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THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

28th November 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

CORPORATE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee will be held in Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale on Thursday, 5th December, 2019 at 10.00 am.

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

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation

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

Municipal Offices
Civic Centre
Ebbw Vale
NP23 6XB

Swyddfeydd Bwrdeisiol
Canolfan Dinesig
Glyn Ebwy
NP23 6XB

a better place to live and work
lle gwell i fyw a gweithio

will be provided if requested.

2. APOLOGIES

To receive.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

To consider any declarations of interests and dispensations made.

4. ACTION SHEET - 19TH NOVEMBER 2019 5 - 8

To receive action sheet.

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BRIDGING THE GAP 9 - 72

To consider the report of the Chief Officer Resources and the Chief Officer Commercial.

6. STAFF SURVEY 2019 - SUMMARY RESULTS 73 - 78

To consider report of Managing Director.

7. QUARTER 1 AND 2 (APRIL TO SEPTEMBER) JOINT FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT 79 - 134

To consider the report of the Head of Governance and Partnerships.

8. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - 8TH JANUARY 2020 135 - 138

To receive the report.

To: Councillor S. Healy (Chair)
Councillor G. Paulsen (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P. Baldwin
Councillor M. Cook
Councillor M. Cross
Councillor G. L. Davies
Councillor P. Edwards
Councillor J. Hill
Councillor H. McCarthy
Councillor C. Meredith
Councillor M. Moore

Councillor J. P. Morgan
Councillor L. Parsons
Councillor J. Wilkins
Councillor D. Wilkshire

All other Members (for information)
Manager Director
Chief Officers

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Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Special Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee – Tuesday 19th November 2019

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
5	<p><u>Action Sheet – 4th September 2019</u></p> <p>CCTV: The Chair enquired if an update could be provided to the December meeting.</p>	Clive Rogers, Head Community Services / Bernadette Elias, Head Governance and Partnerships	It was agreed to provide a Position Statement to the meeting on 5 th December 2019.
7	<p><u>Action Sheet – 26th September 2019</u></p> <p>Health and Safety Annual Report: Members requested an update to be provided to the next meeting.</p> <p><i>A member referred to paragraph 2.7 and asked if it would be possible for the number of employee accidents / incidents to be broken down with more detail provided, e.g. violence / aggression toward staff.</i></p>	Andrea Prosser, Head Organisation Development	A further breakdown of the data on violence and aggression towards staff in the Council and schools for 2018/19 will be provided to Corporate Overview Scrutiny in January 2020.
9	<p><u>Bridging the Gap – Fees and Charges Strategic Business Review</u></p> <p>A Member referred to Bulky Waste Items and raised concerns around the health and safety aspect of items being left for long periods before collection.</p>	Scrutiny and Democratic Officer / Chair	Item to be referred to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
10	<p><u>Bridging the Gap – Income Recovery Strategic Business Review</u></p> <p>Members requested that the Credit Union be invited to present at a Member Briefing Session.</p>	Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources / Democratic Support Officer	A date to be arranged in the New Year.

Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee – Tuesday 19th November 2019

Action:

A member requested an update position on the implementation of the CCTV system.

Professional Response (22nd November 2019):

Policy and Legal Compliance

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council currently has 53 CCTV surveillance cameras deployed in seven zones across the borough (Ebbw Vale, Abertillery, Brynmawr, Tredegar, Cwm, Blaina and Llanhilleth train station). The cameras are recording in each of the zones and have been subject to the necessary Data Impact Privacy Assessments which have been approved and signed off by the Council's Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO). The process involved establishing and evidencing the pressing need for the cameras within each zone considering against key legislation e.g. Human Rights Act (Right to Privacy), the Protection of Freedoms Act, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The CCTV Policy and Operating Framework for the Council is being revised in line with the new GDPR Privacy Commissioner expectation.

Providing footage to Responsible Authorities

As of 22nd November there have been 25 requests for footage. The majority of these (16 requests) have been from Gwent Police related to specific incidents across the zoned areas. Two requests have been from insurance companies in relation to road traffic incidents in relation to insurance claims. Seven requests have been directly from members of the public via C2BG or email. Advice in the case of requests from members of the public is that the individual to contact the Police for consideration in relation to specific incidents.

Of these requests, the Council has been able to provide footage on 11 occasions. Footage has been supplied to the Police for incidents relating to assaults, burglaries, thefts and a death by dangerous driving.

Technical Implementation

All cameras have been installed in the following locations

- Abertillery.
- Tredegar including Cefn Golau.
- Ebbw Vale.
- Brynmawr.
- Blaina.

- Llanhilleth.
- Cwm

The installation of all equipment within the CCTV monitoring suite has been completed.

At present there are a number of cameras not transmitting images to the local recorders. The contractor has been made aware of this and as such the system has not been accepted as complete.

The contractor has been proactive in dealing with these issues and arranged for the manufacturer to attend Abertillery to investigate the reason for the transmission issues. The manufacturer has provided a report to the contractor on the findings and recommended remedial works required including replacing a wireless bridge, and recommissioning the installed units to limit interference from other Wi-Fi sources.

The report has been accepted by the contractor and remedial works will be undertaken. Upon completion of these works the manufacturer's technical team will remotely inspect the system to perform a final check and ensure the stability of the system. On completion and acceptance by technical officers that the transmission system is fully operation the contractor will undertake remedial works in all other areas.

Although the current data transmission system that links the local recorders to the monitoring suite is in line with the approved CCTV solution for operational reasons SRS have been engaged to provide a feasibility study of increasing the data speeds from the local recorders to the main monitoring suite.

Deployable Cameras

All cameras have been received and the method of image storage and downloading is being tested. This testing phase has highlighted a problem with downloading image due to a likely software issue (firmware update) which is currently being attended to.

Heavy duty brackets have been fabricated for mounting the deployable cameras on existing heavy duty CCTV or lighting columns. A mock-up of the installation was undertaken which noted Health and Safety and operational issues, adjustments have been made to take these into account.

Additional brackets are being fabricated to allow the cameras to be deployed on a standard street lighting columns.

Agenda Item 5

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: Corporate Overview

Date of meeting: **5 December 2019**

Report Subject: **Medium Term Financial Strategy & Bridging the Gap**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Nigel Daniels, Leader of the Council**

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	26/11/2019				05/12/19		12/12/19	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report is presented to Members to gain agreement of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and provides Members with the latest assessment of the Council's financial position over the next 5 years together with the proposed approach that the Council will take to address the financial challenges.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), is a key element within the Council's strategic planning framework. It is this financial framework which will support the Council's financial resilience and ensure it operates sustainably.
- 2.2 The MTFS brings together all known factors affecting the Council's financial position and forms the basis for decision making. The MTFS includes a forward look over the next five years to assess the spending requirements the Council is likely to face to deliver the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan and highlights the level of cuts (reducing or stopping services) that will need to be made to ensure the Council can set a balanced budget each year.
- 2.3 The MTFS & Bridging the Gap document proposes the approach that the Council will take to respond to the financial challenges we face over the next five year period. This will be an iterative process and one that will be developed and refined as our funding position from Wales Government becomes clearer and strategic business reviews are further developed and implemented.
- 2.4 As a consequence of the General Election on 12 December 2019, Wales Government has delayed the announcement of their budget and the provisional Local Government Settlement from the end of November to 16

December 2019, with the final settlement due 25 February 2020. This delay has implications for the budget setting process for 2020/2021 and planning for the actual budget cuts required to set a balanced budget.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 *To include Recommendation(s) / Endorsement by other groups, e.g. CMT/Committees/Other groups)*

Option 1 – Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee:-

- Consider and agree the MTFS;
- Note the forecast funding gap for the period of the MTFS;
- Agree the proposals within the Strategic Business Reviews attached at Appendix 1 of the MTFS.

Option 2 – Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee provide comments and challenge the assumptions in the MTFS and the progress made to Bridging the Gap Programme.

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

4.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a key element within the Council's strategic planning framework and supports the delivery of the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

5.1.1 Based upon the assumptions in the MTFS, a budget gap of £16.2m over the next 5 years is forecast as follows:

Table 1: MTFS Budget Gap

2020/2021 £m	2021/2022 £m	2022/2023 £m	2023/2024 £m	2024/2025 £m	Total £m
3.2	2.5	4.7	2.9	2.9	16.2

5.1.2 The Strategic Business Reviews have been progressing and an update on each review is provided at Appendix 1 of the MTFS. The overall financial achievement towards the budget gap is currently assessed as between £5.4m and £7.9m over the period of the MTFS as follows:

Table 2: Estimated Financial Achievement of the Strategic Business Reviews

	Estimated Achievement							
	2020/2021		2021/2022		2022/2023		2023/2024 & 2024/2025	
	£m		£m		£m		£m	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Strategic Business Reviews	1.5	2.1	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.8	0.8	1.3

- 5.1.3 Based on the current estimated achievement from the Strategic Business Reviews compared to the budget gap identified in the MTFS, there is a residual funding gap as follows:

Table 3: Residual Funding Gap

	Estimated Achievement							
	2020/2021 £'000		2021/2022 £'000		2022/2023 £'000		2023/2024 & 2024/25 £'000	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Residual Funding Gap	1.7	1.1	1.5	1.1	3.4	2.9	2.1	1.6

- 5.1.4 Bridging the Gap remains the council's medium/long term strategy to address the budget gaps currently identified. However for 2020/21, additional proposals are being developed across portfolios to mitigate the possible residual funding gap.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- 5.2.1 The assumptions built into the MTFS may change over time e.g. pay & inflation rates, service demand, Revenue Support grant and Council Tax levels.
- 5.2.2 The Council's current MTFS contains a number of assumptions which impact on the level of its income and expenditure. Changes in these assumptions can have a fundamental effect on the budget gap over the next 5 years. The impact of a 1% change on our main assumptions has been calculated and can be seen in the following table:-

Assumptions within the MTFS	+/- 1% £'000
ISB – Cash flat	428
AEF – Cash flat	1,100
Council Tax (4%)	333
Non-Employee Inflation (2%)	676
Pay (2%)	460

- 5.2.3 There is a risk that the current Strategic Business reviews do not identify sufficient financial benefits to Bridge the Gap in the medium to long term. Alternative proposals may therefore be required.
- 5.2.4 Progress against predicted delivery of Bridging the Gap proposals form part of the budget monitoring arrangements.
- 5.2.5 These risks are also mitigated by regularly reviewing the assumptions and revising the MTFS to reflect updated information. MTFS will be updated following announcement of the local government settlement.
- 5.3 ***Legal***
- 5.3.1 The Council must set a balanced budget on an annual basis. The MTFS & Bridging the Gap proposals will support this requirement.
- 5.4 ***Human Resources***
- 5.4.1 Not applicable for this report.
- 6. ***Supporting Evidence***
- 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***
- 6.1.1 The attached Medium Term Financial Strategy & Bridging the Gap provides information for Members consideration.
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
- 6.2.1 The MTFS & Bridging the Gap will support the Council in the development of its annual budgets which in turn will allow the Council to deliver services to the public.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
- 6.3.1 Officers & Members of the Council are involved in the development of the MTFS & Bridging the Gap proposals.
- 6.3.2 The proposals have been considered by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.3.3 Public engagement will be undertaken as part of the budget setting process.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
- 6.4.1 The MTFS forecasts the financial position of the Council for a 5 year period and provides information upon which the Council can plan for the future.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

- 6.5.1 Included within the Bridging the Gap programme is a proposal focussing on an evaluation of the long term impact of prevention and early intervention on reducing the requirement for high cost services and better outcomes for our most vulnerable residents.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

- 6.6.1 Achievement of the Bridging the Gap proposals will require cross Council working and collaboration / partnerships with other stakeholders.

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

- 6.7.1 Bridging the Gap proposals have been developed across the Council and are crosscutting in nature.

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

- 6.8.1 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on the opportunities taken forward as part of the Bridging the Gap proposals.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

The MTFs & Bridging the Gap will be considered by Scrutiny and Council as part of the Council's financial planning arrangements.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix A – Medium Term Financial Strategy*

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BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020/2021 to 2024/2025

Contents

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the Council's key financial planning document, is an integral part of the Council's Corporate Business Planning arrangements. The Strategy covers a 5 year period and is updated, reviewed and approved annually by Council. The Strategy will change over time as new opportunities, or policy decisions affect the financial position of the Council.
- 1.2 The MTFS includes a forward look over the next five years to assess the spending requirements the Council is likely to face to deliver its priorities and the level of cuts i.e. reducing or stopping services that will need to be made to ensure the Council can set a balanced budget each year. It provides guidance for officers and Members on the short, medium and longer term financial challenges and enables advance financial planning to be carried out, assisting the Council to understand and meet future demands. Planning now to meet known or anticipated changes in the future provides greater opportunity to phase in the impact of the changes.
- 1.3 The Strategy sets out how the Council will finance its priorities, having regard for the Corporate Plan.

2. **Corporate Plan**

- 2.1 The Council approved the Corporate Plan 2018-2022 in April 2018 and this sets out the Council's Vision, Values and Priorities and these are:

Our Core Vision:

Proud Heritage
Strong Communities
Brighter Future

Our Core Values:

Proud &
Ambitious

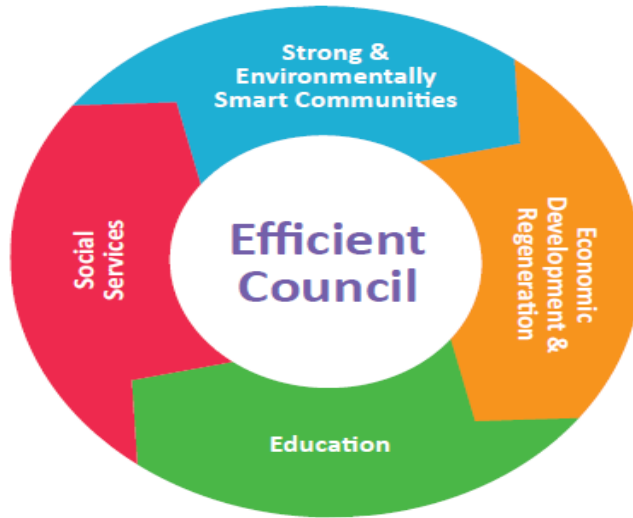
Trust &
Integrity

Working
Together

Fair &
Equitable

Raising
Aspirations

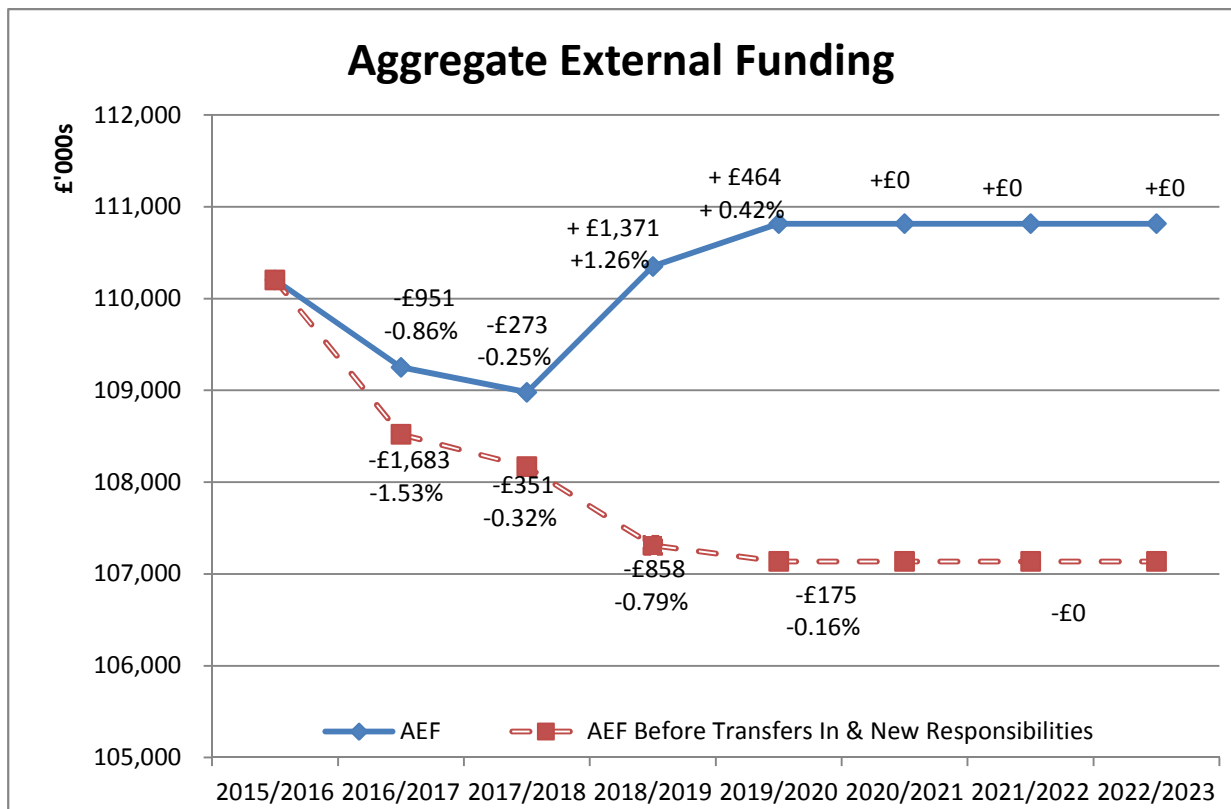
Our Priorities:



3. Revenue Settlement

- 3.1 The Council's revenue settlements for the period 2015/2016 to 2019/2020 and forecast of future settlements is shown in Figure 1. This illustrates the actual cash impact and the impact excluding transfers into the settlement for grants and new responsibilities.

Figure 1: Trend in Aggregate External Funding



- 3.2 The graph demonstrates that on a cash basis the funding received from Wales Government has increased overall by £610,000 between 2015/16 and 2019/20. However in real terms, when Grants transferring into the settlement and new responsibilities are excluded, the funding has reduced by in excess of £3m. This equates to a total of £9.7m over the last 4 years.

This when combined with increased demand for services and increasing costs have contributed to the financial challenge the council has faced in delivering its services to the residents of Blaenau Gwent.

3.3 **2019/2020 Revenue Budget**

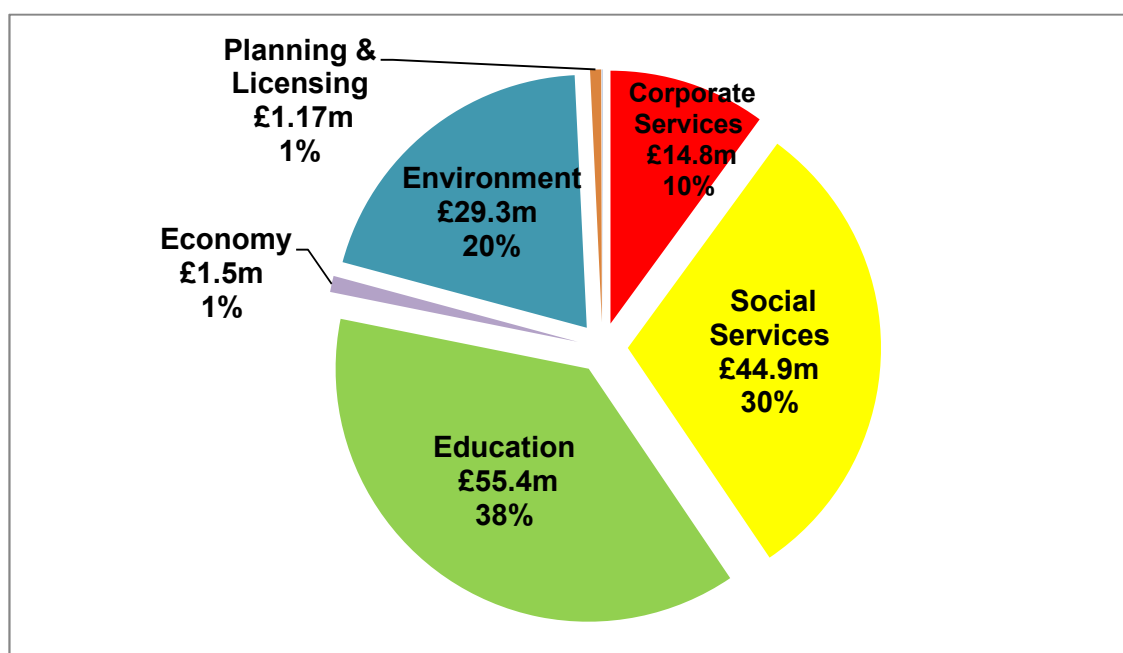
- 3.4 The revenue funding the Council received in 2019/2020 from Welsh Government was equivalent to a cash flat settlement when compared to 2018/2019. The all Wales increase in the Local Government Settlement was 0.2%.

- 3.5 In setting the 2019/2020 budget, the Council agreed:-

- All grants transferring into the Settlement would be transferred to the relevant service
- Additional funding of £1.43m to be built into the budget, over and above pay and price inflation, to address existing and emerging cost pressures
- Savings proposals of £3.4m
- No draw from the General Reserve
- Budget Contingency of £117,000
- Council Tax increase of 4.9%

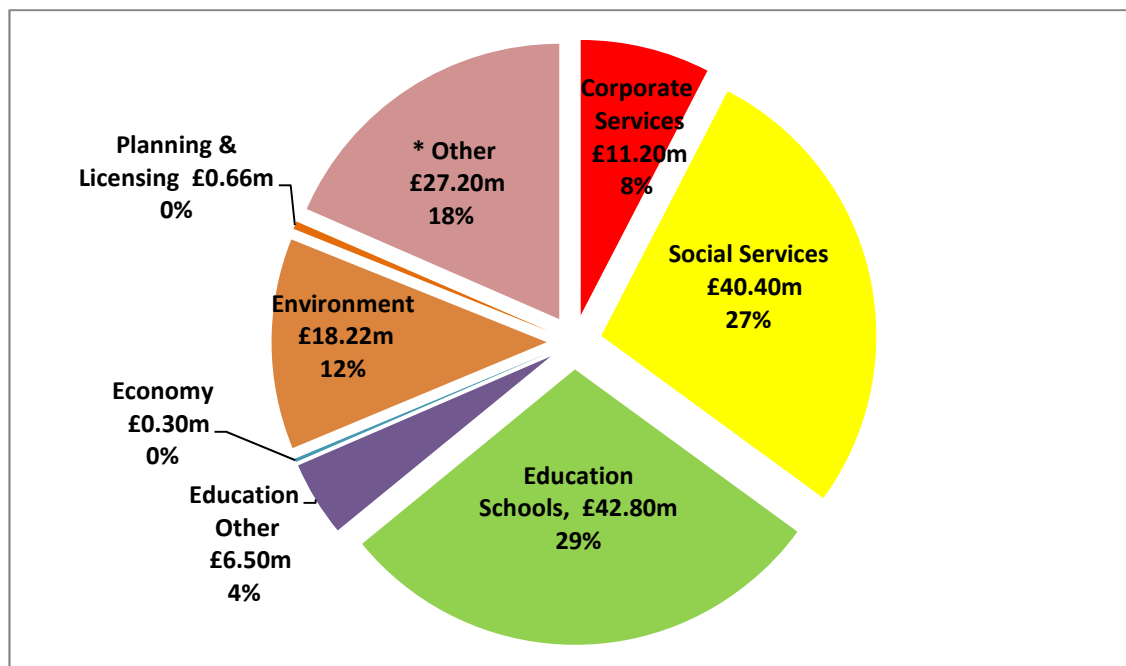
3.6 For the current financial year, the Council agreed a net budget requirement of £144.36m. The budget allocation across Portfolios is shown in figure 2 below:

Figure 2: 2019/2020 Revenue Budget per Portfolio



3.7 The graph shown in figure 3 shows the direct costs of delivering services across portfolios.

Figure 3: 2019/2020 Direct Service Costs per Portfolio

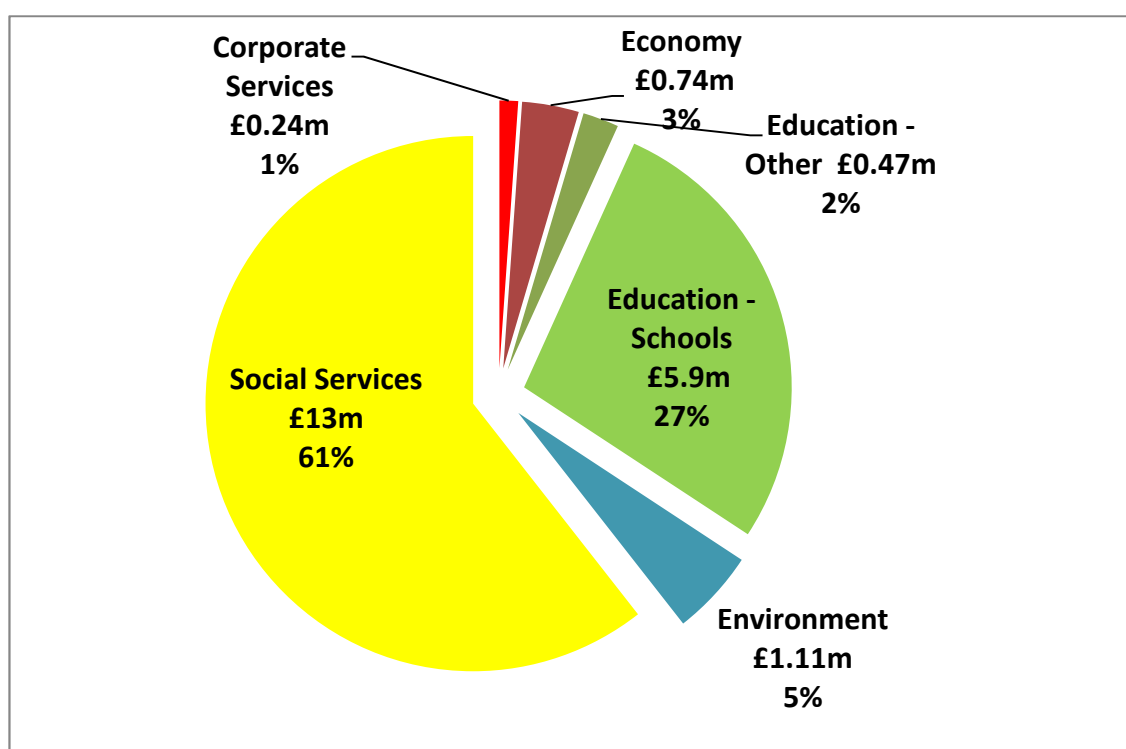


*Other includes:

- Capital charges - £8.4m
- Fire & Apprenticeship Levy – £3.7m
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme - £9m
- IT, Administration Buildings & Insurance - £5.1m
- Other - £1m

- 3.8 In addition, to the agreed net budget, the Council spends a further £22m per annum to support the delivery of services. The Council receives specific revenue grant to fund this expenditure. The assumption within the MTFS is that all grants will continue at the current level, and any reduction or termination of grant will be offset by a reduction in service expenditure.
- 3.9 Specific revenue grant allocations across Portfolios is shown in figure 4 below and it shows the current grant awards for 2019/2020 as at November 2019.

Figure 4: Specific Revenue Grant Funding Per Portfolio 2019/2020



4. **Review and Update of the MTFS**

- 4.1 The MTFS must be regularly reviewed to ensure preparedness from a financial planning perspective. The review will include considering and updating assumptions used in the Strategy to reflect new / emerging information for example inflation, changing demographics, service demand and policy changes etc.
- 4.2 The table below identifies the key assumptions included in the MTFS.

Table 1: Key Financial Planning Assumptions

	Financial Planning Key Assumptions
Pay	<p>Non-Teaching staff – 2% per annum pay increase have been assumed for all years.</p> <p>Teaching Staff – WG have agreed a 2.75% (5% for the lowest grades) increase to teachers pay effective from September 2019. A further 2% has been assumed for subsequent academic years.</p>

	<p>Incremental Pay Progression – the estimated cost of annual pay progression has been applied based on existing staffing</p> <p>Pension – 1% per annum increase on employers contribution to the pension scheme (non- teachers). An actuarial revaluation is due during 2019/2020.</p> <p>Teachers' Pension Scheme – Employers pension contributions increases by 7.12% from September 2019. It has been assumed that additional funding will be provided in the settlement to fund these costs.</p> <p>Vacancy Factor of 1.5% has been built into staffing budgets.</p>
Price Inflation (Non Schools)	<p>Price Inflation – 2% per annum increase has been applied to non-employee related spend (excluding utilities), this is in line with CPI projections. Actual increases will be considered on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Utilities – 4% per annum increase have been applied to utility costs based on the assumption used in the Re:Fit programme.</p> <p>Income Inflation – Increase in discretionary fees and charges in line with inflation of 2% per annum.</p> <p>Council Tax Reduction Scheme – This has been increased in line with the assumed increase in Council Tax of 4.0%.</p>
Schools Growth (ISB)	<p>No inflationary increase has been applied to the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), it is assumed to be cash flat for the term of the MTFS in line with the assumption for Welsh Government funding.</p> <p>Projected increases or decreases in pupil numbers will impact upon the ISB – for 2020/21 pupil numbers are predicted to increase by 35.5 (based upon September 2019 data).</p>

Specific Grant Funding	This has been assumed to remain at the 2018/2019 level (as identified on the Revenue Grants Register). It is assumed that any reduction in funding is offset by a reduction in expenditure.
Capital Financing	<p>Capital Financing – Capital financing costs reflect the schemes within the current capital programme, with borrowing costs for future schemes funded from either USB (Unhypothecated Supported Borrowing) or prudential borrowing. For 2022/2023, the MRP charge will increase to approximately £2.6m per annum from £0.75m in 2021/2022. However, this is still lower than to MRP charge under the previous policy of £3.8m.</p> <p>The revised MRP policy has enabled the MRP charges to be reduced by £15m during the period 2017/2018 to 2021/2022. The MRP figure is incorporated into the overall revenue budget through the Capital Adjustment. Taking into account the above, the forecast overall impact in the Capital Adjustment in 2022/2023, will be an increased cost of £1.8m per annum.</p>
Council Tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax increased by 4.9% in 2019/2020. For planning purposes it has been assumed that Council Tax will continue to increase by 4% per annum. (1% increase will generate approximately £333,000 additional funding). • No additional funding has been assumed at this stage from an increase in the Council Tax Base for 2020/2021 onwards.
Estimated Funding reduction (Aggregate External Funding)	<p>For 2019/20, Welsh Government day to day spending will increase by over 2%, in real term, the largest increase since before the start of austerity measures in 2010/11 (Wales Fiscal Analysis Briefing Note – Analysing the Welsh Government Final Budget 2019-2020 and Local Government Settlement)</p> <p>Across Wales the average Local Government settlement increased by 0.2% with Blaenau Gwent receiving a cash flat settlement, after allowing for a</p>

	number of grants transferring into the settlement. Welsh Government does not currently provide funding forecasts for future years – for planning purposes therefore a cash flat budget for Blaenau Gwent has been assumed for the next 5 years.
Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The financial modelling assumes no draw from General or specific reserves.

4.3 **Medium Term Financial Forecast**

- 4.4 The table below identifies the funding gap after applying the above assumptions to the 2019/2020 approved Estimates.

Table 2: Assessed Budget Gap

	Medium Term Budget Gap				
	2020/2021 £'000	2021/2022 £'000	2022/2023 £'000	2023/2024 £'000	2024/2025 £'000
Draft Expenditure					
Draft Estimates	147,310	151,575	154,075	155,950	155,675
Revenue Grants	22,170	22,170	22,170	22,170	22,170
Assumed Savings	0	(3,000)	(2,320)	(4,530)	(2,695)
Cost Pressures	700	350	1,000	1,000	1,000
Growth	395	180	0	0	0
Adjusted Draft Budget	170,575	171,275	174,925	174,590	176,150
Draft Funding					
AEF	110,815	110,815	110,815	110,815	110,815
Council Tax	34,590	35,970	37,410	38,910	40,465
Revenue Grants	22,170	22,170	22,170	22,170	22,170
Total Draft Funding	167,575	168,955	170,395	171,895	173,450
Budget Gap	(3000)	(2,320)	(4,530)	(2,695)	(2,700)
Contribution to Reserves	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)	(200)
Adjusted Funding Gap	(3,200)	(2,520)	(4,730)	(2,895)	(2,900)

- 4.5 The table identifies a potential funding gap of £16.2m over the next 5 years should the Council continue to deliver services in their existing form.

4.6 **Additional Costs Built into the MTFS**

- 4.7 The draft estimates have been prepared based on the approved 2019/2020 budget and increased in line with the assumptions included in Table 1, and these costs are detailed in the table below:

Table 3: Estimated Additional Costs Compared to 2019/20 Budget

	2020/2021 £'000	2021/2022 £'000	2022/2023 £'000	2023/2024 £'000	2024/2025 £'000
Pay and Pension Inflation	1,427	1,420	1,417	1,426	1,444
General Inflation –					
Third party Expenditure	1,353	1,378	1,407	1,437	1,467
Fees & Charges	(259)	(265)	(261)	(276)	(281)
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	362	376	391	407	423
Capital Charges	257	67	1,809	0	0
TOTAL	3,996	3,850	5,654	3,903	3,980

4.8 **New and Emerging Cost Pressures**

- 4.9 New and emerging Cost Pressures and Growth items have been assumed at £1m per annum for 2022/2023 onwards.
- 4.10 Cost Pressures and Growth items totalling £1m and £0.5m have been included for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 respectively. Cost pressures will be reviewed and updated to reflect new /emerging information for example the financial impact of Policy decisions and cost pressures emerging during the current financial year.

4.11 **Sensitivity Analysis**

- 4.12 The funding gap identified in table 2, is an indication of the financial challenge facing the Council. The assumptions used in the financial modelling may change over time. The following tables show the impact of changes on the Revenue Support Grant and potential decisions relating to Council Tax levels, pay & funding for Schools.

4.13 **Revenue Support Grant (RSG)**

- 4.14 Table 4 below indicates the impact on the funding gap based on a range of scenarios for Welsh Government funding as compared to the 2019/2020 base position. (Note: a +/-1% change in WG funding

equates to approximately £1.1m).

Table 4: Impact on RSG

	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Cash Flat (as per MTFS)	£3.2m	£2.5m	£4.7 m	£2.9m	£2.9m
Reduction of:					
1%	£4.3m	£3.6m	£5.8m	£4.0m	£4.0m
1.5%	£4.85m	£4.15m	£6.35m	£4.55m	£4.55m
2%	£5.4m	£4.7m	£6.9m	£5.1m	£5.1m
2.5%	£5.95m	£5.25m	£7.45m	£5.65m	£5.65m
3%	£6.5m	£5.8m	£8.0m	£6.2m	£6.2m
4%	£7.6m	£6.9m	£9.1m	£7.3m	£7.3m

4.15 **Council Tax**

- 4.16 The Council increased Council Tax in 2019/2020 by 4.9%. The Council Tax increase is assumed to be 4% each year through to 2024/2025 in the MTFS. The table below sets out the implications on the Council's resources on a range of scenarios on future changes:

Table 5: Impact of changes to Council Tax Assumptions

Council Tax	2020/2021 £'000	2021/2022 £'000	2022/2023 £'000	2023/2024 £'000	2024/2025 £'000
Increase in Council Tax Yield as per MTFS – 4% per annum	1,330	1,384	1,439	1,497	1,556
Increase in Council Tax Yield per year - 4%; 3.5%; 3%; 2.5% 2% (in respective years)	1,330	1,211	1,074	922	756
Impact on Funding Gap - Increase	0	+172	+365	+575	+800
3% increase per annum	998	1,028	1,058	1,090	1,123
Impact on Funding Gap - Increase	+332	+356	+381	+407	+433
6% increase per annum	1,995	2,115	2,242	2,377	2,519
Impact on Funding Gap - Decrease	-665	-737	-803	-880	-963

4.17 **Pay**

- 4.18 The MTFs provides for a pay award of 2% per annum totalling £920,000 for 2020/2021. A change in the assumption would impact as follows:

Table 6: Impact of Changes to Pay Assumptions

Assumption Change	+/- £'000
0.5%	230
0.6%	276
1.0%	460

4.19 **Individual School Budgets (ISB)**

- 4.20 The MTFs assumes no inflationary increase to the 2019/2020 ISB. However, at September 2019, there has been an overall increase in pupil demographics of 35 pupils, and the additional funding requirement has been included within Growth items.

The 2019/2020 ISB budget is £42.8m. A change in the assumption would impact on the funding gap as follows:

Table 7: Impact of changes to ISB Assumptions

Assumption Change	+/- £'000
0.5%	214
1%	428
2.0%	856

5. **BRIDGING THE GAP PROGRAMME**

- 5.1 The Council recognises the challenges that it faces in the short, medium and long terms and has developed a programme of Strategic Business Reviews to deal with potential gaps between anticipated funding and expenditure that aims to build financial resilience. Based on strategic themes our Bridging the Gap programme will identify savings opportunities, potential cost avoidance and new revenue streams. Designed to support a balanced budget it is also focussed on creating the conditions of a commercially minded council. This

includes seeking new revenue streams and ensuring resources are aligned to the strategic imperatives of the council. Following year on year funding reductions and the increased demand, the Council needs to redesign and reshape services in order to reduce costs and maximise income. The approach has a particular emphasis on:

- Maximising the potential of income generation and taking a clearly commercial approach where it is appropriate to do so;
- Re-procurement and re-negotiation of contracts;
- Exploiting the opportunity that digital transformation can provide;
- Making best use of our assets and property;
- Considering what action we can take to influence and reduce demand;
- Looking for opportunities to support residents to do more for themselves;
- Exploiting the opportunities to strengthen financial resilience by supporting growth in the borough

- 5.2 We will continue to ensure we have secured all efficiencies and are practicing robust 'housekeeping' throughout plus seeking potential to work differently through partnership and collaboration.
- 5.3 Table 8 and 9 provides a summary of the current Strategic Business Reviews, further detail on these proposals are attached as Appendix 1.
- 5.4 Table 8 highlights the current assessment of the range of savings that could be delivered between 2020/2021 and 2024/2025. For the period of this MTFS, this is currently assessed as between £5.4m and £7.9m
- 5.5 Table 9 highlights those reviews which are in the early stages of development with longer term outcomes anticipated.

Strategic Business Reviews											
			Estimated Achievement 2020/2021		Estimated Achievement 2021/2022		Estimated Achievement 2022/2023		Estimated Achievement 2023/2024 & 2024/2025		BRAG Status
Review	Corporate Priority	Scope	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	
<u>Maximising Income</u>											
Industrial Portfolio	Economic Development & Regeneration		100	100	100	150	100	100	0	50	
		To review the Council's Industrial Unit Portfolio to identify areas for improvement and opportunities for change to ensure the service operates to maximise income and income efficiency in our net income streams.									
Fees and Charges	Efficient Council		200	200	100	100	100	100	100	100	
		To review and develop an approach to the setting of fees and charges that reflects full cost recovery with options for an additional administration fee of approximately 30% where this is appropriate.									
Commercial Waste	Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities		23	23	64	64	96	96	0	0	
		To roll out a new Commercial Waste service borough wide. A capital bid was submitted to Welsh Government to purchase a new bespoke vehicle and receptacles. The bid was successful and secured £250,000 (Capital) for Blaenau Gwent's Commercial Waste Service. During the financial year 2019/2020, the Trade Waste Service will undergo a full revamp with an implementation date of 1 st April 2020.									

			Estimated Achievement 2020/2021		Estimated Achievement 2021/2022		Estimated Achievement 2022/2023		Estimated Achievement 2023/2024 & 2024/2025		BRAG Status
Review	Corporate Priority	Scope	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	
Income Recovery	Efficient Council		54	100							
		<p>To review current income recovery activities to ensure best / efficient practices in place.</p> <p>Objectives of the review will be to ensure:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income recovery policies are appropriate and include early intervention actions agreed Fees & charges are implemented payment in advance of service delivery (where appropriate) thereby avoiding costs of issuing invoices easy access to various payment methods use of technology is maximised 									
Commercial activity, investment and new income	Efficient Council				50	50	50	50	50	50	
		<p>This strategic review will focus on identifying additional commercial opportunities to supplement the current activities of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fees and charges Developing the Industrial Portfolio Current income from traded or shared services Property Investment inside the Borough and out of the Borough Investment in energy and low carbon activities Disposals or development of assets and property <p>The review will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service and baseline review of current commercial activities Opportunities to charge for discretionary services Opportunities for further traded or shared services. 									

			Estimated Achievement 2020/2021		Estimated Achievement 2021/2022		Estimated Achievement 2022/2023		Estimated Achievement 2023/2024 & 2024/2025		BRAG Status
Review	Corporate Priority	Scope	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	
<u>Maximising Resources</u>											
Third party expenditure – commissioning, procurement and contract management	Efficient Council		550	1,000	250	550	250	550	250	550	
		The Council holds a number of high value contracts with third party suppliers across all of its services. When re-procuring at the end of a contract all steps will be taken to ensure value for money is gained and savings achieved. Similarly during the life cycle of the contract, officer will attempt to make efficiencies where possible. Through a targeted approach to commissioning, procurement, contract and supplier management it is anticipated that savings can be identified.									
Assets and Property	Economic Development & Regeneration		130	210	100	210	150	210	0	0	
		The Council has a range of property assets that is maintains and has a cost pressure relating to its Corporate Landlord role. This review will undertake a strategic review of these assets to ascertain their value to the Council both in financial terms and what service value they afford. The aim of this strategic business review is to identify how best to maximise these assets to strengthen our balance sheet. It will consider the future use of the assets and identify those that may provide opportunities for development, commercialisation or sale. This review would include buildings and green spaces and will align with the growth strategy.									

			Estimated Achievement 2020/2021		Estimated Achievement 2021/2022		Estimated Achievement 2022/2023		Estimated Achievement 2023/2024 & 2024/2025		BRAG Status
Review	Corporate Priority	Scope	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	
Maximising Enablers											
Customer Experience	Efficient Council				50	50	50	50	50	50	
		Better customer experience should lead to reduced cost for the Council. This Strategic Business Review will consider the most frequent customer contact issues and review the end to end experience from the customer view. Changes and improvements in those experiences will be developed to enable customer to resolve their issues seamlessly, enabling them to self-serve as much as possible to ensure our resources are deployed for those you cannot self-serve.									
Work Place Transformation	Efficient Council		50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	
		Building on the first phase of work place transformation this strategic business review is design to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify cost savings in relation to ICT expenditure and contract management Review the print and telephony arrangements to reduce costs Implement a digital strategy to maximise the use of technology Realise the benefits of Office 365 and collaborative working tools and reduce duplication of other ICT solutions Enable remote working to release dependency on our building (linked to the assets and property Strategic Review) Develop our employee offer and become an employer of choice.									

			Estimated Achievement 2020/2021		Estimated Achievement 2021/2022		Estimated Achievement 2022/2023		Estimated Achievement 2023/2024 & 2024/2025		BRAG Status
Review	Corporate Priority	Scope	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	Low £000	High £000	
Growth & Investment Strategy											
Growth Strategy	Economic Development & Regeneration		220	320	150	150	300	300	100	100	
		Our Growth Strategy describes our ambition for developing our Borough and creating new communities. This will involve a programme of housing development that will see an impact on our revenue streams through increase Council Tax. This will contribute to the MTFS and is a critical element of building strong communities.									
Low Carbon	Efficient Council; Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities		138	138			200	350	200	350	
		Develop a Low Carbon Plan which sets out an ambitious vision and targets for BG to become a Low Carbon Borough and supports the corporate objectives of being a more Efficient Council and Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities; Scope should include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">Assessment of current carbon footprint to identify current good practice, gaps and opportunities to move towards being low carbon;Identify Council operations which can make a significant contribution towards a low carbon target – property, fleet, digital, energy, schools, housing – and a more efficient council, this will include where investment is needed to achieve outcomes;Community and Partner engagement to achieve a ‘Whole Borough’ approach utilising (for example) Public Service Board, Town & Community Councils, Youth Forum, Leisure Trust and other existing partnerships;Identify links to Regeneration Themes and projects taking place across the Region through CCRCD, Valleys Task Force and Tech Valleys;									
TOTAL ESTIMATED ACHIEVEMENT (@ November 2019)			1,465	2,141	914	1,374	1,346	1,856	800	1,300	

Table 9: Strategic Business Reviews			
Strategic Business Reviews			
Review	Corporate Priority	Scope	BRAG Status
<u>Maximising Resources</u>			
Use of external grants	Efficient Council	<p>This strategic business review is concerned with the bidding, receipt and deployment of additional grant funding that is available to the council and its partners. It is estimated that the organisation receives approximately £22m additional funding to support our priorities. This review will explore how the grants are utilised across the council to deliver outcomes for our residents. It will also review our governance arrangements to increase transparency and a One Council approach to seeking and using this additional funding.</p> <p>This review will also consider the impact of the removal of these grants and the risk placed on core funding.</p>	
<u>Managing Demand</u>			
Reducing demand by changing behaviours	Efficient Council	The Council's role in place shaping means that we need to encourage and enable communities to do as much as they can for themselves and to build resilience. This strategic business review will identify those services that experience high demand to identify any opportunities to work closely with our communities to encourage changes in behaviour. This has been done in many other locations to deal with issues relating to littering, payment of council tax and antisocial activities.	
Prevention and early intervention services	Social Services & Education	This review will focus on an evaluation of the long term impact of prevention and early intervention on reducing the requirement for high cost services and better outcomes for our most vulnerable residents.	
<u>Maximising Enablers</u>			
Using data to deliver better services	Efficient Council	Becoming a 21 st Century Council means using data and insight to drive decision making. This Strategic Business Review will identify opportunities for the sharing of data to design services and target our resources to deliver outcomes for our residents.	

- 5.4 As opportunities are identified through these strategic business reviews the MTFS will be updated to reflect the impact on each financial year. Some of the reviews will inevitably take longer to have an impact but will potentially yield higher returns in the latter years of this MTFS.

6. **MTFS – SCHOOLS**

- 6.1 For 2019/2020, the Individual Schools Budget received an uplift of 1.6%, and this was due to a number of specific grants transferring into the settlement to fund teachers' pay award (£288,000) and free school meals (£180,000) and an increase in pupil population and pensions (£200,000).
- 6.2 During the current financial year, schools have received a specific grant of £158,000 to fund the teachers' pay award, and Welsh Government have recently announced additional specific grant funding of £12.8m across Wales for 2019/2020 towards the pay award from September 2019. It has been assumed that this funding will continue however WG has given no indication as to whether this funding will continue into 2020/2021 or future years.
- 6.3 The table below highlights the potential cost increases in relation to school expenditure, compared to assumed funding increases over the next 5 years, based on the assumptions identified in table 1 above.

Table 10: Potential Cost Increases for Schools

	2020/2021 £'000	2021/2022 £'000	2022/2023 £'000	2023/2024 £'000	2024/2025 £'000
Expenditure					
Pay increases	1,240	1,300	1,350	1,420	1,490
Pension Increase – APT&C	100	105	110	110	110
Pension Increase – Teachers	1,480	0	0	0	0
Inflation – non pay	180	185	190	190	200
Inflation – Utilities	40	40	45	45	50
Total Expenditure Increase	3,040	1,630	1,695	1,765	1,850
Funding					
Proposed Increase in ISB	0	0	0	0	0
Pupil Demographics	395	0	180	0	150
Additional RSG (Grants transferred)	1,480	0	0	0	0
Total Funding Increase	1,875	0	180	0	150
Funding Gap	(1,165)	(1,630)	(1,515)	(1,765)	(1,700)

- 6.5 The table indicates that schools are potentially facing financial cost pressures of between £1.1 m and £1.8m per annum based on an annual cash flat budget for the ISB. This assumes that additional funding will continue to be provided by Welsh Government to mitigate the forecast additional costs from the increase in the employers' pension contributions for teaching staff.
- 6.6 School Balances have declined over the last few years, however in 2018/2019 there was an overall increase of £774,000, and this increase can be attributed to the specific grants schools received during the year and a decrease in the deficit balances of individual schools after implementing a number of actions to mitigate the deficit.

Table 11 – Actual School Balances (Surplus/ (Deficit)

Phase	2016/2017 £'000	2017/2018 £'000	2018/2019 £,000
Secondary	325	189	285
All Through	128	(847)	(762)
Primary	552	857	1,285
Special	(35)	81	245
TOTAL	970	280	1,054

7. **Reserves Strategy**

- 7.1 Financial resilience is a Council priority and this includes ensuring that reserves are adequate to be able to respond to unexpected events, emerging need or unforeseen budget pressures.
- 7.2 General reserves are unallocated amounts that enable the Council to meet non-specific and/or unforeseen financial liabilities.
- 7.3 The Council agreed a protocol for the management of general reserves in 2016, and this specifies a target level for general reserves of 4% of the last reported actual net revenue expenditure (as included in the Revenue Outturn return).
- 7.4 The level of the general reserve at 31 March 2019 is £5.894m, an in-year increase during the year of £0.412m. This outturn position represents 4.39% of net revenue expenditure as reported for 2018/19, exceeding the target by 0.39%.
- 7.5 During 2018/2019, a “Windfall” protocol was agreed by Council, whereby any in year windfall payments would be allocated directly to General Reserves in order to assist in strengthening the Council’s financial resilience and increase the general reserve.
- 7.6 Earmarked reserves are held by the Council to meet potential future expenditure on specifically identified risks, liabilities and commitments.
- 7.7 In 2015, a protocol was agreed for the establishment, retention, management, review and reporting of earmarked reserves. In addition to the statutory requirements to consider the adequacy of reserves when setting the budget and the extensive disclosures

made in the Statement of Accounts, member scrutiny has been enhanced by the preparation of detailed quarterly monitoring reports. The Chief Officer Resources also holds regular meetings during the year to consider the ongoing requirement and value of earmarked reserves held.

- 7.8 The level of earmarked reserves has declined from £21.437m at 1 April 2012 to £6.57m at 31 March 2019 (a reduction of £14.87m or 69.4%). This decrease in reserves highlights the application of sums for their intended purposes and to some extent the impact of reduced levels of funding for the Authority as a consequence of austerity.
- 7.9 In setting the 2019/20 budget, no draw down from the general reserve has been planned. A contingency of £117,000 has been built into the budget which should increase the general reserve further by March 2020.
- 7.10 It is the Council's intention to maintain the general reserves at a minimum level of 4% and increase the overall level of reserves over time to support the Council's financial resilience.
- 7.11 Given the current level of the General Reserve, it is not planned to utilise any of this reserve to balance the annual budget. The establishment of a budget contingency within the annual budget setting process is proposed of £200,000 per annum, to allow the replenishment of the Council's useable reserves.

This would result in an increase to reserves of £1m over the period of the MTFS.

8. **RISKS**

- 8.1 The Corporate Plan, MTFS and the Bridging the Gap programme are designed to complement each other. They provide the narrative that describes the outcomes we plan to deliver, the financial envelope we intend to work within, and our approach to deliver a balance budget in 2021/2022 and beyond whilst creating the conditions for improved financial resilience.
- 8.2 The risks identified with the Medium Term Financial Strategy are:

1. Exiting the European Union

There is a risk of a slow-down in the UK economic growth arising from exiting the EU with or without a deal. The impact could include an increase in both costs and demand for services.

The impact on the wider economy will depend to a large extent on the precise terms of the withdrawal agreement. It is not considered necessary at this point in time to set aside financial resources in the MTFS to assist in such a scenario. However this will need to be carefully monitored in the subsequent weeks/months.

2. Uncertainty around future WG Funding levels

The absence of any future year guidance on levels of likely settlement from WG.

3. MTFS Assumptions

The budget gap is based on a number of assumptions and any changes may have a significant impact on the funding gap.

The assumptions are reviewed and any potential changes monitored. Section 4.11 to 4.22 above models the impact on the funding gap for a range of scenarios.

4. Achievement of Bridging the Gap proposals

The achievement of planned savings is monitored as part of the budget monitoring & reporting process. Corrective action is taken where adverse variances are identified.

5. Grant Funding

The MTFS assumes that grant funding remains constant. Any decrease in funding or the termination of grant programmes could have a significant impact for the Council, particularly for those grants that are supporting service provision such as Families First, Flying Start, and ICF etc.

Welsh Treasurers works closely with the WLGA and Welsh Government to ensure that grants are maintained or transferred into the settlement.

Where grants are reduced, Services will need to ensure that expenditure is reduced in line with the grant.

6. Volume of Demand

Increased demand for services poses significant risks to planning and this will be monitored.

Document History			
Author	Version		Date
G. Taylor	Draft v1	Corporate Overview	10 July 2019
		Council	11 July 2019
G. Taylor	Draft v2	Informal Executive/CLT	20 November 2019
G. Taylor	Final v1	Corporate Overview	5 December 2019
		Council	12 December 2019

Bridging the Gap Theme		Industrial Portfolio Review								
Bridging the Gap Proposal:		Industrial Portfolio Review							Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:		Cllr David Davies, Executive Member Economy & Regeneration								
Officer Proposal Sponsor:		Ellie Fry Head of Regeneration & Development								
Impact on other Portfolios:										
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	100	100	100	150	100	100	0	50	-	-
<p>Strategic Business Review:</p> <p><i>Work undertaken in phases 1 – 5 to identify opportunities and risks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A specialist industrial property consultant has been procured to assist the project team with the recommendations that were identified through the CIPFA report. The primary action from the work so far is to expedite the capital work required to be done to improve the business units and their environs which enables us to rent all/more of the units and begin service charges. Alongside the capex work we would need to take a policy change through Council to enable us to use the portfolio for commercial and economic purposes. This will then unlock the accounting part of the project which will also require change to enable management of the portfolio through a trading account. The capex work is being estimated at the moment with a view to spending the capital before the end of the financial year. The value of the portfolio will improve overall by £300-£350 per annum with the improvements completed. Other savings through recharges will also be possible once the capex work has been completed. 										
<p>Opportunities identified:</p> <p><i>Potential opportunities identified that give indicative figures referenced above</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategic opportunities are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing the policy under which we hold the industrial units to that one where principally they are held for commercial purposes This will allow us to manage the portfolio differently, improve the revenue to maximise the current income we could obtain from the portfolio – amounting to around £300 - £350 extra per annum once the trading account, etc is in place. Undertake the backlog in work required to the portfolio with the Brexit Resilience funding both units and landscape/environment Review all service charges and insurance re-charges to pass onto tenants. 										
<p>Challenges and risks</p> <p><i>What needs to happen to realise the opportunities and stretch the impact to deliver phases 5 - 8?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of work required to be done to enable the portfolio to achieve its target income. Further technical work to unlock opportunities around service charging and rates. Short term compliance challenges that require further funding around ensuring units are statutorily compliant - asbestos, electrical and energy performance – to be addressed in the short term plan to enable the longer term actions to happen. Setting a realistic budget for future years' maintenance to continue to improve the value of the stock. Long term efficient and effective management of the units for better customer satisfaction which can offer BG a better return on its investment - currently risk is that we are doing neither. To satisfy this risk will be a longer term cultural change due to the complexity of the challenges and risks. 										
Invest to save options:										

What additional capacity /investment would further mitigate the risks and maximise the opportunities? How would this investment be set off by additional savings or cost avoidance?

- External expertise has been brought in to put together a detailed assessment of the portfolio and to enable the Council to judge its value. This can be offset through the increased income from the portfolio by around £300 - £350 per annum – resulting in approximately £1m income p/a.
- External expertise is currently in place to assist with shaping the new role(s) and future management of the portfolio. This is an existing role in the Council but will be reshaped to fit the need
- Additional investment will be required each year to ensure that once the portfolio begins to improve that there is sufficient funding to continue the correct levels of maintenance and management. This figure and the management model are yet to be finalised.
- The opportunity to invest in the industrial portfolio to increase the rental value of the units has been taken up. Until the financial treatment of the portfolio is changed the yield is unable to be calculated however we understand that the overall value of the portfolio could go from £7.4m to £12m.
- A future option includes the potential for BG to invest in further industrial developments, as part of a mixed portfolio, and increase returns into BG's overall budget.

Actions:

What will happen during phases 6 – 8 including, involvement of Executive sponsor.

- Finish identification and procurement of the capital work
- Continue operational improvements in the management of the portfolio
- Work with the external consultants to deliver the policy, management and financial changes required.
- Work to deliver the identified opportunities to feed into the MTFS

Executive decisions:	Policy, financial management, budget
Scrutiny Route:	Yes
Consultation:	
EqlA:	

Bridging the Gap Theme			Maximising Income							
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Fees and Charges						Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:			Executive Member – Corporate Services							
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Chief Officer Commercial							
Impact on other Portfolios:			All							
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	200	200	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<p>Strategic Business Review:</p> <p>This Strategic Business Review has focussed on checking that agreed uplifts in fees and charges have been applied, the fees and charges reflect full cost recovery where this is appropriate and that all options for applying fees and charges are explored to provide choice to members.</p> <p>A full cost recovery calculator has been established and tested against a range of fees and charges.</p>										
<p>Opportunities identified:</p> <p>The Strategic Business Review has identified four options for the future:</p> <p>Applying stretch income targets where over achievement is regularly reached;</p> <p>Applying full cost recovery calculator across all fees and charges to identify where the Council is subsidising services;</p> <p>Applying a variety of inflationary uplifts where the market would allow - many of the current fees and charges are based on an assessment of economic activity in the community which has changed;</p> <p>Seek new income for services that are currently provided free but where the Council has the discretion to charge for.</p>										
<p>Challenges and risks</p> <p>The fees and charges Strategic Business Review is closely linked to the income recovery Strategic Business Review. Our view of the community's ability to meet increased fees and charges needs to be considered alongside the unintended consequences of applying fees and charges to currently subsidised or free provision. Scenarios need to be presented to members so that they can make choices in line with their strategic objectives and knowledge of the community.</p>										
<p>Invest to save options:</p> <p>None identified at this time.</p>										
<p>Actions:</p> <p>Review of current fees and charges levels with budget holders and service providers to identify opportunities for stretch targets;</p> <p>Application of the full cost recovery model to understand any levels of subsidy for services;</p> <p>Modelling the application of 1%, 2%, 3% and 4% inflation levels on current fees and charges;</p> <p>Identification of new income from areas where fees and charges are not applied but where services are provided.</p>										
Executive decisions:	MTFS and Bridging the Gap Programme									
Scrutiny Route:	Corporate Overview Scrutiny – Autumn 2019									
Consultation:	Any changes in Fees and Charges would be included in consultation processes with the public as part of consultation in relation to setting the budget									
EqlA:	Screening to be undertaken prior to any variations in setting of fees and charges									

Bridging the Gap Theme			Maximising Income							
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Commercial Waste						Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:			Executive Member – Environment							
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Richard Crook							
Impact on other Portfolios:										
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	23	23	64	64	96	96				
<p>Strategic Business Review:</p> <p>To roll out a new Commercial Waste service borough wide. The current Commercial waste Service is not fit for purpose and needs to be totally revamped. As a result, a capital bid was submitted to Welsh Government to purchase a new bespoke vehicle and receptacles. The bid was successful and secured £250,000 (Capital) for Blaenau Gwent's Commercial Waste Service.</p> <p>During the financial year 2019/2020, the Trade Waste Service will undergo a full revamp with an implementation date of 1st April 2020. (Appendix 1) will give an overview of the key actions during the next 12 months in order for us to generate additional income for the Council.</p>										
<p>Opportunities identified:</p> <p>During the financial year 2019/2020, the Trade Waste Service will undergo a full revamp with an implementation date of 1st April 2020. (Appendix 1) will give an overview of the key actions during the next 12 months in order for us to generate additional income for the Council.</p>										
<p>Challenges and risks:</p> <p>There is a risk that by introducing a revised pricing strategy, existing Trade Waste customers may decide to purchase a Trade Waste Service from another waste operator.</p> <p>There is a risk that the Authority is in breach of legislation if it does not offer a Trade Waste service for the collection of separate materials.</p> <p>There is a risk that the improvements do not generate the modelled increases in revenue.</p>										
<p>Invest to save options:</p> <p>Non at this time</p>										
<p>Actions:</p> <p>To implement a Trade Waste Collection Service from April 2020</p>										
Executive decisions:	MTFS and Bridging the Gap Programme									
Scrutiny Route:	Community Services Scrutiny 2020/21									
Consultation:	With staff affected by changes in contract arrangements									
EqlA:	Screening to be undertaken prior to the commencement of any new service									

Bridging the Gap Theme			Maximising Income							
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Income Recovery						Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:			Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader of the Council							
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Rhian Hayden, Chief Officer Resources							
Impact on other Portfolios:			Crosscutting proposals across various income budgets							
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	54	100								
<p>Strategic Business Review:</p> <p>The scope of the review is to review current income recovery activities to ensure best / efficient practices are in place to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income is maximised Recovery policies are appropriate & include early intervention actions Customers have easy access to a variety of payment methods including direct debit & other electronic means Payment in advance of service delivery (where appropriate) to minimise administration costs of issuing invoices and subsequent recovery costs Use of technology is maximised Costs of collection is reduced <p>For Council Tax, Housing Benefits & Sundry Accounts current levels of debt, historic write off of debts and debtor profiles have been analysed (against ACORN classifications) to identify potential measures that could be implemented to minimise debt. This analysis has identified a strong correlation between those households with Council debt with those geographical areas classified as having moderate means, striving families & struggling estates.</p> <p>Discussions with external stakeholders has also highlighted an increased number of BG residents approaching them for money management & debt advice – suggesting that some families are struggling to pay their bills.</p> <p>Current systems and operating policies are also being reviewed to measure their appropriateness and what changes can be implemented to improve efficiency of the activity.</p> <p>Visits to other LA's have taken place – by and large collection practices are very similar.</p> <p>Some process / procedural differences have been identified which may improve the efficiency of collection activity.</p>										
<p>Opportunities identified:</p> <p>Potential opportunities identified that give indicative figures referenced above</p>										
<p>To support residents it is proposed that working with partners the Council:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take a proactive approach to enable Blaenau Gwent residents to maximize their income, by advising them of potential entitlements e.g. Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Council Tax Reduction Scheme encourage struggling individuals to seek advice and support <p>To identify and test the most suitable method of engagement / support with residents a pilot scheme is to be implemented within the Flying Start Hub in Cefn Golau</p> <p>Colleagues within Flying Start, Housing Benefit & Revenues will develop the potential approaches and test their effectiveness prior to roll out further.</p>										
<p>This could increase in year council tax collection rate (potential one year cash flow benefit).</p>										

<p>Develop Corporate Income Recovery Policy Review CTRS policy and backdating arrangements Improve efficiency of collection processes to 1)Reduce levels of write off 2) Reduce administration costs. Areas already identified are:-</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing payment in advance of service delivery (where appropriate) implementing an online self-serve module for customers encourage greater take up of direct debits or other electronic payment methods Allocate Council Tax payments to current debt rather than past debt 	
<p>The above changes should enable resource efficiencies to be made.</p>	
<p>Challenges and risks What needs to happen to realise the opportunities and stretch the impact to deliver phases 5 - 8? Challenges : The Income Recovery Strategic Business Review is closely linked to the Fees & Charges Strategic Business Review. Householders to be supported to help them manage & meet their liabilities – this may involve signposting to other organisations or identifying potential entitlements such as CTRS etc. Review of CTRS policy to ensure backdating arrangements are appropriate. Increased use of digital means to correspond / interact with customers.</p> <p>Risks: Increased entitlement to CTRS may result in a cost pressure for that budget.</p>	
<p>Invest to save options: What additional capacity /investment would further mitigate the risks and maximise the opportunities? How would this investment be set off by additional savings or cost avoidance? None identified currently.</p>	
<p>Actions: What will happen during phases 6 – 8 including, involvement of Executive sponsor. Continued review of Council Tax Collection Activities (with CIPFA) CTRS Policy to reviewed / revised Corporate Income recovery Policy to be developed Resident support pilot to be implemented</p>	
Executive decisions:	Revised / New policies to be introduced
Scrutiny Route:	Corporate Overview Scrutiny – Autumn 2019
Consultation:	Revised / New Policy development
EqIA:	To be undertaken during policy revision / development

Bridging the Gap Theme			Maximising Income								
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Commercial Activities						Ref:		
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:			Executive Member – Corporate Services								
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Chief Officer Commercial								
Impact on other Portfolios:			All								
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25		
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
	-	-	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	
Strategic Business Review: This Strategic Business Review is closely linked to the review of fees and charges. During this phase the focus has been on understanding those services that are effectively trading as opposed to raising income through the application of fees or charges. With support from APSE a core officer group considered the scope of truly commercial activity and this will inform the future Commercial Strategy.											
Opportunities identified: Develop a critical understanding of the organisational culture and the extent to which it supports an entrepreneurial approach Governance framework for assessing commercially viable opportunities. Detailed analysis examining local markets and developing live business cases – take trading initiatives to business case stage Business case development identifying legal, financial, commercial, strategic objectives, operational considerations and risks Assess strategic potential and identify obstacles and barriers to progress.											
Challenges and risks The strategic intention behind becoming a commercial council needs to be explored and agreed with Members and Senior Leaders to establish corporate objectives for trading and charging. The organisation needs to understand the conditions for successful commercial activity, the strategic potential and identify obstacles and barriers to progress. There is a danger in progressing with trading initiatives without fully formed and tested business cases being in place plus an appreciation of the impact of trading on local businesses where the Council will be competing aggressively in the market.											
Invest to save options: Support is requested to undertake a diagnostic assessment of commercial opportunities. This would involve on-site meetings with key service managers to establish the extent of and potential for trading followed by a report back to the authority leadership. The aim is to assist corporate planning by providing a clear picture of the part that external income generation is able to play in helping meet funding pressures. This would be followed up with further development work at an operational level.											
Actions: Strengthen the Strategic Procurement Board to become a Strategic Board covering Commissioning, Commercial Activities and Procurement. Agree with the organisational conditions needed to support commercial activity. Undertake a diagnostic assessment of commercial opportunities.											
Executive decisions:	Agreement of the Commercial Strategy and focus. MTFS and Bridging the Gap Programme										
Scrutiny Route:	Corporate Overview Scrutiny 2020/21										
Consultation:	With staff affected by increased commercial activities and potential markets										
EqlA:	Screening to be undertaken prior to any commercial activities are put in place in line with the creation of the business case										

Bridging the Gap Theme			Maximising Resources							
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Third Party Expenditure						Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:			Executive Member – Corporate Services							
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Chief Officer Commercial							
Impact on other Portfolios:			All							
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		550		1,000		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	550	1,000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	550	1,000	250	550	250	550	250	550	250	550
Strategic Business Review: <p>The focus of this phase was to identify how much, on what and with whom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full review of all third party expenditure through examining creditors records for 2017/18 and 2018/19, review of the contracts register and examination of contracts held. • Analysis of data and categorisation • Identification of deep dive areas. <p>Key findings:</p> <p>£80m of controllable spend</p> <p>78,000 separate transactions with 3,320 unique creditors</p> <p>75% of total Council spend (>£100k) is with less than 4% of suppliers, while payments to 74% of suppliers (<£5k) account for only 2.5% of total expenditure</p> <p>89% of all payments are below the compulsory procurement threshold for DMT approval (£25,000) and account for 10% of total expenditure</p> <p>55% of payments are below £1000 in value (each) and 47% below £500</p> <p>863 creditors are registered as suppliers since 2007 (> 12 years) and 557 new creditors set up in FY18/19 alone</p>										
Opportunities identified: <p>Manage cost control through tightening contracting arrangements particularly in relation to terms, conditions and liabilities i.e. inflation up lift.</p> <p>Prioritise supplier negotiations and develop a negotiation strategy for contracts due for renewal in 2020/21.</p> <p>Explore with contractors discounts and rebates for different payment schedules.</p> <p>Where appropriate convert agency staff into permanent or temporary posts to reduce additional cost to service including agency fees.</p> <p>Introduce invoice discounting incentives for early payment</p> <p>Strengthen the alignment of spend to strategic priorities and categorise expenditure against need, identifying, at one end of the spectrum, spend that is based on choice and that we could continue to support, and at the other, spend on activities that we must do to satisfy a basic customer need. This will give rise to options of where and how much to invest in different services, initiatives and activities and give members the evidence to support their decision making.</p>										
Challenges and risks <p>The complexity of the data and the visibility of the contractual arrangements that are in place means that this requires a deep analysis of information, match data from different sources and detailed reviews of current contract. Alongside this is the need to establish the commissioning intentions for 2020/21 and beyond with current and future suppliers.</p>										
Invest to save options: <p>Our ability to move at pace and to work through the data to reach the opportunities has been achieved through the investment in external expertise. This has been funded through an earmarked Procurement reserve. To maintain this pace and focus further support is required and this would be based on a risk and reward contract with payment on results.</p>										

Actions: Deep dive into the use of agency staff to reduce fees being paid to temporary recruitment agencies; Review of discount incentives to utilise our cash flow to drive cost reductions; Reconciliation of creditors expenditure to known contracts to facilitate negotiation of better payment terms; Review of contracts where there has been higher values paid to facilitate negotiations with suppliers; Implement No Purchase Order No Pay as a means of controlling costs.	
Executive decisions:	MTFS and Bridging the Gap Programme
Scrutiny Route:	Corporate Overview in Autumn 2019
Consultation:	With staff affected by changes in contract arrangements
EqlA:	Screening to be undertaken prior to any contract variations being progressed

Bridging the Gap Theme			Maximising Resources								
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Property and Land review						Ref:		
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:											
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Richard Crook								
Impact on other Portfolios:			Education/Social Services/Resources/Environment								
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25		
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
	130	210	100	210	150	210					
Strategic Business Review:											
The review of property and land included all council owned property, all property used by the Council on a lease/rental basis and all land owned by the Council. The industrial property portfolio will be covered by a separate review.											
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The pipeline of property disposals has been modelled to test the assumptions in the MTFS in terms of receipts and this has confirmed levels of receipts that can be built into the MTFS• The costs of the operational and non-operational buildings has been reviewed with a focus on where there are high levels of spend and where the trends in terms of costs where not as expected• The review has identified the cost around the Civic centre and Anvil Court need to be considered in terms of existing and future costs and the potential to take a new look at the councils core provision.• Business rates in terms of the increase in cost to the council whilst the council estate has declined has been drilled into further to understand the pattern which sits behind this trend• The property used by services outside of the core provision has been identified and will be reviewed in terms of opportunities for further consolidation• The property that the councils rents for service delivery has also been identified and the lease terms are being assessed in terms of any scope for change• The Councils land holdings have been reviewed in terms of income from rental, why we are holding land and the costs of the holding exercise											
Opportunities identified:											
Proposal 1 – To dispose of all non-operational buildings currently being held by the Council having regard to any grant clawback or legal obligations that may be in place which may affect its saleability. This could secure capital receipts as well as providing savings to the corporate landlord budget in holding costs as well as reducing/avoid rates on the premises (short term)											

Proposal 2 – To ensure the rates paid by the Council are minimised by reviewing the accuracy of current rates payments, and the rating of property in the Council’s portfolio and to introduce a systematic approach to regularly review the rates paid on Council premises. The Council are currently securing specialist advise in this area in order to manage its rates position more efficiently.-

Proposal 3 – To review the Council’s occupation of properties held on a leasehold basis to establish whether there are any opportunities to reduce payments to landlords. The Council are currently securing specialist advice in this area (short to medium term)

Proposal 4 – To review the Council’s current and future requirements for office and civic space to meet forecast future requirements

Proposal 5 – To increase the income derived for land and other assets. All of the Council’s land holdings need to be assessed to identify why land is being held, and the values to the Council in terms of income streams through a series of area reviews. This is an opportunity to not just potentially increase income but to divest the Council of land that may have long term maintenance liabilities(medium term)

Proposal 6 – To utilise capital receipts received from the disposals to create an investment fund for use in bringing residential sites forward and other income generating opportunities.

Proposal 7 – To secure the energy savings delivered by the ReFit investment in the Councils estate

Challenges and risks

There are a number of risks associated with the report including:

1. The market values associated with the disposals may not be realised if the property market takes a downward trend over the next 6 months as a result of the current uncertainty facing the UK economy. The mitigation is to move quickly and review the prices achieved through disposal and determine whether a holding strategy is required to allow the market to recover. This would need to be balanced against the costs of holding the property

<p>2. The review of the Councils rates position may not yield the maximum levels of reductions available to the Council. The mitigation is to use specialist advice and to risk assess each opportunity to maximise the chance of a successful rates appeal.</p> <p>3. The Council may not be able to secure reductions in the levels of rent paid to Landlords. The mitigation is to secure the specialist advice to support the Councils review and to ensure the correct negotiation strategy.</p> <p>4. The risks associated with the development of options for consideration around new office space will be identified in a separate report. At this stage the risk is in not considering a new facility when partners may be considering their property options in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>5. There is a risk that the Council does not have the capacity to complete the review of the wider land holding and this will be mitigated by looking to undertake these on a structured area based approach.</p> <p>6. The risk around using the savings from the REFIT relate to the using of funds which could have been put towards future energy costs, this is mitigated to a point as the Councils position is safeguarded with the guaranteed returns within the contract and the fact that the council will also benefit from further savings if the energy prices rise.</p> <p>7. There is a risk that if the Council does not create an Investment fund for use in further investments that can generate a return on the investment then income generating opportunities may be lost. This can be mitigated by Council decisions around and Investment Strategy and how it would be funded</p>	
Invest to save options:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional specialist support will be needed to negotiate office rent reductions and business rate reductions • Space and business planning support will be required for the detailed review of corporate office space requirements and in the business case preparation • External review of our Asset Management Plan to set longer term opportunities
<p>Actions:</p> <p>Agreement on the Corporate Property approach in line with Exec/CLT</p>	

discussion Appointment of a Property advisor to negotiate on office rent Appointment of a Business Rates specialist	
Executive decisions:	
Scrutiny Route:	
Consultation:	
EqlA:	

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Bridging the Gap Theme			Maximising Resources							
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Use of External Grants						Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:										
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Head of Governance and Partnerships							
Impact on other Portfolios:			All							
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Strategic Business Review: <p>The strategic review of grants is to identify the bidding, receipt and deployment of additional grant funding that is available to the Council and its partners. It is estimated that the organisation receives approximately £22m additional funding to support its priorities. The review explores how the grants are utilised across the Council to deliver outcomes for residents. The work includes reviewing governance arrangements to increase transparency and a One Council approach to seeking and using this additional funding. The review also considers the impact of the removal of these grants and the risk placed on core funding.</p> <p>This aim of the review is to ensure that we have a greater understanding of the impact and added value that the grants bring to Blaenau Gwent. The review considers how to maximise the benefits of the grants through close working across all services. It is anticipated that the review may also provide insight and identify opportunities for lobbying to WG for the release of additional funds relevant to Blaenau Gwent. In 2018, the Wales Audit Office carried out a further Financial Resilience review focussed on how effectively the Council maximises its funding opportunities and contains spending demands. The review concluded that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council needed to develop a stronger financial culture to remain financially resilient. This included a better, more strategic use of grants. • The review found that ‘there was no corporate coordination of grant applications and no central record of grants claimed’. 										
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of potential areas of duplication/aligned work/opportunities to work with others, need to be further explored • Need to integrate the review of grants into MTFs and other Bridging the Gap reviews e.g. prevention and intervention • Challenges and risks <p>A number of key risks have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole Council approach needed to effectively manage grants strategically alongside other funding streams including integration of applications for grants into the budget setting process; • Need to consistently apply the approach on how grants are reviewed to ensure they maximise outcomes- some examples of where this is done but also recent funding streams/bids appearing that need to be knitted in • Better understanding and organisational insight needed, including spend profiles, relationship with core funding,% of the grants supporting outcomes/service delivery and staffing alignment to corporate priorities • Ongoing maintenance of central records of potential and successful grant applications needs to be established to support an ongoing strategic overview of this funding stream; 										
Invest to save options: None identified at this time										

Actions:

Next steps agreed By CLT

In response to the key considerations it is proposed that:

- A phased approach is taken to review each area
- A consistent methodology is applied, working with the service areas and Resources;
- Phase 1: integration of approach to other Bridging the Gap reviews, using learning from The review of the Children and Communities Grant (CCG) completion April 2020. CCG is part of the overall strategic review of grants and is included in the governance arrangements and reporting to Council. A CCG Strategic Review Board has been established. A logic mapping exercise has been undertaken to identify all activity involved in the delivery of the 7 workstreams associated to the CCG which resulted in clear areas of review to be taken forward. This included a review of services where potential duplication can be avoided or efficiencies can be achieved.
- Phase 2 Economy and Environment;
- Phase 3 Adult Social Services, ICF;
- Identify a sustainable way forward for maintaining and reviewing grant income and expenditure.

Executive decisions:	
Scrutiny Route:	Joint report with head of Children services on CCG review to COS Feb 2020
Consultation:	TBC
EqlA:	

Bridging the Gap Theme			Maximising Enablers								
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			behavioural insights					Ref:			
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:			Councillor Nigel Daniels								
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Head of Governance and Partnerships								
Impact on other Portfolios:			All								
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25		
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
	-	-	-	-	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	

Strategic Business Review:

CLT have considered the discussion paper and agreed the approach.

The Local Government Association has worked with councils across a variety of service areas including waste and recycling and children and adults services. Results of this work are providing an evidence base of effective behavioural insights interventions to help manage demand for services and encourage an early intervention approach where appropriate.

Nudges for Social Good- LGA behavioural insights programme

The LGA have produced a summary of the top 10 lessons learnt through the programme aimed at providing some useful hints, reminders, challenges and examples.

EAST framework (Behavioural Insight Team)

Make it Easy

- Harness the power of default or pre-set option
- Reduce the ‘hassle factor’ of taking up a service
- Simplify messages

Make it Attractive

- Attract attention-including use of images or personalisation
- Design rewards and sanctions for maximum effect

Make it Social

- Show that most people perform the desired behaviour-describing what most people do in a particular situation encourages others to do the same
- Use the power of networks
- Encourage people to make a commitment to others

Make it Timely

- Prompt people when they are likely to be most receptive- the same offer made at different times can have drastically different levels of success
- Consider the immediate costs and benefits- we are more influenced by costs and benefits that take effect immediately
- Help people plan their response to events- there is a substantial gap between intentions and actual behaviour. A proven solution is to prompt people to identify barriers and develop a plan to address them

<p>Opportunities identified: To work with the BIT on a specific topic as a pilot. Sharing learning with partners such as Public Health. Potential efficiencies- either financial or improved service delivery. Connectivity with the use of data enabler to be maximised.</p> <p>Challenges and risks: Capacity. Lack of buy in to the approach. Lack of strategic approach</p> <p>Invest to save options:</p> <p>Engagement of external expertise to build capability. Potential to work with NESTA/LGA and BIT</p>

Actions:

The considerations for Phase 1 include:

- **Define the outcome**

Identify exactly what behaviour is to be influenced. Consider how this can be measured reliably and efficiently. Establish how large a change would make the projects worthwhile and over what time period.

- **Understand the context**

Lived experience- Visit the situations and people involved in the behaviour, and understand the context from their perspective. Use this opportunity to develop new insights and design a sensitive and feasible intervention.

- **Build your intervention**

Use the EAST framework to generate behavioural insights in iterative processes that is likely to return to the 2 points above.

- **Test, learn, adapt**

Put your intervention into practice so its effects can be reliably measured. Using Randomised controlled trials where possible. These introduce a control group so you can understand what would have happened if you had done nothing

Next Steps/ actions (agreed by CLT):

- To establish a Behavioural insight Hub for the Council.
- To consider bringing in the BIT to work with us on a specific project supporting a sustainable approach and establishment of the Hub. This could maximise existing skills such as the policy and performance teams ability to support and deliver randomised controlled trials
- To work with partners who adopt this approach in their business (discussions with Public Health are in progress, sharing of case studies ect)
- To agree a programme of work, aligned to the Bridging the Gap programme and other identified priorities.

Executive decisions:	
Scrutiny Route:	TBC
Consultation:	TBC
EqIA:	TBC

Bridging the Gap Theme			Prevention and Early Intervention							
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Taking a closer look at early identification, intervention and prevention approaches						Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:										
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Lynette Jones and Damien McCann							
Impact on other Portfolios:			Potential learning which may impact on other directorates approaches							
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<p>Phase 1 Members of the Core Team have met to determine a high level approach to this theme. Half termly meetings are diarised for the full team (including support officers) and for the year ahead. The first full meeting is on the 5th September 2019.</p> <p>Phase 2 A proposed programme of work has been developed which has 3 steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying the early identification, intervention and prevention functions across the two directorates; 2. A Logic Mapping Exercise for the Early Intervention and Prevention project was undertaken on the 9th October. It is set out by service area firstly by direct support services and the secondary support services. The data has been taken from the post-it notes captured on the day but will need some sense checking for accuracy but the data has allowed us to identify potential areas for consideration. It is likely that some of the relationships already exist but there is scope to explore the relationships further. The next step is to facilitate a session to undertake a 'lived experience' exercise to identify the extent of the interactions across service areas. In line with other logic mapping exercises there is also a need to consider risks and what success will look like, which will help us frame our next steps. 3. Undertake service reviews, to develop a shared understanding across the two directorates; 4. Exploring possibilities for more blended activity and any learning for other directorates. <p>The Group will consider what external expertise and challenge may be required and seek their involvement.</p>										
<p>Opportunities identified:</p> <p>Potential opportunities identified that give indicative figures referenced above</p> <p>At this stage it is too early to identify an indicative figure. The approach may not accrue efficiency savings, but could deliver greater efficiency and effectiveness of operations. It will remain to be seen and will be dependent on ongoing evaluation by the team of emerging findings.</p>										
<p>Challenges and risks</p> <p>What needs to happen to realise the opportunities and stretch the impact to deliver phases 5 - 8?</p> <p>Challenges: i) Ensuring a clear focus on the work to be undertaken and the rationale for doing it. ii) Securing enough capacity to undertake this work in service areas with high workload. Iii) Re-arranging meetings due to changes to political meetings to ensure leadership.</p> <p>Risks: i) Lack of clear focus presenting a risk that work streams slide off course and goals remain unclear. ii) Workload and need to provide statutory provision often against tight deadlines compromises capacity to undertake the work and progress through the plan is not sustained. Iii) need to avoid cancellations of meeting to keep momentum.</p>										
Invest to save options:										

What additional capacity /investment would further mitigate the risks and maximise the opportunities? How would this investment be set off by additional savings or cost avoidance? It is too early in the process to establish whether additional capacity or investment will mitigate risks and maximise opportunities.

Actions:

What will happen during phases 6 – 8 including, involvement of Executive sponsor.

- A joint Education and Social Services Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy;
- Develop a model of early intervention and prevention which could be adopted by other Directorates across the Council to reduce demand on statutory services going forward.

Executive decisions:

Scrutiny Route:

Consultation:

EqIA:

Bridging the Gap Theme			Maximising Enablers							
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Designing Services around the customer						Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:			Executive Member – Corporate Services							
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Chief Officer Commercial							
Impact on other Portfolios:			All							
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	-	-	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Strategic Business Review: <p>The focus of this review has been to identify the key reasons that our residents and businesses contact the Council, what they are trying to resolve, what the experience is like and how effective we are at meeting their needs. An analysis of face to face, telephone, web and postal requests is underway alongside beginning a deep dive into our front door experiences in relation to Place based services to identified opportunities to improve resolution of service requests including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requesting a waste receptacle 2. Resolving issues with potholes 3. Fly tipping <p>This will look at a redesign of the front door and be used to model opportunities for efficiencies and improvements in customer experience across People based services in the medium to longer term.</p>										
Opportunities identified: <p>The redesign of the front door will be mapped from the customer experience perspective through user research and identifying the pain points, the amount of repeat contact created the hand off processes and also the data collection. This should provide us with a clear understanding of the opportunities available to improve the experience and potentially remove those elements of the process that don't add value.</p>										
Challenges and risks <p>The Council's approach to managing customer contact is fragmented with multiple entry points, multiple handoffs and lack of explicit quality standards to manage resident or business expectations. Multiple phone numbers are released to the community however there are triage arrangements in place that leads to a potential bottleneck with residents expecting to get direct access to their case workers but in reality being handed off by other parts of the business. The organisation lacks clarity on what it wants the customer experience to be and then managing that consistently. Unpicking the current situation will require a whole council approach and willingness to walking in our resident's shoes and design our services based on that rather than on service requirements.</p>										
Invest to save options: <p>New skills and approaches are needed to unlock the lived experience of our residents and to thoroughly map the end to end processes. This is an essential capability for the council if it wants to release hidden costs and improve customer experience. Learning from experts in this field would be suggested as part of the next phase of this Strategic Business Review.</p>										
Actions: <p>Kick off the end to end research phase for the front door experience for Place Based service requests Undertake User Research and quantitative analysis. Identify the key issues related with resolving the service requests. Identify options to improve the experience. Identify opportunities for maximising the use of technology to enhance service provision.</p>										
Executive decisions:	MTFS and Bridging the Gap Programme									
Scrutiny Route:	Corporate Overview Scrutiny – 2020/2021									
Consultation:	User research will inform any service redesign									
EqIA:	Screening to be undertaken prior to any service changes being progressed									

Bridging the Gap Theme			Maximising Enablers							
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Work place transformation						Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:			Executive Member – Corporate Services							
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Chief Officer Commercial							
Impact on other Portfolios:			All							
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Strategic Business Review: The focus on this phase has been identifying aspects of work place practice where costs can be reduced, productivity can be enhanced and technology can be maximised. This Strategic Business Review is also concerned with managing the investments needed in our current technology landscape due to changes in licensing arrangements with Microsoft.										
Opportunities identified: Managing our IT suppliers and rationalising the number of systems we have currently supporting the business; Introduction of paper reducing ways of working through better use of printers, copiers, scanners to control our costs Progress with plans to implement Office 365 in 2020/21 to enable the decommissioning of some of the systems we currently have in place. Undertaking a review of our telephony to drive down costs and enable improved remote working.										
Challenges and risks Our current level of understanding of our technology landscape is fragmented and our relationships with our key suppliers have been in place for many years and in some cases decades. It is likely that in some cases we are not achieving value for money for our products. The complexity and the impact of continuing to support legacy systems means a fundamental review is required whilst simultaneously immediate action is needed to control and reduce our costs.										
Invest to save options: Additional capacity is needed bring focus and expertise to the supplier landscape. Experienced IT client support would ensure we seek the savings quickly and in a sustained manner.										
Actions: Identification of systems owners across the organisation. Identification of account managers in the supplier space. Set up initial negotiation meetings with the key suppliers and in particular those where we have long standing relationships. This will include a review of the current products, contractual arrangements and price liabilities. Progress with the preparations for implementation of Office 365 to enable disinvestment in certain systems that will be no longer needed. Develop the business case for a Hybrid Mail Room produce to manage print, copying and record retention arrangements for the future.										
Executive decisions:	MTFS and Bridging the Gap Programme									
Scrutiny Route:	Corporate Overview Scrutiny – Autumn 2019									
Consultation:	With staff affected by changes in contract arrangements									
EqlA:	Screening to be undertaken prior to any contract variations being progressed									

Bridging the Gap Theme		Maximising Enablers								
Bridging the Gap Proposal:		Using data to better deliver services							Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:										
Officer Proposal Sponsor:		Head of Governance and Partnerships								
Impact on other Portfolios:		All								
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	-	-	-	-	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Strategic Business Review: Local Government Association – Nesta Data Report <p>The Local Government Association reports that most councils are only just starting to get to grips with all the data they have, and to understand the ways they could use it to make improvements. The data held by the local government sector is a potential goldmine of insights into how to improve people's lives and make communities better. The research suggests that there are few areas of council activity in which data cannot be used to help councils save money, improve services or inform decision making. The research acknowledges that getting value from data requires taking a 'problem-oriented' mindset, which looks for opportunities for data analysis to produce actionable and impactful insights.</p> <p>The WAO local government national review on the use of data, included a paper specific to Blaenau Gwent. Summary of local review findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks a clear data vision. It is too focussed on a potential short term financial investment and does not currently realise the benefits of using data and its potential to create long term efficiencies. Far more impactful than any such investment will be a change in culture to an environment that treats data as a key resource; Holds a wealth of data. Breaking down departmental silos to integrate data across the authority will help other services to put it to best use; Consolidated performance team has strengthened corporate use of data. This should be built on by setting corporate data management standards and coding for services core data. This will further enable data sharing across different teams and services areas. 										
Opportunities identified: testing at phase 1 will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The integrity of the data available within service areas, how robust it is will influence how it is used. Is the data of good quality and are data quality issues understood and managed; Can we identify data development areas, are we clear where we don't have the data we need for proper insight; Is the data connected to decision making structures, making business cases and accessing financial resources; Is the use of data to measure performance consistently in place across the Council, is it relevant and used to monitor impact and outcomes; and Is the culture of the organisation ready, do we make our data open and do we engage with it – do staff recognise that data can support them to do their jobs better to deliver outcomes? 										
Challenges and risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capturing and analysing the data may challenge the technical capacity of staff as there is potential for a gap between the aspirations of the project and the technical expertise and skills of staff. There can be resistance to open data, and people might not use it, often teams are nervous that data quality is poor or that the data might show them in a bad light. Proactively seeking data to inform decisions as opposed to basing decisions on intuition, accumulated experience or even subconscious biases is a difficult shift. Even with robust insights decision making can be challenging to previously held beliefs. 										
Invest to save options:										

<p>Actions:</p> <p>Next Steps- agreed by CLT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish a working group with appropriate representation from all directorates ; • Agree the scope and terms of reference for the group using Agile project methodology; • An organisation action plan based on the Nesta Data Maturity Framework to be developed by the group; and • Reporting by Sponsor, who will need active involvement, to CLT as part of the Bridging the Gap programme. 	
Executive decisions:	
Scrutiny Route:	TBC
Consultation:	TBC
EqlA:	TBC

Bridging the Gap Theme			Growth & Investment Strategy							
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Growth Plan						Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:										
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Richard Crook							
Impact on other Portfolios:			Education/Social Services/Resources/Environment							
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	220	320	150	150	300	300	100	100		
Strategic Business Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none">All Housing sites reviewed to assess developability and time lines for delivery and average council charge figure agreed for use in generating estimates for income from new buildNumbers of vacant properties identified and the policy changes by other Councils to reduce the discount for vacant properties assessedLinks to the VTF vacant property approach have been madeMatch funding identified for the VTF vacant property approachVacant property officer post established for 1 year to assess business case for a longer term approachPotential wider economic benefits calculated in terms of spend into the BG economyIndustrial/commercial development opportunities to be refreshed when the Industrial estates review completedThe need for a Council Investment Methodology identified and example of approaches used by other councils have been highlighted										
Opportunities identified:										
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opportunity 1 – Increased income in terms of the Council Tax through increased residential propertiesOpportunity 2 – Increased income in terms of Council Tax by reducing the number of vacant properties receiving discountsOpportunity 3 – Increased Capital receipts on Council owned landOpportunity 4 – Increasing the population will mitigate RSA impacts of other councils growingOpportunity 5 – Wider opportunity for increase in spend in the BG economy from additional residentsOpportunity 6 – Income generation from Energy Investments in Wind Turbines									
Challenges and risks <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Council need to approve a revised Vacant property policy in terms of council tax discountThe council needs to put in place an Investment approachEnergy Prospectus needs to be agreed										

Appendix 1 (n)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk 1- Is around the reliance on the private sector to deliver the housing numbers/the market to drive demand for the houses • Risk 2 – Is that the investment opportunities for the Energy projects are not secured/considered viable 	
Invest to save options:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional modelling may be required around the Energy Opportunities depending on the time line/rate of return sought by the Council
<p>Actions:</p> <p>Council Report on the discount for Vacant property</p> <p>Discussion/agreement around the Energy prospectus with the Executive and then scrutiny</p> <p>Appointment of the Vacant Property Officer</p>	
Executive decisions:	
Scrutiny Route:	
Consultation:	
EqIA:	

Bridging the Gap Theme			Growth & Investment Strategy							
Bridging the Gap Proposal:			Sustainable BG – Low Carbon Borough						Ref:	
Executive Portfolio Sponsor:										
Officer Proposal Sponsor:			Michelle Morris							
Impact on other Portfolios:			Potential to impact on all Portfolios, and across partnerships, by reducing costs and introducing new ways of working based on achieving more sustainable and low carbon solutions to support service delivery and meet national targets for public sector carbon reduction.							
Delivery in:	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
Values (low – high)	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	138	138			200	350	200	350	200	350
Strategic Business Review: Work undertaken in phases 1 – 5 to identify opportunities and risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 – Project Scope agreed and Project Group established and meeting regularly; • Phase 2 – Discovery Workshop held with NRW to identify good practice and opportunities for carbon and cost reduction; • Phase 3 – Data analysis undertaken, using NRW Model, which will identify the baseline for carbon emissions from Council operations; this has included identify existing projects and initiatives which will support the delivery of #Sustainable BG and which are not currently factored into the MTFS (in progress); • Phase 4 – Publish #Sustainable Blaenau Gwent – Low Carbon Plan, this will include identifying early initiatives to start delivery of benefits immediately but also to ensure delivery against national targets set out for the public sector by 2030 (End of March 2020); 										
Opportunities identified: The Council is already engaged in a range of projects/initiatives which will contribute to the objectives of #Sustainable BG; Opportunities already identified include: Fleet Review (Regional) EV Charging Infrastructure (Regional) Street Lighting Review Energy Prospectus Refit Project Strategic Property Review Sustainable Procurement The Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board (BGPSB) has also agreed that Climate Change will be one of its priorities over the next 12 months and the Council will lead on bringing together a partnership around identifying how collaboration across the public sector in the Borough can support the delivery of national targets and achieve a more sustainable position for Blaenau Gwent.										
Financial Savings: 2020/21 The Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) scheme has been replaced with effect from 1 April 2019 with the Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting Framework (SECR). The 2019/2020 CIPFA Accounting Code includes no specific reference to accounting arrangements resulting from this framework, so it is assumed that at present there is no ongoing financial impact. This will result in a saving of £138k in the revenue budget in 2020/21. 2021/22 Onwards Savings in subsequent years are currently indicative pending the completion of the data analysis and agreeing priorities for action within the #Sustainable BG Plan.										

Challenges and risks:

The work already underway needs to be aligned to this project and co-ordinated to provide a pipeline of activity with the potential to deliver financial and non-financial benefits; this will allow a strengthening of governance, committee overview and pace in delivery; political leadership for the changes required will be important and the Executive Member – Regeneration is the Executive Sponsor for this project.

There may need to be some investment to support innovative solutions and change including planned procurement and service delivery to switch to more sustainable solutions e.g. fleet, energy; the Council already has access to the Salix Programme (WG funded) but there is the potential to expand investment from external grant support;

Behavioural change will be critical to change the way that Officers deliver services and how residents access them and the delivery of identified benefits will need to be supported by strong communications;

Stretch targets can be achieved if the scope of the work is extended to partners and there is an opportunity to create a more sustainable borough led by this initiative from the Council and Public Service Board;

Active participation of schools in this work will enable benefits to be stretched through the promotion of positive behaviour change and reduction in operating costs;

There is a risk that if a new Carbon Reduction Tax is introduced by Government that the early saving proposed will not be achieved. We are not currently aware of any proposals to continue the tax into next financial year.

Invest to save options:

Access to some WG support already in place e.g. Salix and grants to commence investment in EV Charging infrastructure;

However the Council will need to investigate other funding opportunities to develop #Sustainable BG Plan and agreed projects which will include consideration of specific business cases for Spend to Save funding; for example there may be a case for seeking capital investment through the capital programme but any request would be supported by a business case;

Actions:

Phase 6 – develop #Sustainable BG Plan detailing initiatives which will form part of the Plan and the benefits that will be delivered; during this period it is intended to engage with Elected Members and staff to ensure that the right opportunities and commitment is obtain to deliver against the vision and targets;

Phase 7 – present #Sustainable BG Plan to Council for approval, following scrutiny process;

Phase 8 – delivery of Plan from March 2020 onwards with annual reporting into Committee on progress;

Appendix 1 (o)

Executive decisions:	Executive Sponsor – Cllr David Davies, Executive Member Regeneration
Scrutiny Route:	Regeneration Scrutiny – November 2019
Consultation:	Elected Members; Council Staff; PSB
EqlA:	Screening to be undertaken prior to #Sustainable BG Plan being presented to Council;

Updated 7th November 2019

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Agenda Item 6

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **5 December 2019**

Report Subject: **Staff Survey 2019 – Summary Results**

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

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Morris, Managing Director
Anne-Louise Clark, Chief Officer Resources**

Reporting Pathway – report deadline 28								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive /Committee	Council	Other (please state)
w/c 4/11/19	12/11/19	25/11/19			5/12/19	18/12/19		

1. Purpose of the Report

To present the high level findings of the 2019 Staff Survey and the resulting management actions.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Staff Engagement is about developing productive working relationships and a working environment where employees are willing and able to make the best use of their skills and abilities for the benefit of their employer and themselves. Team leaders and line managers have a vital role which is to motivate and inspire those they manage, to set direction for the team and provide an environment which enables people to work productively together. Organisations where employees show high levels of engagement demonstrate a greater capacity for innovation, experience higher retention rates, less absenteeism and fewer work related accidents.

2.2 Staff engagement typically assessing employee's willingness to:

- Go beyond individual job roles to assist colleagues or customers
- Take advantage of new opportunities
- Adapt readily to new circumstances
- Make suggestions for improvements
- Put forward new ideas

2.3 Typically organisations conduct a regular staff survey to assess levels of staff engagement. Since 2014 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has undertaken a staff survey every two years as a means of gauging its levels of staff engagement. Employees remain anonymous in completing the survey and are only asked to provide high level details e.g. their work area, and information related to equalities and diversity.

- 2.3 The 2019 staff survey was conducted between 18th January and 3rd March 2019 and open to all employees (excluding school based teaching staff).
- 2.4 The data from the survey was analysed and the following activities undertaken:
- High level findings presented to CLT and Wider CLT in May 2019.
 - Directorate specific analysis provided to support service area action planning, supported by Organisational Development.
 - Action plans discussed with members of WCLT through the performance coaching sessions with particular attention to any specific hot spots.
 - A high level overview of the results and findings provided to all staff via the Managing Directors Message.
 - Relaunch of a bi monthly revised staff newsletter to share the vision of the organisation and create a shared sense of purpose.
 - The introduction of the Manager's Brief to facilitate two way communication. This is published on a bi monthly basis.
 - Launch of the Managers Conference in October 2019.
 - Commitment to ongoing engagement with managers to encourage participation in decision making.
 - The second round of staff engagement events for all staff with political and professional leadership are being planned, following the events held in autumn 2018.
 - Commitment to a Leadership Development Programme to include empowering leadership as a topic.
 - CLT meetings to take place at various locations across the borough to increase visibility of senior leaders.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

Option 1

That Corporate Overview scrutiny committee endorses the report prior to it being presented to Executive.

Option 2

That Corporate Overview scrutiny committee makes specific comments on the report prior to it being presented to Executive.

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

- 4.1 The survey builds on the commitment to staff engagement outlined in the Council's Engagement Strategy, recognising the vital contribution of staff in delivering positive outcomes for the community. Staff engagement provides a sense of satisfaction and meaning in work, a feeling of belonging and the opportunity to develop and use personal skills and abilities to make a contribution that is valued and appreciated.

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

There are no specific budget considerations from this report.

5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

Channels to participate were actively promoted across staff. The findings related to those who chose to respond, therefore is not representative of all staff. The survey is recognised as one method of hearing the views of staff.

5.3 *Legal*

There are no specific legal implications of this report.

5.4 *Human Resources*

The results of the survey are used as part of the Annual Performance Coaching Reviews of WCLT. OD supports directorates in developing actions to respond to the findings.

6 Supporting Evidence Performance Information and Data

6.1 Summary of headline findings from the survey:

- i. An improved response rate of employees participating from previous years. A total of 726 staff members completed the survey giving an overall response rate of 45% which is an improvement on both the 2016 and 2014 surveys (33% and 41% respectively);
- ii. Improvement in staff job satisfaction (those who are very or fairly satisfied with their job) up 4% from 2014 to 76%;
- iii. 81% of staff agree that they 'always' or 'most of the time' feel motivated to do a good job, up from 79% in 2016;
- iv. Some notable positive trends on key relationship issues such as 'feeling valued', 'decision-making' and 'well-being';
- v. Improvement in the perception of the usefulness of team meetings and one to one meetings. The latter are considered by 78% of staff as the most effective way of being kept informed, an improvement from 72% in 2016 and 74% in 2014;
- vi. Improvement in communication within and across teams. 83% of staff were in agreement their team communication is effective up from 78% in 2016 and 52% in 2014;
- vii. Some signs of reduced frequency of monthly performance coaching and team meetings for some staff (compared with 2016);
- viii. More than three quarters of staff (78%) agree or strongly agree their immediate line manager gives them feedback on how they are doing. This shows a successive increase from 2016 (70%) and 2014 (61%);
- ix. 79% of staff stated they are able to strike the right work/home life balance, up from 75% (in 2014 and 2016);
- x. 86% of staff feel inclined to speak positively about the council to others outside of work.

Response rate and breakdown - Fig 1

Department	Overall staff number	No. returned	Response rate
Corporate Services	310	207	66.8%
Education (non-school)	59	30	50.8%
Regeneration & Community Services	615	235	38.2%
Social Services	628	226	36.0%
Multiple departments	-	18	-
Did not specify departments	-	10	-
Total	1612	726	45.0%

Note: 10 respondents did not select their work area and a further 18 selected more than one area. Both types of respondents have been included in the all staff averages but not in the directorate figures.

Completion channels – Fig 2

Method	No. targeted	No. returned	Response rate
Paper	731	186	22.4%
Web	881	540	61.3%
Grand Total	1612	726	45.0%

Options for completion via paper or the web were offered. Those with work email addresses were asked to complete the web version, paper copies were distributed to team leaders/managers of those without. In total 731 members of staff (45.7%) were targeted for a paper survey and 881 (54.3%) for the web version.

The web version of the survey proved far more successful than the paper version with close two thirds of those staff targeted responding (61.3%), whereas less than a quarter of those targeted for a paper survey responded (22.4%).

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

The positive difference well led, engaged employees make to the services they deliver is well established. The results will enable the targeting of support where it is needed. The outcome for the public is in their positive experience when interacting with and receiving services from The Council.

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

The staff survey was developed through the Staff and Well-being Group which is chaired by the Head of Organisational Development and has representation of staff from across Council Directorates, as well as representation from Unions.

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

Over time the results of the survey enable trends to be identified and more strategic planning to take place e.g. the development of policies and activities to enhance employee engagement and welfare. The data is also used in the Annual Performance Coaching of members of WCLT, with a view to ensuring sustainable improvements in engagement through the management line.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

Identifying issues through the survey supports positive interventions and actions to enhance staff engagement and well-being.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Not applicable as the staff survey is specific to employees within the Council.

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

The staff survey is an organisational approach and results are presented at both a corporate and directorate level.

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

High level equality information was collected (sex, age and disability). The data can be cross-referenced against those demographics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Monitoring of actions is undertaken within Directorates. The results of the survey are used as part of the Annual Performance Coaching Reviews of WCLT.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

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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: **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **5th December 2019**
Report Subject: **Quarter 1 and 2 (April to September) Joint Finance and Performance Report**
Portfolio Holder: **Leader / Executive Member Corporate Services**
Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias, Head of Governance and Partnerships**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	19/11/19	25/11/19			5/12/19	18/12/19		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee the Joint Finance and Performance Report for quarters 1 and 2, covering the period April to September 2019 (attached at Appendix 1).
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Joint Finance and Performance Report has been reviewed to ensure that it is fit for purpose and can be used as a management tool.
 - 2.2 The report is presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee to provide detail of the work that has been undertaken throughout the Council and where further development is required.
 - 2.3 The Finance and Performance Report includes the following information:
 - Key messages against the priorities within the Corporate Plan
 - Expenditure – Revenue and Capital
 - Key improvement actions
 - Key performance indicators and Public Accountability Measures
 - Corporate Risk
 - 2.4 The information previously reported has been enhanced and presented in a more user friendly format. It will be used as a key improvement tool for the Authority.
 - 2.5 Information included within the report has been gathered from a number of different sources including updates from business plans and drawing evidence from strategic reports. This has provided a detailed view of the activity and performance of directorates throughout quarters 1 and 2.
 - 2.6 The report forms part of an on-going process of development within the Council's Performance Management Framework in identifying further areas for improvement and areas of good practice and performance.

- 2.7 The key themes and notable activity across the Council are included in Appendix 1.
- 2.8 The recently published Corporate Plan 2018-2022 was agreed at Council on 26th April 2018 which includes the Council's agreed priorities. These priorities will be monitored over the next 4 years and an agreed set of measures will be used to evidence progress.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 The Joint Finance and Performance Report has been approved by CLT at their meeting on 19th November 2019.
- 3.2 **Option 1**
Provide suggestions to the content of the Joint Finance and Performance Report in order to make it more efficient and effective as a management tool.
- Option 2**
Accept the information as presented.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- The Council has responsibility to provide performance-related information to the public in order to scrutinise the Council's performance and to gauge how well the Council is doing. There is also a requirement for Members to scrutinise the Council's performance. Reporting of such information contributes to the Council's Performance Framework.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***
Financial information is included within Appendix 1 and is split per directorate.
- 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
Risk information is included within Appendix 1 and is split per directorate.
- The Joint Finance and Performance Report acts as a key monitoring tool for the Council and is considered by external regulators which can have an impact on the reputation of the Council.
- 5.3 ***Legal***
There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.4 ***Human Resources***
Sickness information is included within Appendix 1 and is split per directorate.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

Performance information and data is included within Appendix 1 and is split per directorate.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

The information included within the report will provide opportunity for the public to scrutinise the Council's performance and provide accountability across the Council.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

Services look to involve partners and involve citizens in consultation where possible. This information is included as part of the planning arrangements of the Council.

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

The Joint Finance and Performance Report is reported on regularly and is aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan.

6.5 *Preventative focus*

The Council aims to work using a preventative approach wherever possible so that problems can be tackled before they are escalated. Preventative actions are included in the Council's business plans.

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

There are a number of collaborations that the Council is involved with and, where relevant, information on some of these has been included within the Finance and Performance Report.

6.7 *Integration(across service areas)*

The Council's business plan include where an integrated approach to planning and delivery is taking place.

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

The Joint Finance and Performance Report has no negative impact on the protected characteristics.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 The report will be monitored quarterly through the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Joint Finance and Performance Report Quarters 1 and 2

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Finance and Performance Report
2019/20
Quarter 1 & 2 (April to September)

Foreword

The purpose of the report is to present the performance of the Council for the quarter 1 and 2 period (April to September 2019), setting out the key activities and measures used to monitor performance against the priority areas as identified within the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/22, which includes the following five priority areas:

- Social Services;
- Education;
- Environmentally Smart Communities;
- Economic Development and Regeneration; and
- Efficient Council.

All of these priorities have identified supporting actions and measures which are monitored as part of the Council's business planning process. The Council has fully aligned all of its planning to the Corporate Plan which includes the Well-being Objectives. These are central to the organisation and future work planning and strategies are aligned to these areas.



The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is ground-breaking 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**'. The sustainable development principle is made up of the following five ways of working and progress against these areas is evidenced throughout the report.

The Council's performance supports delivery of the core vision of the Corporate Plan:

Blaenau Gwent Vision -

Proud Heritage

Strong Communities

Brighter Future

BRAG Rating

The Council uses a BRAG rating system to assess progress against actions and measures, the definitions are provided in the table below:

Status	Description
Blue	The action/priority has been completed; all performance factors set have been achieved (time, quality, financial aspects).
Green	The action/priority is performing to plan; all performance factors are within the acceptable variance levels set.
Amber	Issues have been identified with the action/priority that will/may negatively impact on performance; the priority owner is able to resolve the problem or make corrective decisions without assistance; action/priority is at risk of failing on one or more of the performance factors set.
Red	Significant issues identified with the action/priority that requires corrective action in order to meet objectives; the priority owner requires assistance to resolve the issue; action/priority is failing on one or more of the performance factors set.

Why this is important

Our Corporate Plan provides the focus for delivering lasting change for the area. It also provides the platform for transforming Blaenau Gwent into a more confident and capable Council. Our ambition is to deliver better outcomes for the people of Blaenau Gwent and that ambition is underpinned by solid and sustainable plans, ensuring the Council can be held to account for what it has promised to deliver. Maximising the impact of our resources to deliver those outcomes sits at the heart of this priority. This includes understanding our costs, controlling expenditure, maximising our income and aligning our resources to the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors to build a Blaenau Gwent for the future.



Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the 'Efficient Council' corporate theme. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

Priorities:-

- To demonstrate clear and visible leadership to deliver a viable and resilient Council;
- To continue our programme of public engagement and respond in a timely and effective way to feedback;
- To ensure effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience;
- To support and develop a workforce that has the capacity and capability to be productive and responsive to future demands;
- To improve online public services and ensure people have access to the appropriate digital technology and skills to use it properly;
- 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; and
- To be a strong and effective partner and collaborate where possible to deliver financial, business and community benefits.

The following section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the 'Efficient Council' priority theme of the Corporate Plan, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges

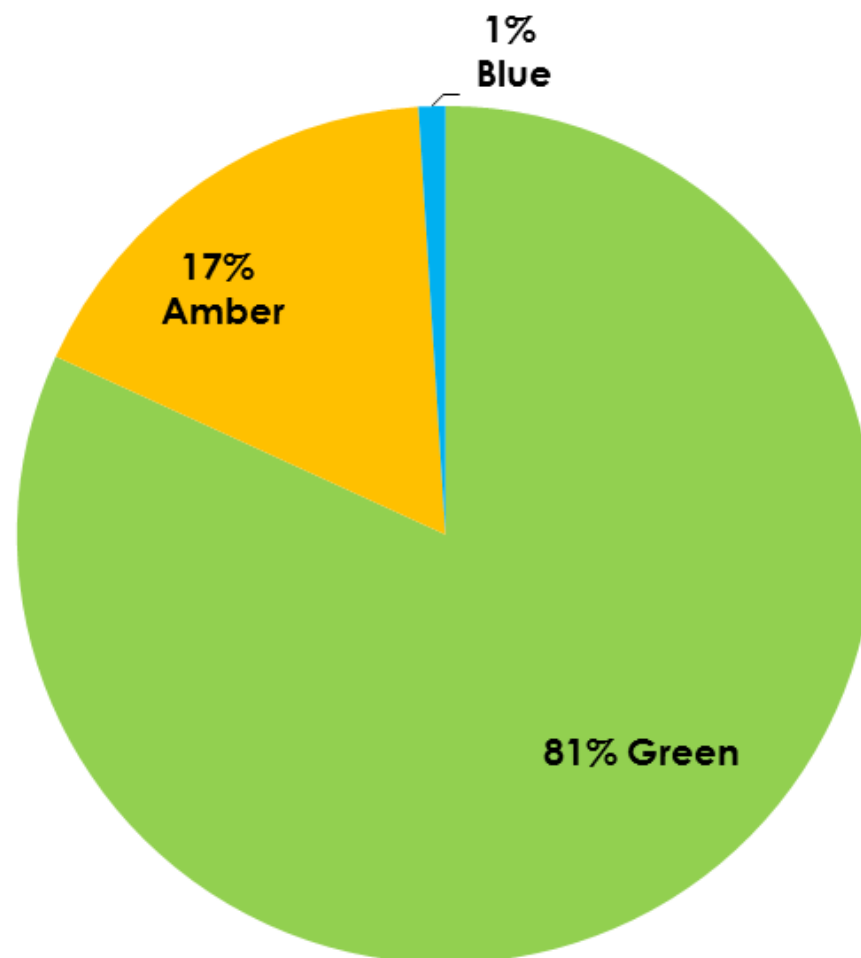
How we performed

Throughout quarter 1 & 2 there has been progress in the implementation of the 'Efficient Council' priorities but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives.

As at the 30th September 2019, the performance of 'Efficient Council' was evaluated as being **mainly successful as 81% of actions were green (on target), 18% were amber (behind target) and 1% was blue (completed).**

Central to the Efficient Council priority is looking at an approach to working in a cost effective and efficient way across the Council. This ambitious programme is called 'Bridging the Gap' and is an integral part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and delivery of the Corporate Plan. This programme of activity is looking at delivering a council that is more commercially minded in the way it delivers services. Progress of this programme will be seen over the remainder of the Corporate Plan.

Overall 'Efficient Council' corporate theme delivery position as at 30th September 2019.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To demonstrate clear and visible leadership to deliver a viable and resilient Council

- WLGA funding has been provided to each local authority to support corporate planning. This has been utilised by employing a Policy Officer who has a role in supporting the Council to prepare for exiting the EU which includes sitting on the WLGA National Coordinators Network for exiting the EU.
- There has been a launch of refreshed internal communication mechanisms to improve engagement, share good stories and ensure staff and managers promote core organisational ways of working.
- Two managers Conferences will take place in October in order to consider our progress as a Council – in delivering on our strategic priorities and positive outcomes for our communities, strengthening our financial resilience, regenerating the area and defining our ambition to be a commercially minded council.

To continue our programme of public engagement and respond in a timely and effective way to feedback

- Discussions are ongoing with the Youth Forum to identify how best young people can engage in the democratic process.
- Nine Streetscene engagement events have been held in markets, supermarkets and town centres across the area. A corresponding web survey was published with 159 people taking part in the survey at the events and 120 completing via the web. Many more engaged with us at roadshows.
- An Open Data event was held alongside Data Cymru to promote the sharing of data across organisations as a means to improving the design of services for the public.
- There is a focus on aligning the relevant work streams of the Public Service Board and Regional Partnership Board. Initial discussions have taken place relating to the integrated well-being programme recently launched which has a whole population focus.

How we currently perform



As at 30.09.19 the average number of days lost per FTE (cumulative) was 5.93



There were 162,559 website visitors from April to September.



89% of Internal Audits were completed within the time allocated.



Income Collection rates showing slight increase on 2018/19 figures.



Five year Medium Term Financial Strategy drafted.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To ensure effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience

- The Council recognises the challenges that it faces in the short, medium and long term and has developed a programme of Strategic Business Reviews to deal with potential gaps between anticipated funding and expenditure that aims to build financial resilience.
Based on strategic themes our 'Bridging the Gap' programme will identify savings opportunities, potential cost avoidance and new revenue streams.
- A draft Medium Term Financial Strategy covering a 5 year period and including an overview of the 'Bridging the Gap' programme and individual strategic business reviews has been approved by Council. The final Medium Term Financial Strategy will be considered by Council during quarter 3.
- There has been finance business partner engagement on all 'Bridging the Gap' working Groups, including the development of a full cost recovery model which is currently being tested.
- Capacity to support the 'Bridging the Gap' projects is a challenge. This is being monitored through supervision and prioritisation of work load and relocating duties.

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COLLABORATION

Collaborative relationships have been established with Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Councils through SRS working arrangements.

Work has been carried out to ensure that Blaenau Gwent are at the heart of conversations with Welsh Government about public sector reform and have involvement in Wales Digital Transformation.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To support and develop a workforce that has the capacity and capability to be productive and responsive to future demands

The importance of our responsibility to manage attendance is recognised and is done so via procedures that incorporate mechanisms to monitor individual attendance levels and, where appropriate, reduce high levels of sickness absence through proactive management action. Sickness absence information for 2018/19 was reviewed at CLT July 2019 including whole Council and Directorate position statements resulting in the following recommendations:

- Target setting per service and seasonally;
- Hold focussed sessions quarterly to review sickness absence – on agenda for team meetings, etc;
- Hold managers to account for managing sickness – end to end;
- Objective for managers as part of annual performance coaching and regular 121s;
- Ensure managers are using ITrent effectively and timely;
- Application of the Managing Attendance Policy 'to the letter';
- Managers recognising good attendance; and
- Push ownership to the individual.

Directorate	Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTE) As at 30.06.19	Quarter 1 Average Days lost per FTE (cumulative)	Number of Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTE) As at 30.09.19	Quarter 2 Average Days lost per FTE (cumulative)
Corporate Services	284.97	1.71	284.85	4.34
Regeneration & Community Services	442.14	3.78	464.81	7.09
Social Services	457.62	3.62	469.18	7.45
Education	945.12	2.84	935.72	5.09
Target	-	2.75	-	5.50
Council Total	2129.85	3.06	2154.56	5.93

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To improve online public services and ensure people have access to the appropriate digital technology and skills to use it properly

- The Council's Customer & Digital Programme continues to develop accessible services for the resident. Usage of online services has increased.
- A project has commenced to enable Council Tax payers and Housing Benefits claimants to self-service (Citizens Access).
- The Council has engaged with Government Digital Service (GDS) to explore the use of their platform to improve services for customers.
- A review of current IT systems and their capabilities, cost and usage is being undertaken to ensure that a system is fit for purpose and cost effective. The customer & digital programme continues to implement digital solutions to working practices to enable the Council to become more efficient and effective in dealing with customer demand.

To be a strong and effective partner and collaborate where possible to deliver financial, business and community benefits.

- The partnership arrangements secured through the creation of SRS ensure that joint working on digital projects is maximised. This has strengthened contract management and opportunities for spend control with third party suppliers. Working in partnership with Newport City Council, a Project Team has been established to manage developments within the Council's ITrent system and relationship with the provider.
- We continue to seek opportunities to work differently through partnership and collaboration not only across Gwent but across the Public Sector. As part of this the Council has provided a response to the Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association on the review of Strategic partnerships. Findings from the review are anticipated in early autumn and will assist in shaping the focus of local work.
- The Council has commenced a review of Leisure and Culture Services in order to determine the future management options available to the Council for the provision of sustainable Leisure Services.
- The Council has undertaken a review of Silent Valley which was reported to Council in December 2017. At that meeting the Council agreed to undertake due diligence on the company. That work has been completed and that report, and recommendations for next steps, are to be presented to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.



LONG TERM (forward planning) -

The Council's Statutory Strategic Equality Plan will outline the Council's intentions for meeting the requirements of the Act over a four year period (2020-24).

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

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

- Creation of 'Bridging the Gap' proposals and initial discovery has been completed and project sponsors have been identified for all projects. Capacity and capability is an ongoing challenge. In order to mitigate this, external support is now on-board in order to expose people to new ways of working whilst work is being completed.
- Opportunities to share transformation synergies have been established with Newport and Torfaen Councils. Re-negotiating some IT contracts has taken place along with identifying the sharing of Transformation resources and capabilities.
- A Commercial Strategy, that includes identified opportunities through Regeneration and Community Services, has progressed with links being established between growth strategy investment opportunities and existing commercial activities. This will be reported to Council in quarter 4.
- A forensic examination of 3rd party spend has been carried out as the pre-requisite to identifying potential savings for 2020/21 and future years.
- A review of fees and charges is now included in the Bridging the Gap Programme, alongside income recovery strategic business reviews.
- Collection rates during the period have been in line with expectations, showing a slight increase on 2018/19 figures.

Case Study – How we are ‘Bridging the Gap’... financial planning for the future

Financial planning is a year round task!

Our exciting new approach – Bridging the Gap - isn't just about making it from budget to budget it's a much wider plan to become a more financially resilient and commercial minded organisation which maximises and creates income, reduces demand for services and provides a great customer experience.



We are currently working on the assumption that our revenue funding settlement from the Welsh Government will again be cash flat. This means we will need to find £2 - £3 million in savings for 2020/21 to continue to provide public services and invest in the future of Blaenau Gwent, without using our council reserves which we need to build up. The 12 Strategic Business Reviews that make up 'Bridging the Gap' will help us to do this.

Going forward, we will be:

- Maximising income and potential income generation - taking a clearly commercial approach where appropriate.
- Maximising our resources by making sure we are getting best value for money through procurement and contracts.
- Exploiting the opportunities of digital transformation.
- Making best use of our assets and property.
- Influencing and reducing demand from our customers and supporting residents to do more for themselves.

This important work involves all of the Corporate Leadership Team and is being led by our Chief Officer Commercial, Anne Louise Clark, who says:

"It's clear that if we want to provide the best services for the people of Blaenau Gwent then we need to think differently, become more business minded and redesign services so that they are more commercial and fit for the 21st Century.

Bridging the Gap offers some quick gains such as looking at our third party spend to get the most for our money where we spend it, and looking at new ways of bringing in money, as well as some longer term projects like reducing our carbon footprint which will be great for the environment, too!"

"This really is an exciting time as we continue to work together to transform services."

The Strategic Business Reviews are each led by a member of the Corporate Leadership Team and supported by the Strategic Transformation Team and officers from across the Council.

How 'Efficient Council' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

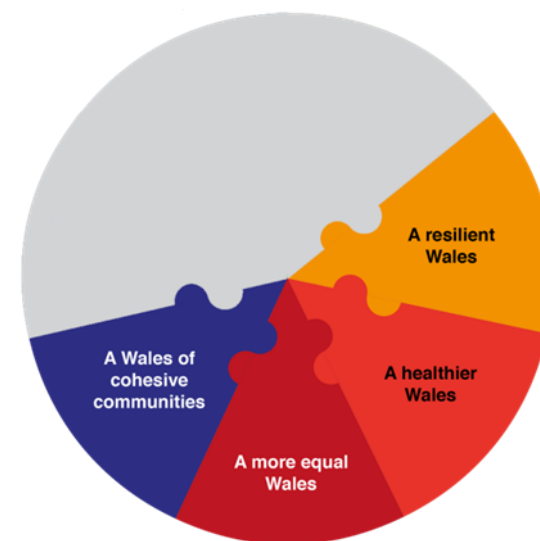
The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going. These are split by both local and national indicators.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
Number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee	National	11	3.06	5.93	-	-	↓
Percentage of Service Reports / Requests via digital means (self-service) (waste and recycling, street cleansing, roads and lighting and switchboard)	Local	-	29%	39%	-	-	↑
Level of General Reserve as a proportion of net revenue expenditure as at 31 March 2019	Local	4.00%	-	4.58%	-	-	-
Net expenditure compared to agreed budget – Revenue	Local	0	(150,000) (0.01%)	(7,000) (0.004%)	-	-	↑
Net expenditure compared to agreed budget – Capital	Local	0	(3,000) (0.02%)	0	-	-	↑
External fees and charges as a percentage of Gross Expenditure <i>* Estimated Figure</i>	Local	5.98%	-	5.59% <i>* Estimated Figure</i>	-	-	-

Why this is important

We want to encourage and support people to make healthy lifestyle choices to enable children, young people and families to thrive. Research has proven people demonstrating positive health behaviours from birth through their life will lead to greater independence, and people being free from complicated health conditions later in life and reducing costs to public services. This in turn could reduce demand on services and ensure the services that are provided are high quality, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

With reduced funding and increasing demand on services the Council can no longer do everything it has done in the past. We must focus on those actions that will have the greatest impact. Safeguarding the most vulnerable people in our communities continues to be a top priority for the Council alongside transforming the aspirations of residents and valuing fairness and equality in everything we do. As a whole the aim of this Objective will be to support vulnerable people of all ages to maximise, maintain and sustain their independence.



Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the 'Social Services corporate theme. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

Priorities:-

- To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own well-being;
- To work with people to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them;
- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater;
- To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support;
- To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities;
- To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm; and
- To develop a partnership approach to reducing and alleviating the impacts of Poverty

The following section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the '**Social Services**' priority theme of the Corporate Plan, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges

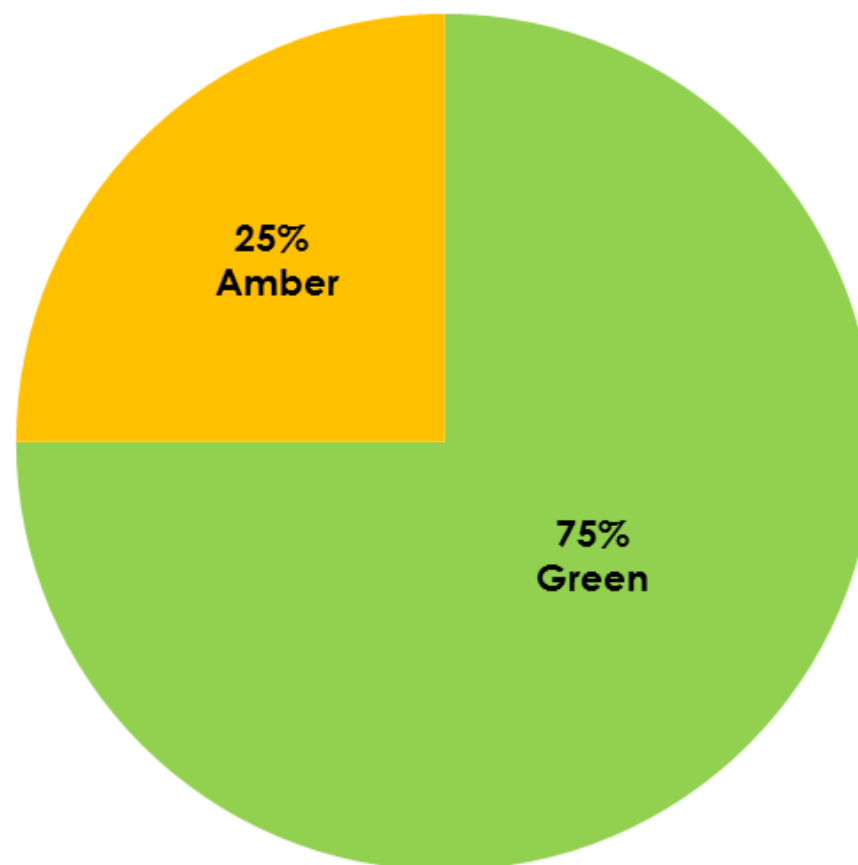
How we performed

Throughout quarter 1 & 2 there has been progress in the implementation of the Social Services priorities but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives.

As at 30th September 2019, the Council evaluated performance and activity against Social Services Objective as mainly successful **as 75% of the actions were green (on target) and 25% amber (behind target)**. When considering trend against the performance indicators **five saw an improvement, four a decline and one remained the same**.

The Social Services function remains high on the Council agenda. The Council is looking to address the areas that will have a long term benefit, ensuring that the needs of people of all ages and future generations are at the centre of service design and delivery.

Overall 'Social Services corporate theme delivery position as at 30th September 2019.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To improve accessibility, provision of information, advice and assistance (IAA) to enable people to support their own well-being

- Sustainability and embedding of the Compassionate Communities work stream is ongoing and includes the increased presence of social care within GP surgeries as part of the integrated approaches to IAA. We are currently strategically mapping our community resources via the transformation Integrated Well-being Networks programme (Adult Services).
- Partnership work continues with the Police under the Early Action Together programme. A DS has been co-located in IAA and early indications are that this is having a positive impact on the timeliness of undertaking the Child Protection process and in ensuring that information is collated and considered in all decision making.
- A review of staff resource in this area is being undertaken to ensure that it is appropriately staffed to meet service demand as the IAA team are the front door for children's services and it is crucial that service demand is met.

To work with people to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them

- We continue to work with colleagues across Health, Social care and Third sector to promote the importance of personal well-being and independence.
- An internal case audit was devised in September 2019 and the theme was 'The Voice of the Child'. A total of 18 cases were randomly chosen and each case audit was completed by either a Team Manager and/or Senior Practitioner, and Independent Reviewing Officer.
- The Safeguarding / Children Looked After (CLA) education team are developing a framework for CLA child friendly schools, which will include a good practice guide and self-evaluation tool for schools. A task and finish group has been established during which it was agreed the child's voice should help inform these documents.

How we currently perform



Blaenau Gwent remains top of the DToC league in Wales



Number of Children Looked After 225



Preventative Services supported 54.9% of child cases.



61 Children on the Child Protection Register



97.9% Adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater

- The Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy has started to evidence how it is preventing problems faced by children and families escalating to a point which requires children becoming looked after or their names going onto the child protection register. Good evidence of this is the work undertaken by the Supporting Change Team and a full evaluation showed evidence that the team is making a real difference to the children and families of Blaenau Gwent.
- We have successfully achieved a £4.5m capital bid which will be used to fund 5 projects linking the childcare Offer nursery provision to schools to provide wrap around day care.
- The prevention and early intervention strategy is in the first 6 months of its 3 year delivery plan. There is still a significant amount of work to be done to achieve the objectives of this strategy.
- The SPACE Well-being programme is working co productively with partners such as Health, Education, Police, Probation, Youth Offending Service and 3rd sector providers to ensure that the mental health needs of children and young people are assessed early with the right agency taking the lead on providing the most appropriate interventions.
- The Education Directorate are key partners in the Gwent Early Action Together Programme and continue to work collectively to strengthen safeguarding arrangements which has included the embedding of the Operation Encompass initiative which provides an early alert to schools before the start of the school day of any child that is subject to, or witness to, police-attended incidents of domestic abuse.

To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support

- Integrated Care Fund grant money has been received and some of this money will be used for psychology support for 2.5 days a week. The psychologist will be seconded into Blaenau Gwent from ABUHB.
- Relationships with housing are very positive and new housing developments within Ebbw Vale are looking to include 1 bedroom flats and children looked after will be considered as a priority.
- New domiciliary care tender has been completed and will commence 1st October 19.
- The department has submitted a number of new ICF bids for consideration by the RPB panels which will enable us to 'test' new initiatives and ways of working during 19/20 and 20/21.
- Collaborated with the third sector to commission additional housing related support provision and preventative support in the long term teams via SLA's with our third sector partners.
- We are collaborating with our LA and ABUHB partners to develop commissioning arrangements on a Gwent wide footprint to ensure that the Care Home market is sustainable and consistent in its quality and delivery to residents across Gwent.
- We have developed a (5 LA's) hospital discharge service (Home First) to be funded by the health board and are looking to further expand this to other parts of the Health and Social care system.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities

- Work with Corporate colleagues continues in order to remodel our Day Activities / Community Options Service including working with Third Sector partners to develop and enhance our horticulture service.
- Additional capital Integrated Care Funding has been secured to enhance our assistive technology offers.
- The Food and Fun Programme was delivered in participating schools this summer, led by school staff with support from the council for catering and cleaning. The school-based programme provided healthy meals, food and nutrition education and physical activity to children in a fun social environment. Schools involved this year were; Blaen-y-Cwm Primary in Brynmawr, Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary in Rassau, Abertillery Learning Community (primary campuses) and Willowtown Primary in Ebbw Vale. Around 160 pupils and families took part with the ethos being centred around activities based around fitness, healthy eating and appreciating the environment.

INTEGRATION

Integrated work across directorates supports delivery of the Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan work to improve the well-being of Children Looked After. This includes the improvement of facilities for children to have contact with their families at Beaufort Road, care leavers being exempt from council tax and care leavers now being classified as a priority group when requiring housing in Blaenau Gwent

To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm

- The all Wales Safeguarding Procedure has been under review for some years, the new procedures are now complete and they will be launched during early November. A dissemination plan will be drafted by the safeguarding managers to ensure they are understood and adhered to.
- A single Point of Access for Children's Emotional well-being has been developed - (SPACE Wellbeing)
- A safeguarding screening project has been developed in conjunction with IAA
- The SERAF document to assess Child Sexual Exploitation is under review and its likely replacement is currently being

To develop a partnership approach to reducing and alleviating the impacts of Poverty

- Work with Welsh Government to deliver parental support is ongoing with most recently baby bundles being distributed.
- A child sufficiency assessment has been carried out at which time we consulted with parents on period poverty.
- A Holiday Hunger Programme Pilot has been very successful this summer.
- Ongoing monitoring and review of those grants within the Housing Support Grant (HSG) has evidenced that all grants have been maximised and outcomes have been monitored in line with the WG guidance.



Case Study

Supporting Change Team

Child A and Child B have lived with their maternal grandmother since they were babies under an informal family arrangement. However, the children's names were placed on the child protection register on two separate occasions owing to various concerns such as hygiene and neglect. There were also concerns about hostility between mother and grandmother.

Mother and her partner have received a positive parenting assessment which demonstrates significant progress given the historical concerns in relation to mother's care. Mother and her partner have shown a good understanding of the children's needs and have been keen for the children to reside with them since the start of Social Services involvement in relation to this referral. The Local Authority plan recommends that the two children are to reside with their mother and her partner. This living arrangement is positive and the children are settled and have started in their new school.

The children will continue to live with their mother and her partner and continue to be supported by wider family members in line with the plan they determined in their family group conference.

Following assessment, the local authority felt the need to seek legal advice. The case then progressed into the Public Law arena and an initial Public Law Outline meeting was held.

The Supporting Change Team became involved with the family and their work centred around supporting the implementation of appropriate boundaries and routines, ensuring that the children were receiving adequate supervision. Work was also completed around ensuring good home and hygiene conditions. This work was completed on an intensive basis and all involved engaged well throughout and even attended the Supporting Change Team 'Circle of Security' Parenting Group. The Supporting Change Team was asked to provide practical and emotional support to the family while the children transitioned from residing with their grandmother to residing with their mother. As part of this process the family have also had a Family Group Conference.

Case Study

X suffers with MS and has done for the past 9 years and often spends a lot of time alone in the house. X finds it difficult to get about and struggles to manoeuvre the wheelchair, due to hand weakness.

Prior to having MS, X was a confident person, but now lacks confidence. X did attend an MS group but found that this was not suitable. The Community Connector tried to identify alternative support groups for X.

The Community Connector contacted a local MS group and GAVO for X to become a phone befriender and X is now doing this. Arrangements have also been put in place for X to receive home deliveries from her pharmacy.

A number of outcomes have been achieved for X from the support received and this includes:

- Improved confidence;
- Less socially isolated;
- Happier;
- Feels connected; and
- Feels worthwhile.

How 'Social Services' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

Blaenau Gwent continues to implement the required cultural and operational changes that the Act requires in order to ensure that all social care services are individually shaped by the people that use them. This includes improving how the service effectively engages with service users, carers, families and partner organisations, whilst actively encouraging all to provide feedback which can be utilised to shape and improve services.

The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going. These are split by both local and national indicators.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	2018/19 Outturn	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
Percentage of proportionate assessments that led to a more comprehensive assessment for care and support - Children	Local (available)	43%	25.4%	44.6%	-	-	↓
Percentage of proportionate assessments that led to a more comprehensive assessment for care and support - adults	Local (available)	64.3%	30.3%	9.5%	-	-	↑

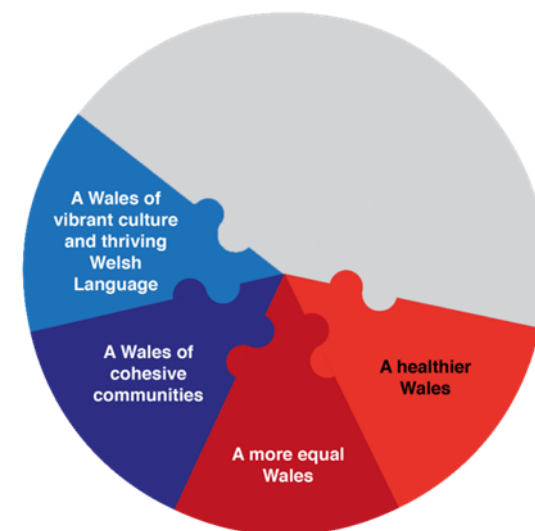
Performance Indicator	National / Local	2018/19 Outturn	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
Percentage of referrals signposted to preventative services (adults)	Local (Data Development)	7.1%	13.0%	16.2%	-	-	↑
Proportion of adult services cases supported by preventative services (New)	Local (available)	29.6%	32.2%	33.9%	-	-	↑
Percentage of referrals signposted to preventative services (children)	Local (Data Development)	TBC	12.8%	13.7%	-	-	↑
Proportion of children's services cases supported by preventative services (New)	Local (available)	57%	61.0%	54.9%	-	-	↓
Rate of Delayed Transfers of Care	National	1.16	0.33	0.33	-	-	↔
Percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within statutory timescales	National	93.3%	100.0%	97.9%	-	-	↓
Number of Looked After Children	Local (available)	222	220	225	-	-	↓
Number of Child Protection	Local	56	70	61	-	-	↑

Why this is important

Improving the quality and provision of teaching and learning is vitally important to ensure we are achieving ambitious outcomes for all children and young people. We will continue to invest in our education services in order to support economic development and regeneration in order to provide opportunities for local people and businesses.

Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the 'Education' corporate theme. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.



Priorities:-

- To improve pupil outcomes, progress and well-being, particularly for our more able and our most vulnerable learners;
- To improve the quality of our education services and our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes; and
- To continue to support our school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions.

This section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the '**Education**' priority theme of the Corporate Plan, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges.

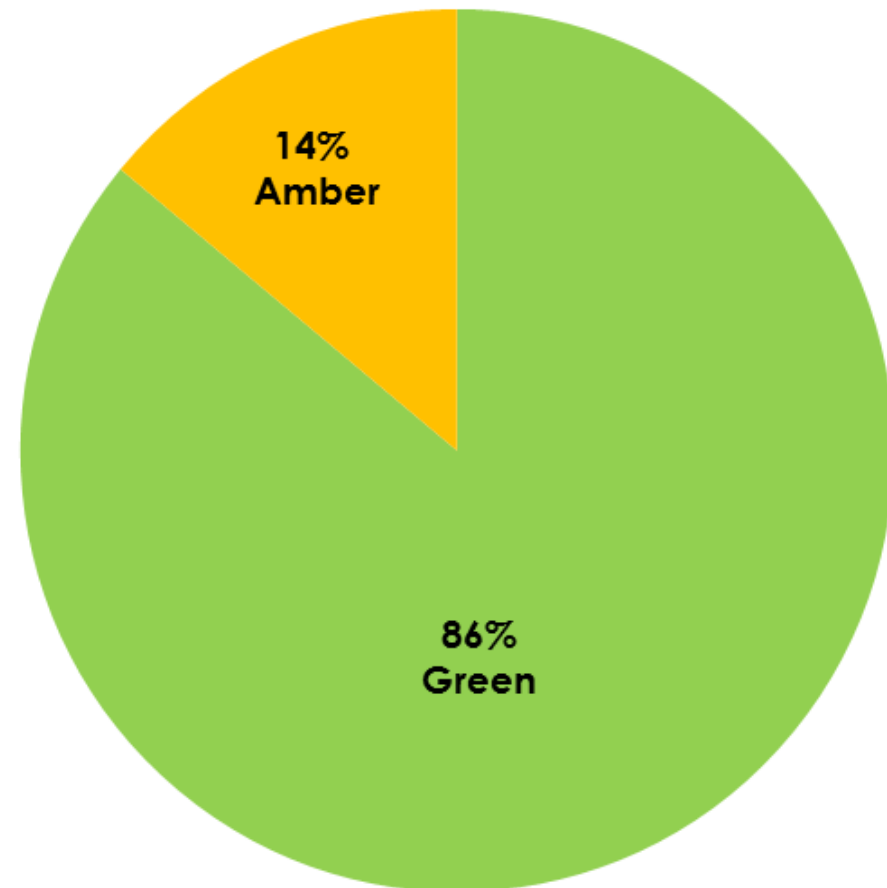
How we performed

Throughout April to September, there has been substantial progress in the implementation of the Education priorities but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives.

As at the 30th September 2019, the performance against Education objectives were **evaluated as successful as 86% of the actions were green (on target) and 14% were amber (behind target)**. When considering **trend against the available performance indicators four saw an improvement and two a decline**.

Education remains high on the Council's agenda. The Council is looking to support the well-being agenda of teachers and pupils as well as support improvements in attainment.

Overall 'Education' corporate theme delivery position as at 30th September 2019.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To improve pupil outcomes, progress and well-being, particularly for our more able and our most vulnerable learners

- Close working with cluster and regional lead ALNCOs within the Borough is effective at supporting schools to develop their practices, particularly in preparation for the ALN reforms.
- A review of Sensory and Communication Support Services (SENCOM) is ongoing which will consider governance arrangements as well other areas. The outcome should involve an improved dissemination of data at required times.
- Exclusions for the 18/19 academic year are lower than the previous year.
- Specific plans to address persistent absenteeism and Elected Home Educated have been effective although plans will run into the next academic year to ensure a focus remains on these areas. Specific programmes of work have improved how schools manage these areas.
- Welsh Government has decided that in order to ensure the ALN reforms achieve what they were established to achieve that it is necessary to delay implementation by one year. Therefore implementation will be from September 2021 with the changes taking three years. Whilst this delay is unfortunate it is not impacting on the regional approach in place in SEWC.
- Lead and regional ALNCO approach is proving effective in the Borough, ensuring an ownership of the agenda by schools as well as the Local Authority.

PREVENTION - Pupils are to be given earlier in-school mental health support as part of an innovative programme aimed at preventing more serious problems from occurring later in life. The In-reach to Schools Programme has dedicated Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) practitioners who are working closely with schools to develop a whole school approach to management of mental health.

How we currently perform



**2018/19 academic year
pupil achievement
figures will be available
from Quarter 3**



**In 2018/19 Blaenau
Gwent had 1.9% of
year 11 leavers
as NEET**



**1.6% of primary school
pupils are persistently absent
and this is a consistent figure
over the last 3 years**



**For 2017/18 4.1% of
secondary school pupils were
persistently absent, a decrease
from the previous year**



**81.5% of schools were
categorised as Yellow or
Green**

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To continue to support our school leaders to help our pupils achieve their ambitions

- The respect and resilience (PREVENT Extremism) action plan has been finalised and is being implemented across the Directorate.
- The content of the joint safeguarding performance report has been reviewed and now includes broader contextual information, which will be built upon through the year. The 2019/20 Safeguarding in Education policy has also been reviewed.
- It is evident from the range of work being undertaken that schools in Blaenau Gwent are increasingly working in a school-led, school-to-school way. They are planning their time effectively, planning the activities well so that outcomes feed directly into improved practice.
- Pupil outcomes (at the expected and higher +1 level), particularly in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 have improved in 2018.
- There is more work needed to improve early literacy and numeracy skills, English at the higher level 6+ in Key Stage 3, boys' performance in language skills, particularly eFSM boys and to secure greater progress in basic skills between the ages of 11,14 and 16 years of age. Focussed work in identified schools is being undertaken in this regard.
- Whilst it is too early to fully demonstrate high impact, it is clear that schools are increasingly working in a partnership way; initiatives are increasingly school-led and schools in Blaenau Gwent are increasingly presenting as outward facing, outward learning and achieving.

- School categorisation has improved year on year over the last 3 years, school inspections are generally positive.
- The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) report for school governors has been finalised and shared with schools for implementation.



LONG TERM

The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation and the Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Transformation projects are focusing on re-designing the ALN and CAMHS landscape to make them fit for purpose going forward. The ALN programme is considered by Welsh Government as a once in a generation change and therefore has a significant profile nationally as well as regionally and locally. Involving multiple services working with schools and the region to ensure the projects keep a clear pupil focus and results in appropriate change for schools and pupils.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To improve the quality of our education services and our school buildings to help learners achieve great outcomes

- The £20.25m 21st Century Schools Band A programme is now fully delivered.
- Following a successful partnership delivery approach between Education and Community Services the new Six Bells Primary Campus, part of the Abertillery Learning Community, opened its doors on time and within budget.
- 21st Century Schools programme management arrangements were independently recognised as being 'impressive' in the Welsh Government facilitated Gateway Review findings.
- The Youth service continues to improve and perform well as demonstrated by a National Youth Work Award.
- All Targets have been met in respect of the Inspire projects which support young people to establish and maintain a placement in further learning, training or employment. This support includes 1:1 support sessions, structured group activities and open access clubs/groups. Confirmation has now been received that this funding has been extended to 2023.
- The number of young people not in education, employment or Training (NEETs) has stabilised at 1.9% (11 young people).
- The Information, Communications, Technology (ICT) Infrastructure project is now well in to the implementation stages. The planned works that took place over the summer holiday period has resulted in the migration of approaching 50% of the schools to the SRS Education system. The full roll-out will take by the spring of 2020 across the school estate. This investment will be complemented through a £2m investment via the WG Hwb initiative for schools.
- The Managing School Places and the School Estate report demonstrates improving performance with the adoption of the admissions policy, reducing surplus places and improved suitability/condition data.
- Welsh Government has announced that Blaenau Gwent has been successful with the Welsh medium grant and this could result in an investment of £6m.
- The Post 16 partnership has improved significantly and the Learning Zone's data is strong e.g. 100% A*-E and 75.9% A*-C pass rates and also strong vocational outcomes are being realised.



COLLABORATION -

The Corporate Parenting plan has a clear Education focus and is driving better connectivity with the Education Achievement Service in terms of information sharing as well as with schools in terms of their day to day management of Children Looked After pupils. Close working is in place with Social Services Children's Services officers.

Case Study

St. Mary's RC Primary School, Brynmawr

At St Mary's we believe that working and learning together with the support from our families, parish and the wider community enhances the learning and well-being of our pupils.

Our shared vision has been developed through successful collaboration and communication with our school community. Our aim is to embed the four purposes whilst nurturing our pupils to be happy, healthy and safe at St Mary's.

We aim to develop empathy and sensitivity within our pupils so that they grow to be proud of themselves. Our families and community partners have contributed to workshops which have supported our more vulnerable in the school community. The musical theatre workshops helped develop literacy skills, pupil confidence and independence.

The workshops were led by Peter Karrie who starred in the West End as the 'Phantom of the Opera' and they

reflected his passion of the musicals. Throughout the workshops the pupils developed performance skills as well as an understanding of empathy through drama.

The progression of the workshops successfully established parent, school, parish and community partnerships as the project concluded with a whole school concert at St Mary's Parish church.

Our Key stage 2 learners have developed relationships with community members living in local care homes. Groups of children have termly visits there to perform for the staff and residents.

The school has established a positive partnership with the Metropole Theatre which is a part of Aneurin Leisure Trust. An organisation with a shared vision to improve community life through Leisure, Learning and culture.

The pupils plan, develop and implement their own concerts and musicals which

are then performed for the wider community at the Metropole Theatre in Abertillery, Blaenau Gwent. The pupils assume a variety of roles during the production and the knowledge and skills developed are incalculable.



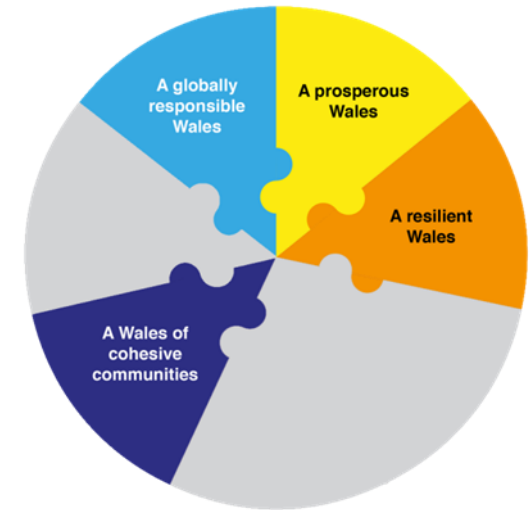
How 'Education' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	Baseline	Annual – Provisional (P) as of Oct 2019	Performance Trend
Pupil outcomes and progress for our 7, 11, 14 and 16 year old pupils in English and Maths, particularly our more able and our most vulnerable learners	National	Key Stage (KS)4 Level 1 92.8% Level 2 59.2% Level 2+ 41.1%	Annual Figures - KS4 Level1 94% (2019P) Level 2—2019 not available Level 2+ 52% (2019P)	↑ - ↑
School inspection and school categorisation Judgements (Proportion of schools in Yellow and Green)	Local (available)	70%	Annual - 81.5%	↑
The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent (<80%) - Secondary	National	4.1%	5%	↓
The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent (<80%) - Primary	National	1.6%	Not available	-
Average Capped 9 score for pupils in Year 11	National	-	Annual Figure 318.7	-
Percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools	National	94.5	Annual Figure 94.3% (unverified)	↑
Percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools	National	92.9	Annual Figure 92.9%	↔
Percentage of Year 11 leavers known not be in education, training or employment (NEET)	National	-	Annual Figure 1.9%	-

Why this is important

Blaenau Gwent has a rich heritage and our buildings and countryside are part of Blaenau Gwent's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit. Our local environment should be used to help improve the health and well-being of our families and communities and be enhanced for future generations to continue to enjoy. There is also a real desire to see the communities where people live kept clean, tidy and useable, creating areas that people can be proud of.



Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the 'Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities' corporate theme. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

Priorities:-

- To re-invest in highways maintenance particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements;
- To increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets;
- To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control;
- To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors; and
- To build the relationships across the Council to support organisations and partners to deliver services in different ways whilst taking a strategic approach to the management of our land and property services in different ways (Community Asset Transfers).

The following section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the '**Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities**' priority theme of the Corporate Plan, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements

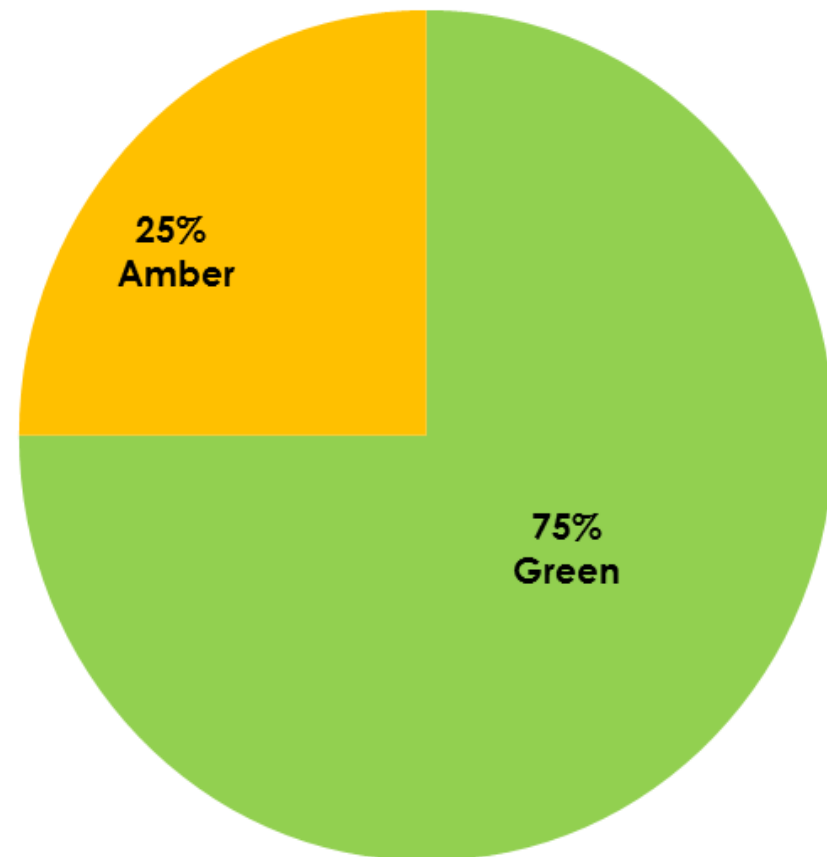
How we performed

Throughout quarter 1 & 2 there has been progress in the implementation of the Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities priorities but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives over the remainder of the Corporate Plan.

As at the 30th September 2019, the performance was **evaluated as being mainly successful as 75% of the actions were green (on target) and 25% were amber (behind target)**. When considering **trend against the performance indicators four saw an improvement, two a decline and two stayed the same. (awaiting Leisure calculation)**

The environment remains as a high priority for the community. The Council is looking to improve the area so that it is somewhere to be proud to live. Through focusing on delivering against the main priorities set out in the Corporate Plan we can begin to transform Blaenau Gwent into a more prosperous and welcoming area that celebrates its heritage and plays its part on the regional and national stage. We will continue to invest in our neighbourhoods so that they are places where people are proud to live.

Overall 'Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities' corporate theme delivery position as at 30th September 2019.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To re-invest in highways network particularly improvements to our residential roads, streets and pavements

- Phase 2 Improvement works are now fully completed with improvements to A, B C & residential roads being undertaken.
- Final costs being determined to enable the development of a Phase 3 - 20/21 programme.
- Other related works have included new safety barriers, bus stops and works related to the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement.
- We continue to maintain the Highway network in line with the Highway Maintenance Plan.
- We continue to move forward on the development of the Highways Asset Management Plan in conjunction with County Surveyor's Society Wales CSS[w].

To increase rates of recycling to enable us to achieve national targets

- A Strategic Outline Business Case has been submitted to Welsh Government to consider a second household waste recycling centre at Roseheyworth.
- Side waste enforcement has been completed throughout Blaenau Gwent. Work will now be undertaken to consider the implementation of the policy and findings will be reported through the democratic process in due course.



INVOLVEMENT -

Public buy in to recycling & side waste policy remains a challenge, further media & public engagement to improve awareness around recycling is taking place.

How we currently perform



62.7% of waste is reused, recycled or composted



93.3% of streets are clean



91.3% of Bridge Inspections have been carried out



78% of fly tipping incidents have been cleared within 5 working days



9 Street Scene Engagement roadshows have been held

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control

- The service has continued to invest in cleansing activity across the area with particular focus around grass cutting and seasonal related activities. There will be continued engagement with the public to encourage waste recycling and to discourage fly tipping.
- We continue to engage with Community Groups around collective litter picking activities.
- Preparation for the next round of Public Engagement road shows is ongoing and these will take place in November
- The Cleanliness Indicator increased this year to 66.3, the second highest figure recorded to date in Blaenau Gwent.
- 98% of streets surveyed were awarded a B grade or above, the highest figure for Blaenau Gwent to date.

To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors

- We continue to work across the area with our community groups, internal and external partners to improve the quality of and access to green space. Funding has been secured to develop our Integrated Network Maps Active Travel Plans further over the next 12 months.
- Working collaboratively with the Gwent Local Authorities two major funding applications have been developed and submitted to Welsh Government using the Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being (ENRaW) Funding. These have been approved in principle.
- Valleys Regional Park money secured for Bryn Bach park and will provide a new play area & bunk house provisions.
- Progress on key projects include:-
 - * completion of 'Granny's Wood', a £73,000 funded project which reinstated a pathway from the centre of the village to the site of the Llanhilleth Colliery Memorial which has been refurbished. It has established a new start and finish point for the Ebbw Fach Trail and created a Heritage, Wildlife & Woodland Walk for those within the community and visitors to the area;
 - * 'BG on the Move' , a local wildlife and natural environment initiative is nearing completion;
 - * completion of this year's 'Invasive Weeds' programme; and
 - * work with a local farmer to cut & gather 5 hectatres [108 bales of hay] from numerous public green network sites programme.

INTEGRATION - The Council works together to improve school buildings to assist in enhancing the quality of educational achievement.

Community Services has worked closely with Education to ensure that the new Six Bells school was completed within time & budget. September term commenced with teachers & children into new school. Support also continues through proactive maintenance of buildings and Service Level Agreement's across a range of key operational areas - catering, cleaning, energy and moving forward on Band B programme of 21 Century Schools programme.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To build the relationships across the Council to support organisations and partners to deliver services in different ways whilst taking a strategic approach to the management of our land and property services in different ways (Community Asset Transfers)

- The majority of non operational buildings have now been disposed of or demolished.
- The service continues to work with the community groups who have leased buildings and grounds by offering technical advice and assistance.
- We continue to improve relationships with CAT leasees via the Blaenau Gwent Community Asset Transfer officer.
- 95% of Grounds CATs have been completed.
- The Community Asset Transfers have been a challenging task, continued assistance is needed to help them take on the assets. Some of these may eventually transfer back if the right help is not secured for them now.
- The 4 outstanding Community Asset Transfers, Llanhilleth, Ebbw Vale, Brynithel & Tredegar are to be resolved via a matrix selection.
- We continue to develop and drive the collaboration agenda particularly within technical services with regular meetings taking place with Client Authorities.



COLLABORATION -

The Council has been actively involved in two important projects to consider how public services across Gwent can collaboratively work together to reduce the regions carbon footprint. The first of these projects involved a review of the fleet of vehicles each public service has across the area, and what opportunities there are to work individually and collaboratively to reduce the impact of our fleet on the environment. The second project has been looking at the opportunities across Gwent to set up electric charging points, including identifying appropriate sites and where funding is available nationally to take the project forward. Moving forward, the Council will look to work with partners to consider the findings of the carbon reduction projects and consider the individual and collective action that can be taken forward to help mitigate our carbon emissions as a public service provider.

Case Study

Six Bells Primary Campus

The new Six Bells Primary Campus, part of the Abertillery Learning Community, recently opened its doors following the successful delivery of the construction contract, Project Managed by Community Services, in partnership with Education Transformation.

The success of the project can mainly be attributable to the development of a strong delivery team and collaborative working partnership with the appointed principle contractor, Morgan Sindall. Community Services provided strong professional services across all sections of the department, including, but not limited to, Project Management, architectural services, mechanical and electrical design and supervision services, cost management and engineering consultation.

Prior to the construction period and throughout the project there were numerous Consultation and Community Engagement events. The contractor also demonstrated and delivered Employment and Training and Community Benefits far exceeding their contractual requirements.

During the construction period visits were facilitated for the pupils and staff. Just prior to opening additional visits were arranged for parents and pupils. It was extremely pleasing to receive such positive feedback during these visits and the smiling faces of the children are proof of a successful project.



Case Study – School Workshops, Keep Wales Tidy Marine Clean Cymru Campaign

As part of Keep Wales Tidy Marine Clean Cymru Campaign a number of school workshops have been delivered.

- One of these workshops was at Bryn Bach Park on 25th September (which was also Recycling Week) where 4 pupils from St Mary CIW, Blaenycwm, Deighton, Georgetown, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, Willowtown, Rhos Y Fedwen and All Saint RC Primary Schools attended. The workshop involved a litter pick (whereby 15 bags of litter were collected. We then examined different items of rubbish and sorted them into what could and could not be recycled and into their relevant categories. To highlight the importance of recycling and the impacts it can have on the local environment and biodiversity the children made 'junk monsters'.



How 'Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going. These are split by both local and national indicators.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
Percentage of streets that are clean	National	95.52	93%	93%	-	-	↔
Percentage of people living within 400m of their nearest area of Greenspace in Blaenau Gwent	Local	85% (LDP target)**	Annual				
Average number of working days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents	National (new)	6.2	10.6	4.6	-	-	↑
Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted	National	56.77%	56.6%	62.7%	-	-	↑
Kilograms of residual waste generated per person	National (new)	TBC	52.6	39.6	-	-	↑
Number of Community Asset Transfers that are actively operating within Blaenau Gwent	Local	TBC	39	40	-	-	↑
Percentage of active Community Asset Transfer's within Blaenau Gwent that have been successfully operating for 6 months or more	Local	20	51	50	-	-	↔
Number of Community Asset Transfers implemented during the period	Local	TBC	19	1	-	-	-

How 'Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

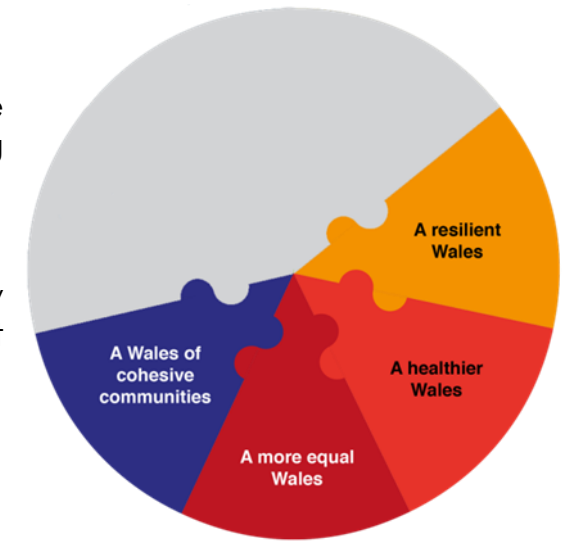
The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going. These are split by both local and national indicators.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	National	293.2	337.8	347.8	-	-	↓
Number of visits to local authority sport and leisure facilities during the year per 1,000 population	National	9,082.7		Being calculated	-	-	
Percentage of principal A roads that are in overall poor condition	National	2.6	-	-	-	-	Annual
Percentage of principal B roads that are in overall poor condition	National	5.6	-	-	-	-	Annual
Percentage of principal C roads that are in overall poor condition	National	5.5	-	-	-	-	Annual
Percentage of food establishments which are 'broadly compliant' with food hygiene standards	National	92.3	92.4	90.1	-	-	↓

Why this is important

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.



Progress against actions

A number of high level priorities (shown below) have been identified to support delivery of the 'Economic Development and Regeneration' corporate theme. These are detailed in the following overview pages along with some associated achievements and challenges.

Priorities:-

- To increase the start-up business rate, retention and growth of local businesses and attract new inward investment;
- 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 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 section reflects the overall progress position for the delivery of the '**Economic Development and Regeneration**' priority theme of the Corporate Plan, along with a breakdown of each individual priority, highlighting progress, achievements and challenges.*

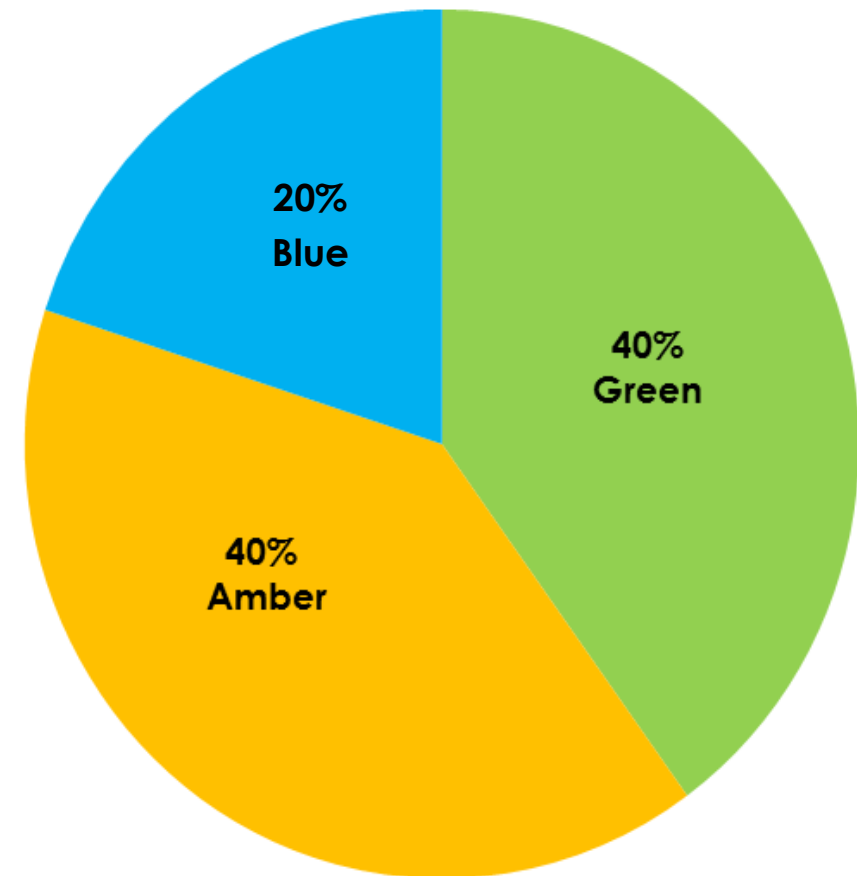
How we performed

Throughout quarter 1 & 2 there has been progress in the implementation of the Economic Development and Regeneration priorities but It is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives over the remainder of the Corporate Plan.

By the 30th September 2019, performance for Economic Development and Regeneration was **evaluated as being mainly successful as 20% were blue (completed), 40% of the actions were green (on target) and 40% were amber (behind target)**. When considering **trend against the performance indicators two saw an improvement, two declined and one has no comparative trend**.

Economic Development and Regeneration supports a number of regional programmes that are taking place within the area including the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Tech Valleys and the Valleys Task Force.

Overall 'Economic Development and Regeneration' corporate theme delivery position as at 30th September 2019.



Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To increase the start-up business rate, retention and growth of local businesses and attract new inward investment

- The Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Strategy has been drafted in partnership with the Enterprise Board (private sector). Support provided for start ups and businesses is being increased through partnership working with business support agencies and specialists.
- Indigenous businesses & inward investment - Enquiries remain active from local businesses regarding expansion and financial plans. The environment remains buoyant. Industrial units are being built (both from the private sector and local authority) to support expansion plans of local and inward investment businesses.
- The Thales project is ongoing and the Regeneration's Project team are working on plans for an extension for the building and The Box Works project is ongoing and will be available for businesses from March/April 2020.

To work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords and private developers to provide a variety of homes

- 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.
- Additional Social Housing Grant has been allocated for 2019/20 this has been assigned to Tai Calon, bringing them into programme. This will assist in their first development of approximately 24 units, on the former Glanffrwyd Site.
- Brynserth (Golwg y Bryn) sales launch event has been held, 6 of the 8 homes available have been reserved and it is anticipated the first homes will be available Dec 2019/early 2020.
- Options on the housing review are currently being considered including a regional approach in collaboration with Gwent partners, (akin to the regional Homelessness Strategy).

How we currently perform



59 households met threshold for being threatened with homelessness. Of these, 41 successfully prevented-69.5%



In Blaenau Gwent 73.5% (32,700) were Economically Active



13.4% more business Start ups compared with the same period last year.



99% of Planning Applications determined within timescales



84% Occupied floor space of business units

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To work with partners to provide effective employment support and access to skills development

- The employment and skills stakeholder event was held and proved to be a successful and interactive session which involved over 70 attendees. There was representation from Education, Further Education, Business, Employment and the Public Service Board. The findings are currently being collated in order to prepare the plan and next steps.
- Recruitment and induction of apprentices was 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.
- A 'best practice' proposal was sent to the Valleys Task Force (VTF) outlining a partnership approach to deliver the Shared Apprenticeship Programme across VTF areas.
- The employment liaison work includes 8 companies engaged and the project continues to receive new referrals. Training opportunities are being promoted in areas such as health and safety, first aid, CSCS and ICT, delivered through a range of partners.
- Work to identify and deliver community benefits continues, an example of which being Sirhowy Nursery Site:
 - The Star Centre applied for funding to pay for internet access for 2 years so they can provide support with Homework clubs, Job search clubs, and Universal Credit support.
 - Provided a new Fridge Freezer so that local business can supply the general public free food which is near to the use by dates.
 - School engagement - artist worked with children 6 weeks to design mosaics one for school and one for site.

To develop digital infrastructure and improve connectivity by promoting digital participation

- GovTech Catalyst Project has completed Phase one and progression into Phase two has commenced. This project is aimed at looking at how we can use our assets to collect information and relay that information to help us deliver our services more efficiently. Options tested in phase one included:
 - detection of potholes using camera technology mounted on refuse, recycling fleet - no driver intervention required; and
 - recycling participation levels identifying properties where recycling is out for collection or recycling containers being emptied.
- There are currently delays to the delivery of the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) project which is being delivered by the CCRCDD. Awaiting an update on progress.



COLLABORATION -

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.

Overview - Quarters 1 & 2

To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits

- Phase 1a of the ReFit project continues with lighting schemes being completed in almost all of the buildings within this phase which includes Corporate Buildings, Leisure Trust Buildings and Willowtown Primary School. Bedwellty House and Park will also have new lighting in the near future
- ReFit Phase 1b focusses on schools with engagement ongoing with Headteachers and Governing Bodies.
- To support the DRiVE Project, SRS have been commissioned to assist in installing additional metering and are working with our building management system company to upgrade our system from Trend 965 to Trend IQ Vision. The costs associated with this upgrade are being met through the project and we will use this system to extract and supply to partners monthly reports on energy (electricity and heat) from buildings utilising our District Energy Network.
- The Smart Living Demonstrator Energy Catalyst Project is reaching the end of Phase 2. Opportunities explored in this phase through engagement with businesses across Blaenau Gwent include energy brokering and materials brokering (inc. solar panels and lighting).
- Energy prospectus completed in draft, however, securing investment to carry out the development of the energy opportunities contained within the energy prospectus is a challenge. A range of options to fund projects are being investigated including borrowing, green bonds and seeking private investment.

To work with partners to develop a new vision for our town centres ensuring their long term future

- 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 alongside a Quantity Surveyor from Technical Services and the property solicitor from Development and Estates.
- Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative - Tredegar Arms works are nearing completion and the owners are 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.
- Works are also due to start on site for the NCB building (the building is Grade 2 listed) in early October.
- Targeted Regeneration Investment (TRI) funding has been secured for the Eugene Cross Park site. Meetings scheduled with Ebbw Vale rugby club representatives and other groups to identify potential options for the site including opportunities for the match funding required to deliver against the TRI funding.



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 – 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.

How 'Economic Development and Regeneration' Performed in quarters 1 & 2

The Council has identified a number of performance measures to evidence how well delivery of the Corporate Objectives is going. These are split by both local and national indicators.

Performance Indicator	National / Local	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Quarterly Performance Trend
House building completions	Local	TBC	5	22	-	-	↑
Number of affordable housing units delivered per 10,000 households	National (new)	TBC	Annual				
Number of Business start-ups supported (directly created as a result of targeted support from the council)	Local (available)	14	9	2	-	-	↓
Percentage of occupied floor space of available council business units	Local (available)	85%	83%	84%	-	-	↑
Percentage of empty private properties brought back into use during the year through direct action by the LA	National	3.3	Annual				
Percentage of all planning applications determined within required time periods	National	97.3	100%	99%	-	-	↓
Percentage of appeals against planning application decisions dismissed	National	63.6	100%	100%	-	-	↔

Financial Management

2019/20 Forecast (as at 30th September 2019)

Revenue Budget				
Portfolio	£,000 Budget 19/20	£,000 Forecast 19/20	£,000 Variance Favourable/ (Adverse)	Favourable/ (Adverse) Variance %
Corporate Services & Financial Management & Strategy	14,718	14,643	75	0.51
Economy	1,515	1,437	78	5.1
Education	55,477	55,541	(64)	(0.16)
Environment	29,530	29,790	(259)	(0.9)
Licensing	65	75	(10)	(15.4)
Planning	1,056	1,057	(1)	(0.1)
Social Services	44,915	44,740	175	0.39
Council Total	147,276	147,283	(7)	0.002

Current Budget Position:

The overall forecast financial position across all portfolios to 31 March 2020, is a small adverse variance of £7,000, (as at 30 September 2019) against a net revenue budget of £147.3m. This is an improved forecast when compared to Q1 (£150,000 adverse) and evidences the robust budgetary controls operating within the Council.

Preventative measures, including the Supporting Change Team & the MYST project are having a positive impact on expenditure and when combined with the Supporting Sustainable Social Services grant of £762,000 has contributed to the favourable variance against the Social Services budget.

The most significant adverse variance is within the Environment Portfolio, including Waste Services (£104,000) and in the Corporate Landlord budget (£63,000).

Capital Budget			
Portfolio	£,000 Budget 19/20	£,000 Variance	Favourable/ (Adverse) Variance %
Corporate Services & Strategy	227	0	0.0
Environment, Economy & Infrastructure	10,107	0	0.0
Social Services - Adult & Children	1,408	0	0.0
Education, Active Living and Learning	6,627	0	0.0
All Portfolios	789	0	0.0
Council Total	19,158	0	0.0

Current Budget Position:

As at September 2019, it is forecast that expenditure against projects within the capital programme will be within budget (in year funding available £19m).

There has been a £1.2m increase in capital funding since quarter 1.

Regulatory Proposals

The Council is subject to numerous internal and external audits and regulatory reviews each year which ensures local authorities provide value for money when delivering services, services are being run efficiently and effectively, and identifies local authorities approach in planning and delivering improved services in the future. This section aims to capture the progress being made against these proposals.

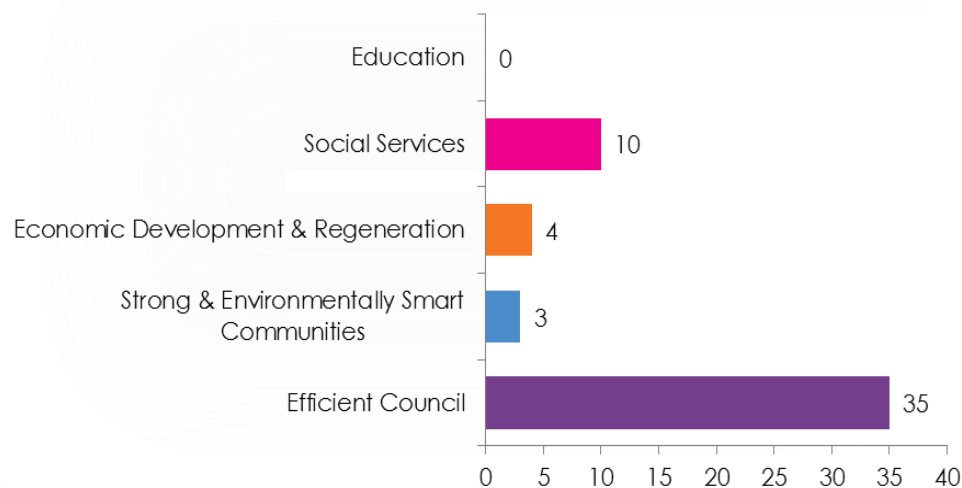
Reports and Proposals

At 30th September 2019 there are **31** audit reports. Of those:-

- 15 Reports still in initial stages, either newly received where the Council will be subject to review or currently proceeding through the Democratic process for approval by Members; and
- 16 reports where 52 proposals for improvement are being monitored via business plans.

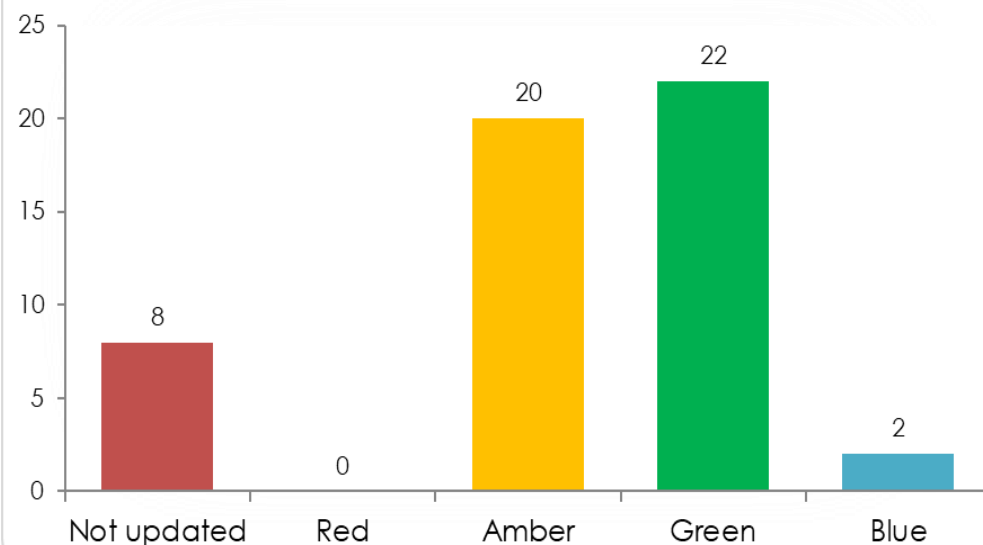
Open proposals for improvement

Open Proposals for Improvement by Corporate Plan Theme



Current proposals status

Current Proposal Status



Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>CRR20 -</p> <p>There is a risk that increasingly complex needs and demand for services provided by Social Services and Education, in particular for Looked After Children, will put further significant pressure on the Council's budget.</p> <p>Director of Social Services and Councillor John Mason</p>	<p>This remains a volatile area and it is impossible to predict an ideal number of children looked after per head of population. The population of children looked after is affected by multiple variables outside the immediate control of the local authority and, in that respect, we must be both proactive and reactive. The Children's Services IAA is implementing the principle of Early Action Together; this places an officer from Gwent Police in our IAA service which, in turn, enables multi-agency screening of referrals. Having a police presence in the IAA service also enables us to undertake basic checks and swifter risk assessment of extended family when it is deemed too risky for children to remain in the care of their parents.</p> <p>ICF funding has been used to develop a 'Mediation Worker' post for those young people and their families experiencing significant relationship tensions. This is intended to prevent family breakdown being a reason for young becoming looked after. The Supporting Change Team continues to provide intensive support services for those children identified as being at risk of becoming Looked After and quarterly monitoring undertaken by the senior management team is demonstrating the efficacy of the team's work.</p> <p>The MyST (My Support Team) is now fully operational and working at capacity. The remit of the team is to work intensively with children who are in residential provision with the aim of helping them return to a foster placement or family environment if possible. The team also works with children, families and carers where there is a risk of having to move to residential provision with the aim of preventing that escalation. Our Placement Team continues its recruitment process and we continue to work collaboratively to commission high quality foster placements for our children looked after. The newly developed Special Guardianship Support Team already shows that foster placements are being converted to Special Guardianship placements thus reducing the numbers of children Looked After by the Local Authority.</p>	<p>Critical</p>

Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>CRR1 -</p> <p>Failure to deliver and sustain the changes required to ensure that vital services are prioritised within the financial constraints faced by the Council.</p> <p>Managing Director and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has made good progress in starting to strengthen its financial resilience – achieving a balanced revenue budget in 2018/19 and forecasting a balanced budget for 2019/20 as well as increasing the level of reserves (both general and ear-marked) during 2018/19; financial management is improving with all Senior Managers having performance objectives in their annual performance reviews to make them accountable for the management of their budgets and for delivering a balanced position; • The MTFS has been reviewed and the draft agreed by Council in July 2019, further work will now be done before the final document is presented to Council for final approval in December 2019; • The Bridging the Gap Programme has been agreed – in draft – by Council in July 2019 and this will support the MTFS and address the shortfall in funding over the next 5 years whilst protecting as far as possible front line services; work has commenced on Strategic Business Reviews to deliver the efficiencies and cost reductions required and there will be reports to Scrutiny Committees through October/November on the proposals which will achieve budget reductions in 2020/21; • The new structure for the Commercial Team is being put in place with one key appointment remaining and this new team will support the move to becoming a more commercially minded Council; • Work has commenced on the Commercial Strategy which will support the development of a more commercial culture and approach across the organisation and all service areas; this has been presented to and discussed with all Senior Managers at Managers Conferences in October; • There has been a strengthening of the understanding of the road map in relation to ICT and determination of the level of investment is required to support service improvement and commercial activity; • The Leisure Review is progressing with Phase 2 report now completed and the Council now undertaking the agreed next actions which is to complete a soft market testing exercise to assess the potential for sustainable service delivery; • Due diligence in relation to the review of Silent Valley Waste Management Ltd has been completed and the Project Team is now reviewing the viable options in advance of a report to Members. 	High

Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>CRR14</p> <p>Failure to improve staff attendance rates within the Council will lead to an unacceptable impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively and financially support the cost of sickness absence.</p> <p>Head of Organisational Development and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Sickness absence report to CLT September 2019 – report to progress to Corporate Overview Scrutiny on agenda for December 2019 (moved because of cancellation of October meeting) • Quarter 1 figures show a worsening position in comparison to this time last year – Corporate figure 3.11 average days per employee – on CLT agenda for 29/10/19 • Senior HR Business Partners working with Directorates to target 'hotspots' – those areas exceeding the Corporate target of 2.75 days – further analysis of the 'hotspot' areas to be undertaken • Training to raise awareness of mental health for managers and staff to be programmed for the new year in 2020 • Discussion held with Strategic HR Head teachers group and agreement to form a project team to review the Managing Attendance Policy for Schools aligning to the learning of the Corporate review of sickness absence • Managing Attendance policy layout to be simplified with the use of managerial guidance – early new year 2020 • Plans developing for the retendering process for Occupational Health – this will include consideration of an employee assistance programme • Awareness raising on sickness absence will feature as part of the staff newsletter. 	High
<p>CRR19</p> <p>If the Council does not manage its information assets in accordance with requirements set down within legislation, then it may be faced with financial penalties and possible sanctions that hinder service delivery.</p> <p>Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p>The Information Governance Forum (IGF) reconvened in September 2019 with the Terms of Reference reviewed and agreement to now meet on a quarterly basis. At the first meeting, the Information Asset Owners (IAOs) have been reviewed and approved. Going forward this group will be critical in identifying risks and driving improvements and messages across the council. A revised Information Security Policy has been considered by the IGF and will now progress to CLT prior to adoption by Members. The Record Retention and Disposal Policy has been reviewed and approved and will shortly be promoted to all staff.</p>	High

Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>CRR21</p> <p>The Financial resilience of the Council could be at risk if the Council does not ensure that financial planning and management decisions support long term stability and sustainability.</p> <p>Chief Officer – Resources and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p>The Council has considered a draft Medium Term Financial Strategy covering a 5 year period to 2024/25. Included within the strategy is an assessment of the spending requirements the Council is likely to face to deliver its priorities and the level of cuts i.e. reducing or stopping services that will need to be made to ensure the Council can set a balanced budget each year. Planning now to meet known or anticipated changes in the future provides greater opportunity to phase in the impact of the changes.</p> <p>To deal with potential gaps between anticipated funding and expenditure the Bridging the Gap programme has been developed that aims to build financial resilience. Based on strategic themes, over the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the programme will identify savings opportunities, potential cost avoidance and new revenue streams. Designed to support a balanced budget it is also focussed on creating the conditions of a commercially minded council.</p> <p>Financial resilience is a Council priority and this includes ensuring that reserves are adequate to be able to respond to unexpected events, emerging need or unforeseen budget pressures. During 2018/19 the overall level of the Council's reserves increased and during 2019/20 it is forecast that the General Reserve will increase to £6.1m (an additional £240,000).</p> <p>Given the current level of the General Reserve, it is not planned to utilise any of this reserve to balance the annual budget. The establishment of a budget contingency within the annual budget setting process is proposed.</p>	High
<p>CRR22</p> <p>Failure to deliver the Council's priorities within the agreed annual budget resulting in the increased use of emergency finance measures and the drawdown of reserves.</p> <p>Chief Officer – Resources and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p>In agreeing the 2018/19 & 2019/20 revenue budget, the Council agreed additional budget to address cost pressures within priority areas.</p> <p>During 2019/2020 the revenue budget monitoring reports indicate that the Council will be in a breakeven position at the end of the year. This forecast has improved when compared to the 2018/19 position and the 2019/20 quarter 1 position (forecast of £150k adverse variance). Within the forecast, an assessment of delivery of the budget savings indicate that 97% have / will be delivered.</p>	Medium

Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>CRR24</p> <p>There is a risk that exiting the EU will have an adverse impact at a national and local level which could impact on the community and on the Council and its ability to deliver public services.</p> <p>Managing Director / Head of Governance and Partnerships and Councillor Nigel Daniels</p>	<p>Preparations for exiting the EU intensified during this period and there was a noticeable increase in communications with WLGA and Welsh Government as the 31st October 2019 Brexit deadline approached. The Brexit core planning group continued to meet on a monthly basis, sometimes more frequently where necessary, to review the planning process and ensure robust processes are in place to mitigate against the risks or take advantage of any opportunities associated with the UK's exit from the EU. The planning group focussed on the challenges that presented the most pressing risks to the local authority, such as risks associated with no-deal Brexit relating to social care, supply chains for essential goods (food, fuel, medical supplies etc.) and demand on the council workforce, as well as maintaining lines of communication with local businesses to support them through the Brexit process where necessary.</p> <p>The council has utilised the EU Transition Funding from Welsh Government (secured by WLGA on behalf of all local authorities) to prepare for Brexit by appointing the corporate policy officer as the Brexit coordinator. Two sub-regional community cohesion officers funded by the EU Transition Fund are also now in post. These officers have been monitoring community cohesion and raising awareness of the EU settlement scheme amongst local EU citizens since July.</p>	High
<p>CRR7</p> <p>Failure of schools in Blaenau Gwent to adapt and change accordingly to the requirements of the new curriculum and national agenda of the Welsh Government as laid out in the National reform agenda document "Education for Wales: Our national Mission".</p> <p>Director of Education and Councillor Jo Collins</p>	<p>Schools have responded well to all professional learning opportunities provided by the EAS. Learning Network schools in Blaenau Gwent are working well with schools in the Borough and across the region. Elected members are beginning to develop a shared understanding about the requirements of the new reporting arrangements linked to the national requirements to reduce high stakes accountability measures and approaches. Schools in the Borough performed at expectation when compared with schools in the region and using residuals (Scrutiny Report 25th October 2019). The midyear update of the Education Directorate's Business Improvement Plan evidences that progress has been made against our key priorities for last year, particularly in English in all Phases and key stages and at the higher A*/A level at GCSE, for eFSM pupils and improvements in boys' progress and performance. Schools support each other well and the school categorisation profile has improved significantly over the last 3 years. In summary schools are responding well to the changes and the outcomes of self-evaluation processes identify clear areas for ongoing improvement.</p>	Medium

Corporate Risk Register

Risk Description and Lead	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>New Risk identified for Quarter 3</p> <p>The 2 schools currently in receipt of Council Intervention fail to make appropriate progress against the Statutory Warning Notice to Improve and their Post Inspection Action Plans.</p> <p>Director of Education and Councillor Jo Collins</p>	<p>Progress updates will be provided from Quarter 3</p>	<p>Medium</p>

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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: **Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **5th December 2019**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme – 5th December 2019**

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

Report Submitted by: **Cllr Stewart Healy, Chair of the Corporate
Overview Scrutiny Committee**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x				05.12.19			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 8th 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 / July 2019, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the 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 on 8th 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 on 8th January 2020, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme - Meeting on 8th January 2020

Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programme

Scrutiny Meeting Date: Wednesday 8th January 2020

Scrutiny Deadline to receive reports: Monday 16th December 2019

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Report	Method/ Expert Witness/Exec Member	CLT Sign Off	Executive Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
CCTV Progress Report	Bernadette Elias	Monitoring Members to receive a progress report.	Agenda Item	10.12.19	Info Item - 29.01.20	N/A
Organisational Development Policies	Andrea Prosser	Policy Development To review policies.	Agenda Item	10.12.19	N/A	06.02.20
INFORMATION ITEMS						
Information Management Monitoring Report	Rhian Hayden	Information To provide information of progress against identified action on a half yearly cycle.	Information Item	19.11.19	N/A	N/A

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