ BGCBC

A **£30k environmental enhancement scheme** was recently completed that secured a range of community benefits including;

- **1 new employment opportunity created** – local resident referred from the Job Centre Plus secured this position.
- **12 individuals enrolled on the project** and participated in various training initiatives whilst gaining practical skills onsite at the Aneurin Bevan Stones.
- The contractor **utilised 10 local companies** and spent **£14,868.42** within the local supply chain.



## Procurement and Supply Chain

An application to the Welsh Government Foundational Economy Challenge Fund has been submitted, if successful the application would provide resource to explore the Council's current procurement spend, percentage awarded to local (Blaenau Gwent) businesses and opportunities moving forward to support businesses and position them for tendering contract opportunities. This project could ultimately support local business sustainability, associated employment and retention of spend within the local economy. The bid aligns with a similar proposal from the 4 locally operating Registered Social Landlords that could create further opportunity.



# Employment and Skills

A Tech Valleys proposal has been developed in partnership with the local Head Teachers group. The proposal will be submitted and considered during Quarter 4 with a view that funding could be awarded to deliver a **STEM focus project**, utilising school facilitators and an industry liaison officer to deliver a coordinated programme of activity utilising business and partners **to inspire and raise awareness of opportunity amongst young people and children.**

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**STEM delivery in schools** - CITB, linked with Aspire to Be and Go Construct have developed two new initiatives as a response to the construction industry workforce needs, linking directly with schools, through construction led programmes (Minecraft) and resources. A free pilot programme and resources were secured for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council primary schools;

- Teachers from **7 schools** have successfully completed a **5 day minecraft training** programme, with Aspire 2 Be with 3 schools attending a regional Buildathon alongside Cardiff primary schools. The principles have been embedded within schools through “Minecraft” workshops and afterschool clubs.
- Teachers from **9 schools attended the STEAM focus day** which will provide schools with free training and introduced a range of contextualised lesson plans and resources to teachers to use in the classroom.



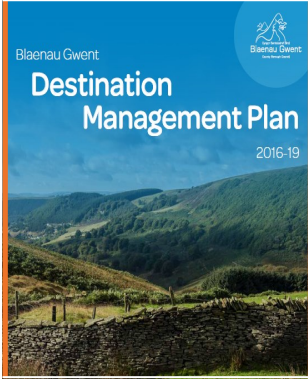
**As part of the £100m Tech Valley Investment opportunity a range of initiatives and associated funding applications are being developed for submission in the autumn including;**

**Skills Academy** – Refurbishment of the Monwel building to host a flexible skills academy that could include;

- 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
- support the culture of enterprise through the establishment of a Tech Lab



# Destination Management & Tourism



We strive to maintain a thriving and vibrant welcome to residents and visitors alike. Delivery of The Destination Management Plan ensures improved visitor experience and growth in the visitor economy. We work with event organisers to promote their events and also work with new Ebbw Vale Business Group to establish regular events throughout the town centres.

**19 Autumn events held plus week long activities at 3 sports centres and 2 parks.** The value of events to the tourism sector is increasingly evident. Many smaller local events are growing as is the support needed to run them safely and successfully.



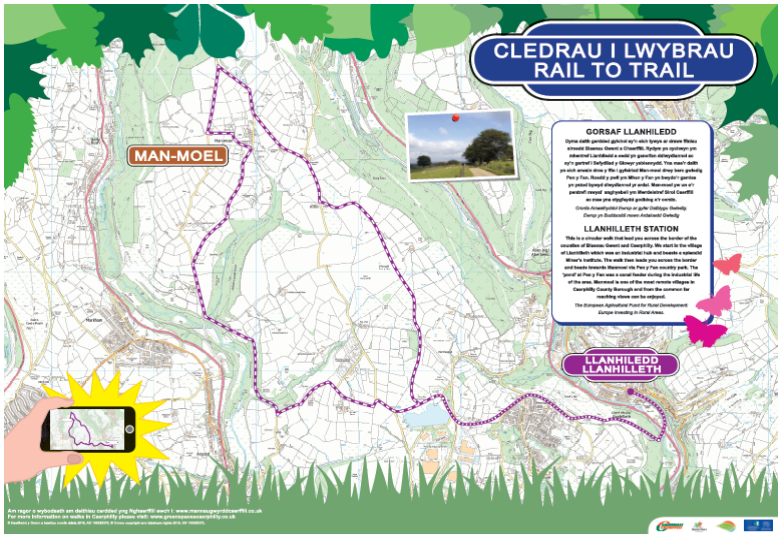
The heritage and culture of the area is one reason for visitors coming to the area. We have a special and proud history, a landscape that tells of the earliest settlers in the area and a wealth of historical sites, museums and archives that draw in visitors on a daily basis.

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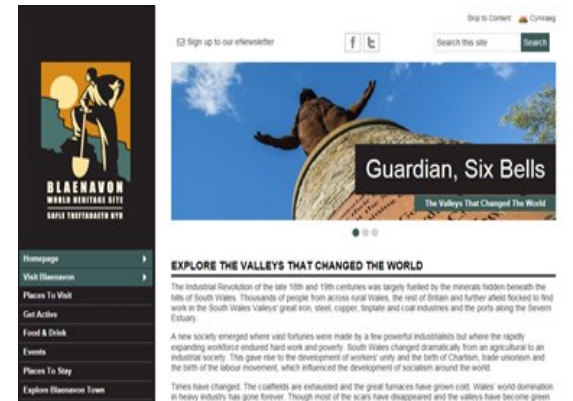
We have developed many Local walking trails and we continue working with Cwm a Mynydd Local Action Group to develop trails that link to the train.

There is a need to continue to improve connectivity, with works to increase rail services on the Ebbw Valley rail link and completion of the A465 dualling. We are looking to also link these to walking and cycling trails.

## Rail to Train at Llanhilleth



**“We have continued to work with ‘The Valleys That Changed the World’ developing and promoting the Industrial Heritage”.**





# Destination Management & Tourism

To ensure a thriving and vibrant tourist economy we work with individual businesses to maximise their potential. We recognise that sharing knowledge, gaining new skills and teaming up to form a cohesive way forward is important and enhances the destination offer.

**37** accommodation developments are ongoing such as The Tredegar Arms which has opened this autumn.



Supported the opening of **1** new cafe in the circle Tredegar who now also provides the community with regular events in Welsh, book clubs etc.



We continue to engage with town centre local businesses to support and assist with business promotion.

**12** new businesses (now 83 in total) are linked to our new **Business hub**, a smart digital platform dedicated to Blaenau Gwent businesses and start-ups, enabling businesses to connect with each other and discover local opportunities.



## Collaboration

Wales Valleys Walking Festival – a partnership with Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Merthyr councils.

The following National data was taken from the **STEAM Tourism Impact Report:**

Economic impact up **4% to £54.9m;**

Visitor days up **5% to 947,000;**

Visitor numbers up **7% to 723,000;**

Employment down **3% to 662 FTE;** and

Spend per visitor day down **1%.**

A Project to maximise the tourism potential of Blaenau Gwent as the Home of the NHS and Aneurin Bevan has been completed.



This year there were **7** walks, **5** taking place in Blaenau Gwent.

Numbers per walk ranged from **5 to 15.**



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## The Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus

has been drafted. This will require agreement at Council before it can be distributed out to the market to identify investment opportunities and secure funding for delivery of these energy opportunities.

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### ELECTRIC VEHICLES -

Providing electric vehicle charging points helps work towards a greener, cleaner environment and the views of residents contributed to planning future provision.

Blaenau Gwent together with four neighbouring authorities have secured up to **£450,000 of funding for Low Emission Vehicles** (OLEV) for the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points across 30 sites within the five Local Authority areas.

Blaenau Gwent will act as lead Authority on behalf five other Local Authorities including Caerphilly, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Newport.



# Energy and Digital

Work has commenced on delivery of a **£4.1million programme 'ReFit'** to install energy efficiency measures in buildings throughout the Council's portfolio. Buildings included within the programme are Corporate Buildings, Schools, Leisure Trust Buildings and Street Lighting. **Lighting Schemes have been completed in :**

Willowtown Primary School -  
Energy Efficient LED Lighting &  
Solar PV Panels

- Guaranteed Energy Savings of £7,631.10 per year
- Improved lighting levels and better quality of lighting
- Installation of Solar PV
- A long-term source of renewable technology
- 38,000 kWh saved between March and November
- 21,000 CO2 Savings saved in the same period



Bert  
Denning

Civic Centre  
- Energy  
Efficient LED  
Lighting



Ebbw Vale Sports  
Centre - Energy  
Efficient LED  
Lighting



Silent  
Valley  
Waste  
Transfer  
Station  
- Solar  
PV  
Panels



Engagement with  
schools is continuing

Libraries

Learning  
Action Centres





# Energy and Digital

## GovTech Catalyst project -

Working together with Durham County Council and Government Digital Service we are looking at how we can use our assets to collect information about what is going in the streets and relay that information to help deliver public services more efficiently.

**'Eyes on the Street': enabling Blaenau Gwent Borough Council's vehicle fleets to collect and report data as they travel around the borough concerning recycling participation, deterioration of the highways as well as monitoring and identifying highways violations.**

**Phase one is now completed** which included:

- detection of potholes using camera technology mounted on refuse, recycling fleet - no driver intervention required
- Detection of recycling participation levels



We aim to develop digital infrastructure and improve connectivity within the borough by promoting digital participation.



Blaenau Gwent Council is involved in

## The PENTAGON Project

at The Works site on the former steelworks in Ebbw Vale, as part of efforts

## to reduce fuel poverty

in the county borough.

The project is now in its final year and aims to deliver a new generation of eco-districts that exploit a wide range of renewable energy generation sources and also investigates the use of energy conversion technology (including power to gas) to improve flexibility of energy supply.

The Thales Project is ongoing and we continue to work towards the delivery of the new £20m National Digital Exploitation Centre (NDEC) based in Ebbw Vale which will be the first research and development facility of its kind in Wales, and will provide the perfect setting for S M E s and microbusinesses to test and develop their digital concepts. The centre design is currently in design stage with construction scheduled to start in May 2020 with the facility set to be in full operation by April 2021.



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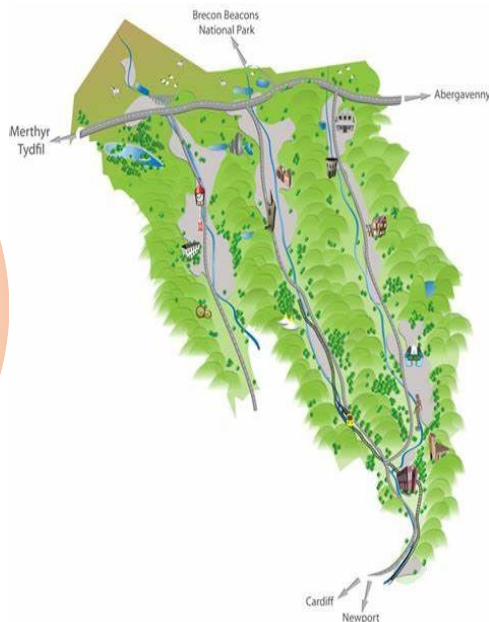
# Town Centres

Project delivery of Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative continues

**£3.6m funding secured from Lottery Heritage Fund**

## Tredegar Arms

works nearing completion with the owners officially opening the building on the 23rd October 2019. The total **project cost is £1.8m** which has been from various funding sources including private investment from the building owners.



The Regeneration Opportunities team are continuing to engage with potential projects to utilise the **town centre loan** opportunities available.

A further **£190,000** has been secured as a result of underspends across other Local Authorities and 3 potential projects have been identified and loan agreements are currently being developed.

There will be a further phase of funding available for town centre loans which has money available of up to £1 million

Regeneration is by nature long term and collaborative with social outcomes. We collaborate internally with colleagues in other departments and externally with private and public sector partners. All of our projects reflect this and we are always looking for further ways to collaborate to get the best results.



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Work is ongoing to engage with potential town centre properties across Blaenau Gwent to participate in the town centre loans and grants scheme. Due diligence into potential applications is being carried out by the Regeneration Opportunities Team, a Quantity Surveyor from Technical Services and the Property Solicitor from Development and Estates.



Works due to start on site for the NCB building (the building is Grade 2 listed) in early October.



**Long Term** by 2033, Blaenau Gwent's Local Development Plan will support delivery of a network of connected sustainable, vibrant valley communities that support the well-being of current and future generations.



# Case Study - Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Businesses Join

Businesses from Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent along with members from successful business networking clubs Torfaen Business Voice and the Blaenau Gwent Effect Network, are forging closer trading partnerships following an event earlier this month.

The recent event was the first of its kind, created and hosted by Torfaen Economy & Enterprise and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Economic Development Unit and was held at the General Offices, Ebbw Vale.

Over 65 businesses from across a wide range of sectors took advantage of the free opportunity to introduce their businesses to each other over both informal and facilitated networking, and a buffet.



## **Councillor Richard Clark, Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Economy, Skills and Regeneration at Torfaen Council said**

"It was a real pleasure to attend and speak at this event. Forging business relationships across county boundaries is a really positive step towards strengthening our local economy. I hope this is just the beginning of a number of successful joint initiatives that will help build and capitalise on the fantastic energy and commitment local businesses in this part of south east Wales have."

## **Blaenau Gwent Councillor David Davies, Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, said:**

*"The 'meet your business neighbour' event for businesses in Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen, which was hosted in the General Offices Ebbw Vale, provided local business with the chance to interact with new contacts and suppliers. It was also an opportunity to share best practice and keep up to date with political, legislative and economic developments.*

*This is such a good example of how businesses from neighbouring boroughs can engage and work together, which is not only beneficial for the local economy but also strengthens business networks in the region".*



# Case Study - Tredegar Regeneration

A significant local Tredegar building is about to be re-opened. The Tredegar Arms received an extensive refurbishment following a grant offer from the National Lottery. Today the building will open its doors to the community as a hotel and restaurant.

The Tredegar Arms forms a key part of a historic landscape of buildings that were constructed out of the town's growth from the iron industry and in recent times had fallen into a state of disrepair. It was previously used as a coach house and had become derelict since 2012. The building was in a poor state of repair, with fire damage to the upper levels. The owners had received a funding offer from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to aid the conservation's sensitive refurbishment in order to provide a restaurant and hotel facility in Tredegar. Major renovation works commenced in 2017.

Following two years of refurbishment work and significant investment, the Tredegar Arms will offer restaurant and bar facilities, hotel with 10 bedrooms, and a function room of high standard with disability access.

With Project Management support from members of the Regeneration Opportunities Team over the last few years, the project has been funded by a number of partners, including the owners, THI grant contributions being made up from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Welsh Government's VVP Tackling Poverty Programme, Cadw, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Town Centre Loan (TCL) Private Funds and Tourism Grant Micro Small Business Fund Welsh Government (MSBF WG).

The funding has been utilised to refurbish the exterior with traditional materials and techniques to allow the building to appear and function as it was originally designed. There is a new slate roof, lime rendering and timber sash windows along with a sensitively designed and integrated entrance portico which was originally part of the building but was removed during previous building work.

It is one of a number of buildings being improved within the area of the Circle in Tredegar and we look forward to providing future updates as other buildings make progress.

**BEFORE:-**



**AFTER:-**





# Case Study - Bringing New Homes and Prospects to Blaenau Gwent.

The construction of new homes at Golwg y Bryn, Ebbw Vale is well underway. This is the result of Blaenau Gwent CBC's positive partnership working relationship with one of the country's leading house developers – Lovell and Melin Homes an experienced social landlord, to bring much needed quality homes to Blaenau Gwent. The collaboration has ensured the exciting venture being brought to fruition backed with the support of Welsh Government funding.

With the aim of creating opportunities for local suppliers and skilled craftsman to engage with a major house builder, an extremely successful “Meet The Buyer” event was facilitated by Blaenau Gwent's CBC Regeneration Team. A & M Brick Laying and Taylor Lane are two Local Companies that are already on site as a direct result from the event. Local employment, apprenticeships and wider community benefits are all future opportunities we hope to secure from this exciting development.



**Golwg Y Bryn, Ebbw Vale**  
£17m Mix Tenure Development comprising 100 units  
Commencing Spring 2019

**LOVELL**  
A MORGAN SINDALL GROUP COMPANY

The development, which will see 70 open market homes and 30 affordable, including shared equity, has recently been launched from a neighbouring site with a hugely positive response, from residents looking to secure their choice of home. Several plots have already being reserved and plans are underway to officially open the exquisite show home on site later this year.

# Case Study - Inspire Regional Management Team

An **annual conference** was co-ordinated by the Regional Management Team for Inspire2Achieve on 9<sup>th</sup> July

**at Llancaiach Fawr.**

There were **89 attendees** on the day with representatives from all of our 8 joint beneficiaries along with the **6 members** of the Regional Management Team.

The day was designed as an opportunity for the Joint Beneficiaries to receive any updates from the Regional Management Team, to discuss any issues that they are having with delivery and to allow them to share ideas for best/transferrable practice between themselves and how delivery models work in different areas.



Questions	Total Agree / Strongly Agree		Unsure		Total Disagree / Strongly Disagree	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Q1 - Overall I found today's session informative	62	81%	14	18%	4	5%
Q2 - The workshop topics were appropriate	56	73%	19	25%	2	3%
Q3 - The workshop helped answer my queries	49	64%	19	25%	9	12%
Q4 - The workshop helped me gain a better understanding	63	82%	9	12%	7	9%
Q5 - The session was organised and presented well	66	86%	10	13%	2	3%
Q6 - I would be interested in attending further workshop sessions	51	66%	22	29%	6	8%

**An Inspire to Work Conference will follow in February 2020**

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# Agenda Item 9

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny**  
Date of meeting: **9<sup>th</sup> December 2019**  
Report Subject: **Town Centre Strategy Task and Finish Group**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**  
Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Corporate Director  
Regeneration and Economic Development  
Bethan McPherson, Team Leader**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
19.11.19	26.11.19	29.11.19			09.12.19			

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline the recommendation to establish a Town Centre Task and Finish Group.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Challenges relating to town centres, increasing vacancy rates and declining footfall remain both a national and local challenge. Consideration and development of new uses and offers within our town centres is critical to long term sustainability, vibrancy and servicing the needs of our community as part of the broader foundational economy.
- 2.2 In response to this challenge, external consultants Nash Partnership were appointed to assist in the development of the Blaenau Gwent Town Centres Strategy in 2017, providing a new strategy, with clear focus and direction.
- 2.3 The primary purpose of the Town Centre's Strategy, was to articulate a locally agreed direction for addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with each of the five town Centres within Blaenau Gwent taking into account local and national policies and priorities.
- 2.4 The draft strategy has been prepared by NASH and an initial task and finish group was established in 2018 to consider the report and outline its recommendations for approving the strategy document. The work of the task and finish group was not concluded.
- 2.5 There is an outstanding requirement to review the strategy, prior to the recommendation for approval; the establishment of a new town centre task and finish group would be focused on consideration of the following:

- a. Generating a new strategy, focus and direction
  - b. Common principles that should underpin the strategy, action plan and associated delivery across all towns.
  - c. Complementarity of offer across the Authority and associated town centres.
  - d. Key strategic projects for town centre delivery, Blaenau Gwent wide.
  - e. Partnership and delivery mechanisms to support implementation of priorities contained within the strategy.
- 2.6 The recommendations of the task and finish group would feed into the report seeking approval of the strategy and inform the approach moving forward in terms of implementation.

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

#### 3.1 **Option 1**

To approve the establishment of a Town Centre Strategy Task and Finish Group.

#### **Option 2**

Not to approve the establishment of a Town Centre Strategy Task and Finish Group.

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

This topic supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2022 in the following areas:

- Economic Development and Regeneration - 'To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future.'

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

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

There are no immediate implications on budget, the strategy was funded through external Welsh government funding in a previous financial year. In the medium to long term, the recommendations contained within the strategy and key priorities identified within any associated action plan may require funding. A range of internal and external funding opportunities may need to be explored to support implementation.

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

The primary risk associated with the recommendation presented within the report is the task and finish group does not propose membership beyond council members and officers. To mitigate this extensive engagement work was undertaken in preparing the strategy and the implementation of priorities would be delivered through an appropriate partnership structure, with wider stakeholder membership.

## 5.3 ***Legal***

There are no legal implications associated with the report.

## 5.4 ***Human Resources***

The Regeneration Department is recruiting a Towns Facilitator to co-ordinate and support the agreed partnership in delivering agreed priorities. More broadly town centres fall across multiple disciplines internal and external to the Council, requiring a combined contribution and commitment.

The task and finish group will be supported by officers within Regeneration.

## 6. ***Supporting Evidence***

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

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

An approved town centre strategy to inform future delivery at a strategic and local level:

- Town centres that serve the needs of its communities
- Town centres with good infrastructure
- Town centres accessible to all

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

The task and finish group would consist of scrutiny members only. However the strategy was developed and will be implemented in an engaging and participatory way, involving key town centre stakeholders. There is opportunity to extend membership to specific experts or service users.

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

The work of the task and finish group and the town centre strategy more broadly aims to ensure a sustainable future for our towns, with facilities and provisions that serve the needs of its users.

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

Town centres have been in relative decline, a proactive and alternative approach is key to reducing further decline.

**6.6 Collaboration / partnership working**

Collaboration and partnership working will be critical to the development of any associated action plan and implementation. This will extend to public sector organisations, businesses, voluntary and third sector organisations.

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

A full EqIA is not required for the purpose of establishing a task and finish group.

**7. Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The task and finish group will report its recommendations to scrutiny and will form part of the wider report to approve the town centre strategy.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- Appendix 1 – Task and Finish Group Template



## Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Template

In order to set up a Task and Finish Group please ensure that this template is completed in full. The relevant Scrutiny Committee will consider this information when deciding if the Task and Finish Group is required.

<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	Regeneration
<b>Title of Task and Finish Group</b>	Town Centre Strategy
<b>Is a Council Policy currently in place? If so, please state which one</b>	No
<b>Which Council Priority would the Task and Finish Group Support?</b>	Economic Development and Regeneration  To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres, ensuring their long term future.
<b>Why is there a need to set up a Task and Finish Group?</b>	The Task and Finish Group is required to consider the draft town centre strategy prior to making its recommendations for approval.
<b>What is the Scope of the Task and Finish Group? What will be considered and what will not?</b>	The task and finish group will meet to review the draft Town Centre's Strategy.  The group will comprise of scrutiny members – who will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the draft strategy and associated recommendations undertaken by the Consultants, Nash Partnership, with specific consideration to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Generating a new strategy, focus and direction</li> <li>b. Common principles that should underpin the strategy, action plan and associated delivery across all towns.</li> <li>c. Complementarity of offer across the Authority and associated town centres.</li> <li>d. Key strategic projects for town centre delivery, Blaenau Gwent wide.</li> <li>e. Partnership and delivery mechanisms to support implementation of priorities contained within the strategy.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate their findings in respect of the above points, and make associated recommendations for the broader approval of the strategy.</li> </ul> <p>The group will be supported by the Regeneration Department.</p>
<p><b>How will the aim of Task and Finish Group support the Sustainable Development Principles?</b></p>	<p><b><i>Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation) Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)</i></b></p> <p>The task and finish group would consist of Scrutiny members only. However the strategy was developed and will be implemented in an engaging and participatory way, involving key town centre stakeholders. There is further opportunity to extend membership to the group is required e.g. expert advisors, service users.</p> <p><b><i>Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)</i></b></p> <p>The work of the task and finish group and the town centre strategy more broadly aims to ensure a sustainable future for our towns, with facilities and provisions that serve the needs of its users.</p> <p><b><i>Preventative focus</i></b></p> <p>Town centres have been in relative decline, a proactive and alternative approach is key to reducing further decline.</p> <p><b><i>Collaboration / partnership working</i></b></p> <p>Collaboration and partnership working will be critical to the development of any associated action plan and implementation. This will extend to public sector organisations, businesses, voluntary and third sector organisations.</p> <p><b><i>Integration (across service areas)</i></b></p> <p>There are no immediate opportunities linked to the work of the T&amp;F group.</p>

<b>What outcome are you seeking from holding a Task and Finish Group?</b>	A town centre strategy that will deliver change, with consideration of:  Common principles to support delivery Clear partnership/governance structure Strategic delivery priorities Holistic and complimentary approach
<b>Which Officers will support the Task and Finish Group?</b>	Service Manager (Regeneration) Towns Facilitator (depending on recruitment timescales) Team Manager (Building Control and Development Plans) (Connected Communities)
<b>Suggested Member Representation, e.g. Ward specific*</b>	Scrutiny Members
<b>How many meetings will be held and how often?</b>	Max of 4 meetings, every 2 weeks.
<b>What is the anticipated timescale for completion?</b>	Commence Dec 19/Jan 20 Conclude Feb 2020
<b>How often will you report back to committee?</b>	The recommendations will be fed back into scrutiny following the conclusion of the T&F group – this will be a single report.

**\*Members of the Task and Finish Group will be agreed by the appropriate committee.**

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# Agenda Item 10

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**  
Date of meeting: **9<sup>th</sup> December 2019**  
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr David Davies, Executive Regeneration and Economic Development**  
Report Submitted by: **Cllr Lee Parsons, Chair of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	29.11.19			09.12.19			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
  - 1.1 To present to Members the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020 for discussion and to update the Committee on any changes.
2. **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
  - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans. Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
  - 2.3 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in June 2019, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
  - 2.4 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
  - 3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020, and:
    - Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;

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

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020, as presented.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020



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

**Scrutiny Meeting Date:** Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020

**Scrutiny Deadline to receive reports:** Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>	<b>Method/ Expert Witness/Exec Member</b>	<b>CLT Sign Off</b>	<b>Executive Meeting Date</b>	<b>Council Meeting Date</b>
Destination Management – Annual Review	Moe Forouzan / Alyson Tippings	<b>Monitoring</b> To monitor the priorities and activities being delivered and what outcomes have been achieved.	Agenda Item	07.01.20	11.03.20	N/A
Transport Strategy	Alun Evans / Ellie Fry	<b>Policy Development</b> To consider the development of a Transport Strategy.	Agenda Item	07.01.20	11.03.20	N/A
Skills Strategy	Bethan McPherson / Tara Lane	<b>Policy Development</b> To consider and recommend for approval the Skills Strategy.	Agenda Item	07.01.20	11.03.20	N/A
Departmental Staff Sickness Absence Quarterly Monitoring	Richard Crook	<b>Monitoring</b> To undertake a quarterly review of staff sickness absence.	Agenda Item	07.01.20	N/A	N/A
Tech Valleys	Richard Crook	<b>Service Delivery</b> The report will provide an opportunity to outline the work to date, key themes and consider opportunities going forward.	Agenda Item	26.11.19	29.01.20	N/A
<b>INFORMATION ITEMS</b>						
Regional Transport Authority (RTA)	Ellie Fry	<b>Information</b> To receive an update on the work of the Regional Transport Authority as part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal structure.	Information item	07.01.20	11.03.20	N/A
Regional Skills Partnership (RSP)	Richard Crook	<b>Information</b> To receive an information report on the regional skills partnership work.	Information item	07.01.20	11.03.20	N/A

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