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THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

Dydd Mercher, 6 Ionawr 2021 Dydd Mercher, 6 Ionawr 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

PWYLLGOR GWAITH

A meeting of the Pwyllgor Gwaith will be held in Ystafell y Weithrediaeth, Canolfan Ddinesig, Glynebwy on Dydd Mercher, 13eg Ionawr, 2021 at 10.00 am.

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. CYFIEITHU AR Y PRYD

Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod gwaith o rybudd os dymunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais.

2. YMDDIHEURIADAU

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

Derbyn ymddiheuriadau

3. DATGANIADAU BUDDIANT A GODDEFEBAU

Derbynd datganiadau buddiant a goddefebau.

MATERION CYFFREDINOL

COFNODION

4. PWYLLGOR GWEITHREDOL 7 - 22

Ystyried cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd ar 9 Rhagfyr 2020.

5. CYFARFOD ARBENNIG O'R PWYLLGOR GWEITHREDOL 23 - 26

Ystyried cofnodion y cyfarfod arbennig a gynhaliwyd ar 15 Rhagfyr 2020.

EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION GWASANAETHAU CORFFORAETHOL

6. BLAENRAGLEN GWAITH – 24 CHWEFROR 2021 27 - 32

Ystyried yr adroddiad.

7. GRANTIAU I SEFYDLIADAU 33 - 34

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Adnoddau.

EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION ADFYWIO A DATBLYGU ECONOMAIDD

8. CYNLLUN ARGYFWNG BWS (BES) 35 - 44

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

EITEMAU MONITRO - GWASANAETHAU CORFFORAETHOL

9. ADOLYGIAD PERFFORMIAD BARGEN DDINESIG 45 - 52

PRIFDDINAS-RANBARTH CAERDYDD 2020/21
CHWARTER 1

Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Gyfarwyddwr a'r Pennaeth Adfywio.

10. **MONITRO PERFFORMIAD STRATEGAETH CYFATHREBU CORFFORAETHOL** 53 - 62

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Masnachol.

11. **MONITRO PERFFORMIAD STRATEGAETH FASNACHOL** 63 - 72

Ystyried adroddiad y Prif Swyddog Masnachol.

12. **PARATOADAU PONTIO GADAEI YR UNDEB EWROPEAIDD** 73 - 90

Ystyried adroddiad Pennaeth Llywodraethiant a Phartneriaethau.

13. **PERFFORMIAD ABSENOLDEB SALWCH** 91 - 104

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Datblygu Sefydliadol.

EITEMAU MONITRO - ADFYWIO A DATBLYGU ECONOMAIDD

14. **ADOLYGIAD BLYNYDDOL PROSBECTWS YNNI** 105 - 130

Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Tîm Cyfleoedd Adfywio.

EITEMAU MONITRO - YR AMGYLCHEDD

15. **GORFODAETH PARCIO SIFIL – DIWEDDARIAD GWASANAETH** 131 - 142

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

16. **ADRODDIAD GWEITHGAREDDAU – GORFODAETH GORCHYMYN SBWRIEL A RHEOLI CŴN AR GYFER BLWYDDYN ARIANNOL 2019/20** 143 - 160

Ystyried adroddiad Rheolwr Tîm Diogelu'r Amgylchedd.

17. **UCHELDIR CYDNERTH DE DDWYRAIN CYMRU –
CYNLLUN RHELI CYNALIADWY RHAGLEN
DATBLYGU GWLEDIG CYMRU** 161 - 190

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Gwasanaethau
Cymunedol.

EITEMAU MONITRO – ADDYSG

18. **CYNLLUN STRATEGOL CYMRAEG MEWN ADDYSG
2019/20 BLAENAU GWENT AC ADRODDIAD
CYNNYDD AR Y CYNNIG GRANT CYFRWNG
CYMRAEG** 191 - 218

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol
Addysg.

19. **RHAGLEN GWELLA YSGOLION 2020** 219 - 242

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol
Addysg.

20. **RHEOLI LLEOEDD DISGYBLION A'R STAD
YSGOLION 2019/2020** 243 - 288

Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Trawsnewid Addysg.

21. **TGCH ADDYSG – PROSIECT CYSYLLTEDD
SEILWAITH** 289 - 296

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol
Addysg.

EITEMAU MONITRO - GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL

22. **DIWEDDARIAD CRONFA GOFAL INTEGREDIG (ICF)
2019/20** 297 - 306

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Gwasanaethau
Oedolion.

23. **EITEM(AU) EITHREDIG**

Derbyn ac ystyried yr adroddiadau dilynol sydd ym marn
y swyddog priodol yn eitemau eithriedig gan roi
ystyriaeth i'r prawf budd cyhoeddus ac y dylid eithrio'r
wasg a'r cyhoedd o'r cyfarfod (mae'r rheswm am y

penderfyniadau dros yr eithriadau ar gael ar restr a gedwir gan y swyddog priodol).

EITEMAU ER PENDERFYNIAD - MATERION YR AMGYLCHEDD

24. DIWEDDARIAD AR GAPASITI CLADDEDIGAETHAU MYNWENTYDD 307 - 322

Ystyried adroddiad y Rheolwr Tîm Golwg Strydoedd.

25. TROSGLWYDDO ASED AU CYMUNEDOL 323 - 332

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

EITEM ER PENDERFYNIAD – MATERION PORTFFOLIO AR Y CYD – MATERION ADFYWIO A DATBLYGU ECONOMAIDD A'R AMGYLCHEDD

26. CAIS I BRYDLESU TIR 333 - 358

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

EITEM ER PENDERFYNIAD – MATERION ADFYWIO A DATBLYGU ECONOMAIDD

27. TROSGLWYDDO ASED AU CYMUNEDOL 359 - 378

Oherwydd yr angen i ystyried yr eitem ddilynol fel mater o frys, mae Arweinydd y Cyngor wedi cadarnhau y gellir ystyried y mater dilynol dan Ddarpariaethau Paragraff 4(b), Adran 100(b) Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972.

RHESWM AM Y BRYS

Er mwyn osgoi oedi wrth i CRT symud ymlaen gyda gwaith dylunio a chontract a goblygiadau posibl ar gyfer cyllid.

Ystyried adroddiad y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Adfywio a Gwasanaethau Cymunedol.

To: N. Daniels (Cadeirydd)
J. Collins

D. Davies
J. Mason
J. Wilkins

All other Members (for information)
Manager Director
Chief Officers

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 9TH DECEMBER, 2020

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

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

**Deputy Leader/Executive Member –
Regeneration & Economic Development**
Councillor D. Davies

Executive Member – Education
Councillor J. Collins

Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins

Executive Member – Social Services
Councillor J. Mason

WITH: Corporate Director Social Services
 Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
 Corporate Director Education
 Chief Officer Resources
 Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
 Press Officer

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>An apology for absence was received from the Managing Director.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>The following declaration of interests were raised:-</p> <p>Councillor N. Daniels – Item No. 18 Councillor J. Mason – Item No. 25</p>	
	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p>	
No. 4	<p><u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 14th October, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 19th October, 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	

GENERAL MATTERS

6. CONFERENCES/COURSES

The Leader referred to the following course:-

Introduction to Planning Enforcement - Online Training – 09/11/2020

RESOLVED that approval be granted to Councillors D. Hancock and W. Hodgins, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee to attend.

DECISION ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES MATTERS

No. 7 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 13TH JANUARY, 2021

Consideration was given to the report of the Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and information contained therein be noted.

No. 8 THE CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR THE YEAR 2021/22

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

The Chief Officer Resources advised that the Council had a statutory requirement to calculate the Council Tax Base for each financial year. The Council Tax Base was a measure of the Authority's tax-raising capacity which was expressed in terms of the number of Band D equivalent dwellings taking account of exemptions reductions.

The Chief Officer Resources advised that the Council's Tax Base for the current year, 2020/2021 was set at 20,662.45 and for 2021/22 proposed the Council tax base be 20,794.09 which reflected the increase of 222 domestic properties in the last 12 months.

The Chief Officer further explained that there had been a review of council tax collection during 2019 which resulted in some changes to collection methods. Whilst in 2019/2020 there was an early indication of improved collection rates, the coronavirus pandemic has had a significant effect on current council tax collection rates across Wales and it was anticipated that this would continue into 2021/22. The Chief Officer Resources therefore felt it prudent to estimate the in-year collection for 2021/2022 to remain at 95%.

The report was welcomed by the Executive and the increased housing numbers was pleasing to note. It was advised that despite the pandemic there still remained great interest by developers in Blaenau Gwent.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and approved the Council Tax base calculation for 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix 1 tables 1 to 6 of the report, and that the council tax base for tax setting purposes be 20,794.09.

No. 9 **GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS**

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

The following additional grants were reported:-

ABERTILLERY

Cwmtillery Ward – Councillor T. Sharrem

1.	Friends of Blaenau Gwent Village	£50
2.	Blaenau Gwent Methodist Church	£100
3.	Abertillery BG RFC	£75
4.	Abertillery Belles FC	£75
5.	Abertillery Bluebirds AFC	£75
6.	St Paul's Church	£50
7.	St Paul's Church Hall	£50
8.	Six Bells Bowls Club	£75
9.	Abertillery Bowls Club	£75
10.	Cwmtillery Pigeon Club	£75
11.	Chillax	£50
12.	Abertillery Angling Club	£75
13.	Abertillery Excelsiors	£75
14.	Old Tylerians RFC	£75

15.	Bourneville Community Centre	£75
16.	Blaenau Gwent Baptist Church	£50
17.	Baptist Church Foodbank	£50

Llanhilleth Ward – Councillor J. Collins

1.	Clwb Llan	£150
2.	Llanhilleth Tenants and Residents Association	£300

Llanhilleth Ward – Councillor L. Parsons

1.	Clwb Llan	£150
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NANTYGLO & BLAINA

Blaina Ward – Councillor J. Morgan

1.	Ystruth Primary School PTA	£150
2.	Blaina Community Sports Club	£500

Blaina Ward – Councillor L. Winnett

1.	Ystruth Primary School PTA	£150
2.	Blaina Community Sports Club	£500

Blaina Ward – Councillor G. Collier

1.	Ystruth Primary School PTA	£150
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Nantyglo Ward – Councillors J. Mason & K. Rowson

1.	Hermon Cemetary Trust	£200
2.	1 st Blaina Scouts Group	£200

Nantyglo Ward – Councillor P. Baldwin

1.	BGfm	£200
2.	Hermon Cemetary Trust	£200
3.	Nantyglo OAP Hall	£100
4.	Winchestown OAP Hall	£100
5.	Wesleyan Methodist Church	£100
6.	Holy Trinity St. Anne Church	£100
7.	Coedcae Interact Club	£50

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|----|-------------------------|------|
| 8. | Nantyglo Community Shop | £100 |
| 9. | Nantyglo RFC | £150 |

BRYNWAWR

Brynmawr Ward – Councillor J. Hill

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Friends of North Ebbw Fach Interact | £100 |
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TREDEGAR

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

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Tredegar Miners Memorial Gates | £200 |
|----|--------------------------------|------|

Central & West Ward – Councillor M. Moore

- | | | |
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| 1. | Tredegar Miners Memorial Gates | £200 |
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RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.	
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DECISION ITEMS – EDUCATION MATTERS

No. 10	<u>360 DEGREE SAFE ONLINE SAFETY POLICY FOR SCHOOLS</u>
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Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.	
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The Corporate Director Education advised that the report sought Executive approval on the 360 Degree Safe Online Safety Policy for Schools. The Corporate Director noted that the proposed policy demonstrated an integrated approach to online safety across all schools and views had been sought from schools through the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), and the policy would need to be approved by the school governing bodies.	
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The Corporate Director Education felt that the report was timely with schools providing blended learning in response to Covid-19 and the policy had been welcomed by the DSLs. The policy encourages schools to make full use of digital technologies available to engage learners and improve learner outcomes.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein noted.

No. 11 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES**
SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.

The Corporate Director Education advised that the purpose of the report was to seek approval of the Blaenau Gwent Local Government Education Services Safeguarding Policy following its annual review. The Corporate Director spoke to the report and noted the updates which had been made to the Policy, as follows:-

- Reference to Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019, replacing previous reference to All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008;
- Inclusion of the Blaenau Gwent Youth Service safeguarding policy in appendix 3 of the policy;
- Inclusion of the safeguarding data collection protocol; and,
- Inclusion of a COVID-19 annex to reflect the current situation and reinforce the procedures for reporting concerns. This appendix can be updated regularly as the emergency situation develops and changes.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 1 be approved prior to the Education Directorate Safeguarding Policy being distributed to schools.

MONITORING ITEMS - CORPORATE SERVICES

**No. 12 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING – 2020/2021
FORECAST OUTTURN TO 31ST MARCH, 2021
(AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2020)**

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

The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report provided the forecast financial outturn position across all portfolios for the financial year 2020/2021 as at 30th September, 2020. There was an adverse variance of £3.402m before the application of Welsh Government Hardship funding which reduced the forecast adverse variance to £0.248m. This was an improved position compared to the forecast at June 2020 which indicated an adverse variance of £1.2m. The Chief Officer further reported the financial position across all portfolios and outlined the key points as detailed in the report.

The Chief Officer Resources advised that the appendices contained information on fees and charges as well as progress made against the Bridging the Gap programme. The Appendices also detailed actions which are being taken forward by Budget Holders to mitigate any forecast cost pressures.

The Leader was mindful that Executive Members respectively and as a collective monitored budgets on a regular basis and given the current situation felt that budgets had been managed well by Budget Holders. He was of the opinion that the Council was in a reasonable position and had hoped that with the much appreciated assistance from Welsh Government provided to Local Government it would help the Council in balancing the budget.

The Leader advised that next year's budget indication was due to be announced on the 22nd December, 2020 and it was hoped that the Council would continue the excellent work around financial management achieved in previous years.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the appropriate challenge was provided to the financial outcomes in the report.

<p>No. 13</p>	<p><u>CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, FORECAST FOR 2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR (AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2020)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Chief Officer Resources advised that the report provided an overview of each Portfolio’s actual and forecast capital expenditure against funding approvals for the 2020/2021 financial year as at 30th September, 2020. The Chief Officer spoke to the report and outlined the key pointed contained therein.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate challenge to the financial outcomes in the report be provided. • Continued to support appropriate financial control procedures agreed by Council. • the budgetary control and monitoring procedures in place within the Capital Team, to safeguard Authority funding be noted. 	
<p>No. 14</p>	<p><u>USE OF GENERAL AND EARMARKED RESERVES 2019/2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Officer Resources.</p> <p>The Leader advised that the Council had been criticised in previous years for their low levels of reserves, however over the last couple of years we have ensured that positive action had been taken to restore reserves to an acceptable level.</p> <p>At this juncture, the Leader invited the Chief Officer Resources to provide an overview of the report. The Chief Officer Resources noted the key points contained in the reported and referred the Executive to the forecast position for the general reserve at year-end 2020/2021 which would be a decrease of £0.048m, to £6.387m. This balance would represent 4.72% of net revenue expenditure, £0.973m above the 4% target level of £5.414m. These figures indicated further progress towards strengthening the financial resilience of the Council and providing a buffer to deal with unexpected future issues. There would be a need to mitigate the forecast year end adverse variance if these had not been addressed, however the level of reserves would still be above the target level which the Council had set for ourselves.</p>	

	<p>The Leader welcomed the report and felt it demonstrated the Council's commitment to manage our financial resilience. The Leader hoped that Budget Holders would continue to work hard to eradicate the budget deficits to prevent using monies from the Council's reserves.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered the impact of the £0.248m adverse variance for 2020/2021 would have on the budgeted contribution to the General Reserve; and • the forecast decrease of the General Reserve in 2020/2021 to £6.387m, being 4.72% of net revenue expenditure (above the 4% target level) be noted. • Continued to challenge budget overspends and implement appropriate service Action Plans, where required. 	
No. 15	<p><u>THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES 2019/2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Legal and Corporate Compliance.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the Executive are informed of the Council's performance with regard to complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, and that the report had been referred to the Audit Committee for assurance that the process for the monitoring of complaints is robust and the performance information provided reflects these practices.</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEM – ENVIRONMENT</u></p>	
No. 16	<p><u>FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (2016- 2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the progress made over the previous 12 months be noted.</p>	

<p>No. 17</p>	<p><u>BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE FORWARD PLAN (2019-2022) 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 2, that the annual report and activity recommended this year to meet the Section 6 Duty be noted.</p>	
	<p><u>MONITORING ITEMS – EDUCATION</u></p>	
<p>No. 18</p>	<p><u>OUTCOME OF THE LEISURE REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR THE ANEURIN LEISURE TRUST</u></p> <p>The Leader declared an interest in this item, however he was permitted to remain in the meeting during discussions.</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Education welcomed the report which would strengthen the working relationship between the Trust and the Local Authority.</p> <p>The Executive Member referred to Appendix 3 and proposed that the frequency of meetings be on a quarterly basis and not bi-annually as suggested with additional meetings called as and when required.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p> <p>FURTHER RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	

<p>No. 19</p>	<p><u>OUTCOMES 2019-2020: FOUNDATION PHASE, KEY STAGE 2, KEY STAGE 3, KEY STAGE 4</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education outlined the report and noted that there had been a relaxation in reporting school performance due to Covid-19 pandemic. The Corporate Director was pleased to update that there had been improved performance in KS4 across schools and the results were in line with the target set in the respective School Development Plans.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 20</p>	<p><u>BLAENAU GWENT EDUCATION SERVICES DRAFT SELF-EVALUATION FINDINGS</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education spoke to the report and outlined the ongoing self-evaluation processes undertaken within the Education Directorate, across the Council and with key partners. The Corporate Director further referred to the areas where good progress had been made and discussed areas where further improvements were required.</p> <p>The Executive Member for Education welcomed the report and wished to recognise the Blaenau Gwent's Youth Service. There had been many areas on improvement in the Youth Service and it had aspects of excellent practices. The Executive Member reported that the Youth Service had exceeded an all Wales average and had been joint winners for a National Youth Work Award.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	

<p>No. 21</p>	<p><u>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION OUTCOMES FOR EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS – AUTUMN TERM 2019 AND SPRING TERM 2020</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education advised that the report provided performance monitoring information regarding the inspections undertaken by ESTYN of educational establishments and an update of inspection outcomes for schools inspected during the Autumn term 2019 and Spring term 2020. The Corporate Director pointed out that these inspections had been undertaken in 2019/2020 and publication had been delayed due to the emergency response to Covid-19.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education further referred to the three inspections which had taken place and provided an overview of the feedback received.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 22</p>	<p><u>EDUCATION DIRECTORATE - RESPONSE TO COVID-19</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education advised that the report gave the Executive an opportunity to review the Education Directorate’s response to the COVID-19 situation, particularly supporting the schools during the emergency period. The Corporate Director spoke to the report and outlined the work undertaken in conjunction with corporate colleagues and schools.</p> <p>The Corporate Director referred to the decision taken by Blaenau Gwent to move to remote learning from the 10th December 2020 and advised that this decision had been based upon evidence of infection rates in Blaenau Gwent. The Corporate Director added that Blaenau Gwent currently had the 3rd highest number of cases across Wales with 574 cases per 100,000. These figures had a significant impact on our schools with 19 out of 25 schools affected, 1300 pupils and 66 members of staff currently off school self-isolating.</p>	

These figures had significant impact on face to face learning, and therefore, there was a compelling rationale in moving to remote learning.

There was a strong political and professional support with unanimous support from head teachers. The Public Health Professor, Head of Public Protection and Disease Control have supported the approach adopted by Blaenau Gwent. The Corporate Director stated that the Authority would provide support to vulnerable learners and free school meals during this period.

It was reported that head teachers had felt that remote learning would be more effective in the current circumstances. The Corporate Director Education concluded that the decision to move to remote learning was a local decision based on the local situation, which was right at this time.

The Executive Member for Education wished to thank the Education Directorate for their outstanding response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Executive Member concurred with comments raised by the Corporate Director and stated that the decision to move to blended learning was based on a strong rationale. The decision had received unanimous support from head teachers and had been particularly welcomed in the Tredegar cluster where schools had been closed due to the rise in infection. The Executive Member fully supported the decision taken by the Leadership of the Council and felt this was a good decision for Blaenau Gwent.

The Leader also supported the decision to move to blended learning across all schools in Blaenau Gwent and advised that it was not a decision which the Council had taken lightly. He felt that the Executive Member for Education and Corporate Director Education had taken a decision which was best for Blaenau Gwent. It had received unanimous support from across schools and had been welcomed by parents

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.

MONITORING ITEMS – SOCIAL SERVICES

No. 23 UPDATE ON STRATEGY TO SAFELY REDUCE THE NUMBERS OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

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

The Corporate Director Social Services advised that the report provided a progress update on the three-year strategy to safely reduce the numbers of looked after children. The Corporate Director noted since the strategy was introduced there has been a slow but steady decline in the numbers of Children Looked After from a high of 237 to 205 as at today. The Authority had successfully used additional funding from the Integrated Care Fund which had assisted in enhancing the Strategy and support our objectives of keeping families together and providing support to families on the edge of care. The strategy had been independently evaluated and was currently being refreshed for a new strategy in 2021.

The Corporate Director added that the work undertaken had helped keep families together and also reduced the number of children being placed in residential care. This has helped the Children Services budget, however, legal costs remain high but we have re-opened discussions with a neighbouring local authorities on possible legal support. This work had received a great deal of positive feedback from staff and families.

The Executive Member for Social Services welcomed the report which highlighted the positive work undertaken in Children Services and he wished to express his thanks to the Corporate Director, Head of Children Services and staff on the work behind this positive report.

The Leader advised that there had been some speciesism received when these measures were taken some 3 years ago. The Council was far from complacent and there still was a great deal of work to be undertaken. However, the Strategy was now seeing results and the Leader had hoped that this work would continue.

The Leader reiterated the comments raised in terms of the excellent work achieved in Children Services. The staff in Social Services and across the Council continue to work hard during the pandemic and the public are continually grateful.

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.

<p>No. 24</p>	<p><u>REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Social Services.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the report be accepted and Option 2 that the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board be supported.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – REGENERATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS</u></p>	
<p>No. 25</p>	<p><u>BRYNMAWR AND NANTYGLO MASTERPLAN</u></p> <p>The Executive Member for Social Services declared an interest in this item, however he was permitted to remain in the meeting during discussions.</p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing, that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and Option 2, to endorse the findings of the Brynmawr and Nantyglo Masterplan and agreed the next steps for work to be undertaken as detailed in the report.</p>	

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE –
15TH DECEMBER, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

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

**Deputy Leader/Executive Member –
Regeneration & Economic Development
Councillor D. Davies**

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

**Executive Member – Environment
Councillor J. Wilkins**

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

**WITH: Managing Director
Corporate Director Education
Chief Officer Resources
Head of Legal & Corporate Compliance
Press Officer**

DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

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

No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>No apologies for absence were received.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interests or dispensations were reported.</p>	
	<p><u>DECISION ITEMS – EDUCATION AND LEARNING MATTERS</u></p>	
No. 4	<p><u>WELSH-MEDIUM EDUCATION CONSULTATION PROPOSAL</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director Education.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education advised that the report sought the Executive’s approval to consult upon the creation of a new 210 places Welsh-medium primary school in the Tredegar/Sirhowy valley. The Corporate Director gave a background of the vision of Welsh Government and the National Strategy.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Education explained that the report had been considered by the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee along with the Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-20. The WESP was directly aligned to both the Welsh Government’s and the Council’s Welsh Language strategic frameworks and the Corporate Director outlined the strategic priorities in the WESP as detailed in the report.</p> <p>It was added that Blaenau Gwent was the only Authority in Wales with one Welsh-medium primary school and if the Council decided not to increase Welsh education there was limited scope for growth and development of the Welsh language in line with Welsh Government aspirations. The Corporate Director also noted that all neighbouring authorities had already undertaken or have intentions to consult on increasing Welsh medium primary provision in their respective areas.</p>	

The Corporate Director Education further spoke to the report and referred Members to the four key components of the proposal. The consultation timeline, if approved would commence on Thursday, 17th December, 2020 and would be concluded on Friday, 29th January, 2021. This timeline satisfied the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code's requirement of being 'live' over 20 school working days.

The Corporate Director Education reported that there were no capital financial implications associated with this proposal as 100% funding had been awarded. Further capital funding had also been awarded from Welsh Government from the Childcare Capital Grant. The Corporate Director advised that there would be revenue budget implications associated with the proposal in the medium to long term and Individual School Budgets would need to be increased from financial year 2023/2024. The funding required would grow annually as the school grew to capacity. There would be a positive financial impact on home to school transport as pupils from Ebbw Fawr and Tredegar areas would not need to be transported to Bro Helyg.

The financial impact, if the proposal was agreed would be included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Corporate Director added that the revenue funding and expenditure has been modelled over 7 years and was detailed in the appendices attached to the report.

At the invitation of the Leader, the Corporate Director Education outlined Appendices 3 and 4, which detailed the revenue implications against the preferred proposal.

The Executive Member for Education thanked the Corporate Director Education for the detailed overview of the report and appendices. The Executive Member pointed out that the report sought approval from the Executive to proceed to consultation to seek stakeholders views and ascertain if there was a demand for a new Welsh medium school.

It was reported that the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee had supported the preferred option. It had been asked if the consultation would be Borough wide and if there would be a dedicated governor session on the proposal. The Corporate Director Education had confirmed that the consultation would be undertaken across the Borough as it would affect all our learners.

In terms of a dedicated governor's session, it was confirmed that this request would be accommodated as part of the consultation exercise as governors were key stakeholders and statutory consultees.

The Corporate Director Education added that there was lengthy discussion at the Scrutiny Committee, however, there was support in proceeding to consultation at this point.

The Leader noted that the Scrutiny Committee was a statutory consultee and asked if the earlier meeting was considered as consultation. The Corporate Director Education advised that the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee meeting would be considered as pre-consultation. The Scrutiny Members would have an opportunity to have their views formally captured as part of the consultation, which would be reported back via the democratic process at the appropriate time.

In response to a question raised in relation to when the report would be submitted for further determination once the consultation exercise had been completed, it was confirmed that the next report was scheduled to be presented in February 2021.

The Leader further asked how consultation would be undertaken in line with safety guidelines due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Corporate Director Education advised that the majority of consultation would be undertaken virtually with small components carried out face to face in a safe and controlled environment. The Council accepts written consultation via email or posted as well as via social media platforms. The Corporate Director did not envisage any issues in undertaking the consultation exercise as it could be done carried out virtually.

The Executive Members supported the report and the Executive Member for Education referred to the preferred option. It was thereupon

RESOLVED that the report be accepted and the report, associated documents and course of action be approved.

Agenda Item 6

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme – 24th February 2021**

Portfolio Holder: **All Portfolio Holders**

Report Submitted by: **Cllr Nigel Daniels, Leader / Executive Member
Corporate Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
X	x	17.12.20				13.01.21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present the Executive Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 24th February 2021.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Executive Work Programme is a key aspect of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and supports the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's recently revised Corporate Plan, agreed by the Council on 23rd July 2020, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 All Scrutiny Committees and the Council Forward Work Programmes have been aligned to the Executive Forward Work Programme.
 - 2.4 As the document is fluid there is flexibility to allow for regular review between the Chair and the Committee.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1**
To agree the Forward Work Programme as presented for the Meeting on 24th February 2021.
 - 3.2 **Option 2**
To suggest any amendments prior to agreeing the Forward Work Programme.

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Executive Forward Work Programme

Executive Meeting Date: Wednesday 24th February 2021

Report Submission Deadline Date to Liz Thomas: Tuesday 2nd February 2021

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

Decision: 2 item Monitoring: 6 items Information: 6 items

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
DECISION ITEMS				
Portfolio: Leader / Corporate Services				
Grants to Organisations	Approval To agree the Grants to Organisations.	Rhian Daly	N/A	N/A
Information Security Policy	Approval To agree the policy.	Rhian Hayden	Corporate Overview – 22.01.2021	N/A
MONITORING ITEMS				
Portfolio: Education				
Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act Readiness	Performance Monitoring To provide Members with an update on the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018), the implications and the progress we are making in terms of readiness for September 2021.	Gavin Metheringham	Education and Learning – 26.01.2021	N/A
Portfolio: Social Services				
Community Meals	Performance Monitoring Members to be informed of the progress made since the transfer of the service to Social Services.	Alyson Hoskins	Social Services – 21.01.2021	N/A
Portfolio: Leader / Corporate Services				
Capital Strategy Review	Performance Monitoring To consider the implementation of the Capital Strategy 2021/22.	Rhian Hayden	Corporate Overview – 22.01.2021	N/A
Portfolio: Deputy Leader / Regeneration				

Report Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Scrutiny Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Targeted Regeneration Funding (TRI) Update	Performance Monitoring Members to receive an update on TRI funding.	Amy Taylor / Nick Landers	Regeneration – 06.01.2021	N/A
Lime Avenue Employment Park	Performance Monitoring To provide an update on progress of current development site.	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	Regeneration – 06.01.2021	N/A
Portfolio: Joint Education and Social Services				
Safeguarding Performance Information Social Services and Education	Performance Monitoring To provide members with Safeguarding Performance and Self-Evaluation information and to influence areas of focus.	Damien McCann/ Lynn Phillips	Joint Safeguarding – 11.02.2021	N/A
INFORMATION ITEMS				
Youth Service Performance	Information Only To provide Members with performance information and impact of the Youth Service comparing with the latest Welsh Government benchmarking data.	Joanne Sims	Education and Learning – 26.01.2021	N/A
21 st Century Schools Programme Bands A / B Gateway Review Outcome	Information Only To provide Members with an update on the closure of the 21 st Century Schools Band A programme and the progress made on the Band B programme.	Claire Gardner	Education and Learning – 26.01.2021	N/A
Corporate Parenting Progress Report	Information Only Members to be informed of the progress made against the Corporate Parenting Action Plan	Tanya Evans	Social Services – 21.01.2021	N/A
Information Management Monitoring Report	Information Only To provide information of progress against identified action on a half yearly cycle.	Rhian Hayden	Corporate Overview – 22.01.21	N/A
Adult Safeguarding Performance Information	Information Only To receive Safeguarding Performance information relating to Adult Services and to influence areas of focus.	Alyson Hoskins / Andrew Day	Joint Safeguarding 11.02.2021	N/A
Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) Annual Return 2018/19	Information Only Members to receive the Annual Assessment from Welsh Government which highlights Blaenau Gwent's performance against the Welsh Public Library Standards.	Joanne Sims	Education and Learning – 08.01.20	N/A

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COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

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

REPORT SUBJECT: **GRANTS TO ORGANISATIONS – 13th Jan 2021**

REPORT AUTHOR: **RHIAN HAYDEN**

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

ABERTILLERY

Llanhilleth Ward – Councillor J. Collins

1. Knit and Natter £150

BRYNWAWR

Brynmawr Ward – Councillor J. Hill

1. St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School £100

CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES

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Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: Executive Committee

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Bus Emergency Scheme Phase 2 (BES2) Briefing**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr David Davies, Executive Member for Regeneration**

Report Submitted by: **Richard Crook, Director of Regeneration & Community Services**

Report Written by: **Ellie Fry, Head of Regeneration and Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
					06.01.21	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This paper provides an overview on progress of the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) Phase 2 to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and to enter into longer term arrangements to make the bus services more sustainable across Wales.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Journey to Date and Plans for BES2

Since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic Welsh Government, Local Authorities, TfW and operators have worked together to make bus services available to Welsh citizens in spite of the significant reduction in passenger numbers and associated fare income. Money is still being provided to operators on an emergency basis under the terms and conditions in the BES 1.5 agreement which expires at the end of March 2021.

- 2.2 With the BES2 agreement the public sector is planning to enter into longer term arrangements with operators, ideally by the end of January 2021, which will replace BES 1.5 when agreed.

What does BES2 Mean for Local Authorities?

2.3 Actively managing recovery from the impact of COVID-19 on local bus services

The BES2 agreement formalises Welsh Government's commitment to supporting recovery of bus services following the impact of COVID-19. BES2 funding will be used to address the loss of fare box revenue and the additional costs associated with responding to the COVID 19 pandemic. Welsh Government will be a co-signatory to the proposed BES2 agreement with bus operators

- 2.4 Under the terms of the BES2 agreement, operators will be required to provide bus services that meet local needs under the direction of the Lead Authority for each region, working with and on behalf of its constituent local authorities.
- 2.5 The end date for the BES2 contract is 31 July 2022. This should allow enough time for revenues to recover. The contract may be terminated earlier if market conditions mean that additional Government funding is no longer required to address the impact of COVID-19.
- 2.6 **Funding responsibilities**
The BES2 agreement exists to provide a legal basis for funding the costs associated with the impact of COVID 19. These include the loss of fare box, duplication of buses to take account of social distancing or providing alternative services where operators give them up and the services are still needed. This applies to services that were commercial pre-COVID and to tendered services.
- 2.7 The BES2 agreement does not change local authorities' ability to determine where and how they spend the Revenue Services Grant (RSG). The RSG funding is not hypothecated and most local authorities including Blaenau Gwent spend an element of this grant on local bus service provision to fill gaps in the commercial network and to match with the Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG) (roughly £8m across Wales) to secure the delivery of services to a specified standard.
- 2.8 The BES2 funding for COVID19 related costs sits alongside this local authority funding for local bus services and does not remove or amend local authority powers and responsibilities with regard to local bus services. The two funding streams serve different purposes and Blaenau Gwent will still need to prioritise and fund local bus services where we see fit.
- 2.9 Welsh Government have clarified that in terms of this BES 2 Funding:
- if a local authority chooses to cease to fund a supported contract, BES 2 funding cannot be applied to backfill that loss of funding
 - local authorities remain responsible for their existing contracts and may need to vary these contracts to scale back services if BES 2 funding were to cease before fare box takings return to pre-COVID levels, unless additional sources of funding are available.
- 2.10 **Directing the provision of services**
Working in a similar way to the way that the BSSG is currently regionally managed, with the Lead Authority in each region, local authorities will need to jointly prioritise the routes that BES 2 funding should be applied to, taking into account the work already undertaken under BES 1.5 and using these priorities for spend:
- supporting learners' journeys to school or college on registered local bus services;
 - increasing frequencies where demand exceeds capacity;
 - improving accessibility to jobs and services across our regions and communities;

- supporting economic recovery; and
 - ensuring social inclusion,
- 2.11 Under the terms of the BES2 contract, subject to the Lead Authority acting reasonably within the bounds of available funding, the bus operators will be required to provide services that meet local priorities as directed by the Lead Authority.
- 2.12 The BES2 arrangements include the collaborative development of regional Reference Networks by local authorities, operators, Welsh Government and TfW. The Reference Networks will reflect local, regional and national priorities and will help to guide investment in bus services for the future. BES2 ensures local authorities have an influence over the development of a coherent Reference Network which will ultimately be delivered by a mix of tendered and commercial services.
- 2.13 **Implications for local bus contracts**
The BES2 agreements do not supersede the existing supported contracts (e.g. section 63 contracts) that are in place between each local authority and bus operators. The BES2 agreements sit alongside existing contracts and provide a legal basis for the additional funding that operators are receiving in respect of their supported contracts to cover the loss of fare box and additional costs incurred, for example, with respect to complying with social distancing and cleaning requirements. The BES2 agreements also set out the basis on which operators will exit the BES arrangements and return to the original terms of contract.
- 2.14 The additional funding that is being paid to operators to address the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic would breach local authorities' de minimis limits for direct award contracts. Welsh Government is a signatory to the existing BES 1.5 agreement and to the proposed BES2 agreement in order to use its powers to support continued provision of the operators' services without breaching the de minimis cap. Welsh Government powers in this regard can be exercised for a two-year term and date from the start of the BES 1.5 agreement on 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2022.
- 2.15 BES can impact on local contract procurement. Where a local authority wishes to tender for a new or time expired supported contract the risks associated with predicting fare box revenue, during and immediately after the pandemic, will affect tender prices. In these circumstances, bidders will be required to offer a price that they will charge while BES funding is in place and alternative prices for when BES funding is no longer available, with their tenders covering both before and after the fare box has returned to pre-COVID levels.
- 2.16 **Regional Working**
BES2 supports the move to improve regional co-ordination and oversight of delivery of local bus services. Under BES1.5, the funding was distributed to the Lead Authority in each region. Each operator signed one agreement with the Lead Authority in each region where it operates, with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales as co-signatories. The Lead Authority is then responsible

for distributing the BES funding to the operators in its region. It is proposed that this model is retained for the BES 2 agreement. The responsibilities of each party will be clearly set out in the grant letter to the Lead Authority and in the BES 2 agreement, and measures are being taken to minimise the risk to the Lead Authority relating to funding and termination of the BES2 agreement.

2.17 Why move to BES2?

The benefit for operators is that they will be able to make a profit under the terms of BES2. No profit has been allowed in the emergency arrangements up to now.

2.18 The benefit for the public sector is that we can jointly better manage the recovery of bus services. The alternative is that, as recovery begins, operators will shrink their networks to the routes and services that are commercially viable for them leaving government to support an even larger subsidised network. The BES2 arrangements are seeking to ensure that operators are incentivised to support the recovery of the whole network and not just a limited number of commercial routes.

2.19 The public sector is taking fare box risk under BES2 and, as fare box levels rise, this revenue will augment the funding available to work with operators to support the recovery of services. This will benefit us all in the long term by building passenger confidence in a reliable and comprehensive public transport network.

2.20 Although recovery from the impact of the COVID 19 on patronage is likely to be slow, we do not expect operators to stay within the BES2 arrangements forever. As passenger confidence returns and fare box recovers, we expect operators to exit the BES2 arrangements and work with us under partnership agreements. The partnership agreements will be based on agreed core set of principles and behaviours that will be developed with operators as part of the BES2 arrangements.

2.21 What results are we trying to achieve with BES2?

BES2 provides a mechanism for managing the recovery and reshaping of bus services to respond to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic. Specifically:

- Address areas of high demand where social distancing has reduced available capacity
- Ensure that communities are not cut off due to low fare box revenues.
- Offer new options for meeting demand such as demand responsive transport which may be more cost effective as patterns of travel change.
- Offer better value for money for passengers by working with operators to rationalise their fare structures and develop multi operator ticketing, to the extent permitted by competition law.
- Build a better working relationship with operators to develop a robust and viable network of services for the future.
- Gain a better understanding of the costs of delivering bus services in Wales to inform future policy and funding decisions
- Reduce pollution by introducing measures to attract people out of their cars and onto public transport and by working with the industry to upgrade their fleet.

2.22 **What does BES2 mean for operators?**

Where an operator signs up to the BES arrangements (whether BES1, 1.5 or BES2), all the services that the operator runs – whether they are supported or formerly commercial – are included in the contract.

2.23 Each operator is expected to continue to operate routes that are largely similar to those which they operated pre-COVID, amended as necessary to respond to the crisis. This helps to maintain stability in the short term and provides a framework for decision making e.g. if an operator chooses not to run services that they used to run before COVID a decision can be made to let a tender for those services if they are still required.

2.24 Funding for the regional BES contracts will be a mix of existing sources and additional funding from Welsh Government, with operators being funded to cover all their allowable costs across all their services less their earnings from the fare box, concessionary fares, BSSG and YPT.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

Option 1: preferred option

3.1 For Blaenau Gwent to endorse the contents of the attached report and support the BES2 arrangements as part of a regional and Wales approach.

3.2 **Option 2: do nothing**

For BG not to support the BES2 arrangements

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

This project support the amendments made to the Outcome Statements within the Corporate Plan in its review in October 2019.

Corporate Plan 2020/22 Outcome Statements:

- Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities
- Support a fairer sustainable economy and community
- To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities

5. **Implications Against Option 1: preferred option**

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

There is no impact on the funds currently used in Blaenau Gwent to subsidise Buses (BG RSG and Bus Support Grant) as this is additional funding from Welsh Government.

5.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**

5.2.1 **What risks exist with the proposed approach?**

Operators choose not to sign the BES2 agreements and instead shrink their networks to the minimum required and/or reduce the quality of their services to make a commercial return. *Mitigation – working with operators to address their concerns and ensure that all parties see this as a beneficial arrangement.*

5.2.2 The BES 2 arrangements breach competition, state aid or procurement law and are rendered invalid. *Mitigation – working with lawyers to ensure that the terms are compliant with the law.*

5.2.3 Operators challenge the local authority's ability to let new contracts on routes where the operator has registered a commercial service. *Mitigation – the standards that will be specified as part of BES2 provide an objective way to defend the local authority's right to let a supported contract where the service offered by the operator does not meet the specified standard. Legal advice and guidance will be provided to local authorities to support this statement.*

5.2.4 Additional funding from Welsh Government beyond the end of March 2021 is yet to be confirmed. *Mitigation – WG have committed additional funding from September 2020 to support local bus services and officials are working to secure further funding to support these key services beyond the 2020/21 budget horizon.*

5.2.5 Funding operators in this way is not cost effective and/or operators are not incentivised to be efficient. *Mitigation – use the data from operators to assess the cost effectiveness of the spend and shape contract terms to incentivise efficiency.*

5.3 **Legal**

Legal matters will be addressed by WG and our lead authority – Torfaen CBC.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no human resource issues as part of this initiative.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Performance will be monitored through Transport for Wales and lead authorities and fed back to BG.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

We are expecting this to improve local bus services for the communities in BG.

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

There has been limited consultation on the options due to time constraints and the emergency nature of the initiative.

- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
This scheme takes into account current and longer term needs and is planned in accordance with those on a regional basis.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
The scheme is being undertaken to prevent bus services failing further due to the effects of the pandemic
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
We are working with our lead partner Torfaen CBC on this initiative.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
This initiative will be integrated across all those departments that currently use buses to deliver a service to BG communities.
- 6.8 ***EqlA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***
Screening has been undertaken and no full assessment is required.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
Will be undertaken via our lead partner and TfW.
- 7.1 **Background Documents /Electronic Links**
- *Report to Cabinets on BES2*
 - *BES2 Appendix letter*

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Eich cyf/Your ref - LW.436.20

Local Authority Transport Lead Members

18 December 2020

Dear Members,

Following my letter of the 19 November explaining the next phase of the Bus Emergency Scheme that will ensure longer-term partnership from operators in return for their bail out funding, I am pleased to follow up with a summary document explaining the rationale and approach. This has been developed and agreed with the Welsh Local Government Association, the Association of Transport Coordination Officers, Transport for Wales, and the Welsh Government.

Since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, we have worked together to maintain bus services in spite of the significant reduction in passenger numbers and associated fare income. To date, the BES arrangements have been short term, only providing security for a few months at a time. Money is still being provided to operators on an emergency basis under the terms and conditions of the BES 1.5 agreement which expires at the end of March 2021.

BES 2 sets out longer term arrangements for delivering bus services while operators continue to receive support from the Welsh Government and local authorities to address the short fall in revenue. The agreements sit alongside existing local authority contracts and support your ability to act to address the impact of COVID-19, providing the legal basis for the additional funding that operators are receiving in respect of their supported contracts to cover the loss of farebox.

The BES 2 agreement has four parties to it – namely the Welsh Government, Local Authorities, Transport for Wales and Operators. The BES2 agreement does not fundamentally alter the role and decision-making powers of Local Authorities but provides a framework for working with operators to ensure that bus services meet priorities, allowing you to better direct where we want the available funds to be spent so that we can jointly better manage the recovery of bus services. Each operator is expected to continue to operate routes that are largely similar to those which they operated pre-COVID, amended as necessary to respond to the crisis. Without these agreements, operators could instead choose to shrink their networks to the minimum required and/or reduce the quality of their services to make a commercial return.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Gohebiaeth.Lee.Waters@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Given the urgency of moving towards a more sustainable footing, it is imperative that this is done early in the New Year so that we can offer certainty to the industry, maintain essential services for communities, and maximise the benefits of our significant funding. I hope that you will be in a position to agree the new contract in January to align with our expectation that operators will also sign early in the New Year. Simon Jones, Director of Economic Infrastructure, will send separately to local authority Chief Executives the Bus Emergency Scheme 2 contract and the WLGA will send a template report for your cabinets that you can adapt and refine to meet your own needs. If you need any further information or support, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Waters', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Lee Waters AS/MS

Dirprwy Weinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport

Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Performance Review 2020/21 Quarter 1**

Portfolio Holder: **Leader / Corporate Services**

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Morris, Managing Director
Ellie Fry, Head of Regeneration**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
04.11.20	05.11.20	17.12.20			02.12.20	13.01.21	25.03.21	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the performance of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCD) during 2020/21 Quarter 1.
- 1.2 This report highlights areas of interest in the attached report which has been produced by the Cardiff Capital Region Programme Director and was presented to the CCR Cabinet in September 2020 (attached at Appendix 1). This report summarises and highlights key programmes of work Blaenau Gwent (BG) are engaged in and are of interest to BG.

2. Background and Context

- 2.1 The report includes progress of the programme against key targets identified within the CCR Business Plan for 2019/20. Detail includes:
- 2.2 Highlights for BG include:
 - Metro Plus Programme - Transport for Wales (TfW) progress
 - Ultra Low Emission Transformation Fund
 - Housing Catalyst Fund
 - Challenge Fund Launched
 - CCR Energy Strategy
 - Framework and principles agreed for SDP
 - Graduate Scheme
 - Aspire Roll Out
 - CCR Engagement within the Western Gateway Initiative
- 2.3 In its meeting on the 14th September CCRCD Regional Cabinet discussed the Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report for financial year 2020/21 Quarter 1.

2.4 **Budget Position 2020/21 Quarter 1**

It is important to understand the overall budget position which relates to funding remaining available for City Region projects in the future. Regional Cabinet 2020/21 Annual Business Plan Quarter 1 summary indicates the overall budget is as follows:

2.5 **2020/21 In-Year Project Approvals and Expenditure**

The CCR Regional Cabinet has signed off the £335,000 expenditure as of Q1 2020/21 against an original budget of £12,945,056. Review of the current pipeline of projects and an analysis of the likely timescales of expenditure indicates that the level of Local Authority capital funding included in the Annual Business Plan is significantly lower than anticipated in 2020/21. Expenditure at this level can be managed within existing funds held by City Deal, so no call on Local Authorities is likely during 2020/21, but will be subject to the timing of expenditure and any new approvals agreed by Cabinet during the remainder of the year.

2.6 Additional approvals which have been made by Regional Cabinet since the approval of the 2020/21 Annual Business Plan, reflects that while there has been acceleration of activity, this remains below the level originally anticipated.

2.7 **Metro Plus Programme - Transport for Wales (TfW) progress**

We have been working closely with Transport for Wales (TfW) on a number of project components put forward as part of the Metro Plus scheme in BG. This includes both the Ebbw Valley line and the Abertillery spur.

2.8 The work progressing with the Metro Plus (Phase 1) work is part of a programme of 10 transport schemes which are part of the wider metro infrastructure. These Metro Plus schemes are not individual projects, but a programme of regional enabling infrastructure, to stimulate economic growth and regeneration across Cardiff City Region, supporting the sustainable mobility of people, and improving the way people make their economic contribution. Merthyr Council is the financial host for this program.

2.9 Work has started on the improvements to the Ebbw Valley line at Crumlin and these improvements are the beginning of a number of work contracts that will be continuing over the next few years to enable the line to take more train capacity. We are also progressing with design work on the Abertillery line as the business case undertaken by Transport for Wales (TfW) for improved frequency of services clearly showed that there were significant additional economic benefits for the County Borough when the Abertillery line was included. The next stages of design work will be progressing with further CCR money award for the Metro Plus scheme.

2.10 **Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transformation Fund**

CCR has been awarded £1.3million from the Welsh Government Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Transformation Fund. It will assist with the transition to Low Emission across the region. The funding will be used for the following:

- Taxi ULEV Infrastructure;
 - Development of a business case to deliver ULEV infrastructure at transport interchanges; and
 - Electric Vehicle road show with Drive and Ride Opportunities
- 2.11 Blaenau Gwent acted as Lead Partner for the Gwent Electric Vehicle project and has shared details of their procurement approach with the CCR team to assist with their procurement processes.
- 2.12 **Housing Catalyst Fund**
 The CCRC Viability Gap Fund was formally launched in the Summer, with the requirement that local authorities act as Project Leads, an invitation for applications has been made, with a submission deadline of 31.12.20. The Housing Delivery Group has considered known sites within Blaenau Gwent and evaluated against the main fund criteria to identify potential sites for progressing. A report has been submitted and approved at Executive outlining potential sites and the recommendation to further explore the preferred site, BKF Plastics, Ashvale. Additional to this, a call for interest was made to identify any additional sites that met the criteria and are able to progress in line with the fund requirements (limited response and has not instigated exploration of additional sites).
- 2.13 BKF Plastics is the only site being progressed through the fund and work during the reporting period includes:
- Project group established to progress the application (wider engagement with relevant officers where required e.g. Section 151 and Legal)
 - Site visit with private land owners and private developers
 - Project meeting with CCRC, land agent and developer to discuss scheme and application process
 - Meeting with Savills regarding potential support, primarily to test project viability and provide an independent assessment/assumptions made
 - Exploring a revenue fund application to CCR to support development costs (professional services/advice)
- 2.14 The main known issue is the level of grouting required (circa £500k), this, when factored against other development costs; land values (noting that the BGCBC land is subject to WG land reclamation grant); against unit sales values is where the viability gap is believed to be. Work will continue, with a view to submitting an application, once viability gap is proven. The outcome of the first round sift will be known in the Spring of next year, if successful further work will be required before a final award.

2.15 Cardiff City Region Challenge Fund Launched

The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Challenge Fund is inviting public sector bodies to develop challenges and connect with organisations who can provide innovative solutions to those challenges, leading to better services, improved efficiency and effectiveness, and productivity.

2.16 The purpose of the funding is to help the public sector to obtain new solutions, products and services to challenges and in doing so, provide a route to market for those solutions. Up to 100% of a project to support the development of challenges will be available. Public Sector are invited to compete for a share of £10m with the strongest challenges being selected for funding.

2.17 The benefits for public sector getting involved include:

- Opportunity to explore creative solutions to local economic challenges
- Investment to find and develop innovative solutions
- Improved local service delivery that benefits from tailored solutions
- New market creation and ability to 'break through' public procurement frameworks
- Potential for commercial solutions which can be scaled and sold both locally and beyond
- Local supply chain growth and development

2.18 Eligible public sector organisations may include Local Authorities, Health Boards, Police Forces etc. However, for challenges to receive funding each challenge must demonstrate scope to:

- Solve the greatest societal challenges
- Create innovative solutions
- Deliver economic impact for the region
- Drive commercial scalable opportunities
- Build local wealth

2.19 All challenges will be assessed against the same criteria. The Fund is now open for expressions of interest from all public sector organisations active in the Cardiff Capital Region and all prospective Challenge Owners will be required to submit full applications by noon Friday 12th March 2021. Officers across the Council will be looking at ideas to put forward as EOIs over the next few months.

Cardiff Capital Region Energy Strategy

2.20 The strategy was commissioned by the Welsh Government and supported by the Welsh Government Energy Service. It has been developed by Cardiff Capital Region City Deal with additional support from regional stakeholders, including Local Authority Officers.

2.21 The objective of the strategy is to develop a strategic pathway identifying key interventions to deliver on the region's ambitions for decarbonising

energy systems. An energy vision scenario has been modelled to set out a potential decarbonisation route that will put the region on track to achieve a net zero energy system by 2050.

2.22 To be on track for net zero by 2050, Cardiff Capital Region needs to reduce emissions from its energy system by 55% by 2035, split by sector as follows:

- 51% reduction in domestic heat and power emissions;
- 54% reduction in commercial and industrial emissions; and
- 60% reduction in road transport emissions.

The strategy was considered by the CCR Regional Cabinet in December.

Framework and principles agreed for Strategic Development Plan (SDP)

2.23 The previous framework agreed for the SDP has been overtaken by the Government's Local Government Election Bill. This creates Corporate Joint Committees (CJC's) at a regional level to deliver SDP's, a Transport Plan and promote economic well-being. The proposal is that the CJC will replace the formerly proposed Strategic Planning Panel which was to have led the work on the SDP and has been the subject of previous reports to Council.

2.24 Welsh Government are consulting on the regulations and a Members Seminar has been held on this subject to inform a response from the Council and a debate at Council followed. We await next steps

Graduate Scheme (Pilot)

2.25 Engagement and communication is regular with the officers at City Deal on the graduate scheme, and we endeavour to circulate all their bulletins to our businesses. CCR has also held webinar for businesses in the last few weeks, out of 68 attendees only 1 was from Blaenau Gwent. We have arranged to meet with the team to establish how we can have a more targeted approach, with current climate there will only be a small amount of interest and we have other initiatives that may be more appropriate, so direct contact instead of general bulletins about the programme may increase take up. We will update again with progress on a different approach.

Aspire Roll-Out across the City Region

2.26 CCR Investment panel have received a proposal from Aspire BG to roll out the offer across the Region to provide support for Industries of the Future. The Investment panel have requested a review to be undertaken of the existing apprenticeship landscape across SE Wales, specifically focussing on Shared Apprenticeship Programme aspect and Industries of the Future. The review work will identify gaps in service delivery and business needs.

2.27 Following this the Aspire proposal will be reviewed to ensure it meets the required needs/gaps and there may be some recommendations for change. A Green Book Treasury assessment will also have to be undertaken for the project and some assistance with the development of this will be provided to

meet UK Gov Green Book Treasury requirements. The review is currently being procured and the findings will be determined early 2021.

CCR Engagement within the Western Gateway Initiative

- 2.28 CCR has agreed to join the Western Gateway Partnership, a collaboration with the West of England region.

The overall ambition of the Western Gateway Initiative is 'Propelling a greener, fairer, stronger Britain'. The three primary ambitions which the Western Gateway is striving to achieve focus on connectivity, being a global gateway and innovation. Achieving this in isolation for the Cardiff City Region would be more difficult than when combining with a greater area of the Western Gateway.

3. Recommendations for Consideration

- 3.1 That the content of the CCRC D report is noted and an Option applied.

Option 1

For Members to consider the overall progress on the CCR programme of work for 2020/21 and accept the report;

Option 2

- 3.3 For Members to consider the overall progress and make any comments on progress before the report goes to Council.

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

- 4.1 The CCRC D is a key strategic initiative for the Council, which will assist in delivering the Corporate Plan in terms of job creation, housing and improved transport connections in addition, alongside nine other Local Authorities we are working to deliver a range of programmes to improve the connectivity, infrastructure and business governance of the region.

These projects support the amendments made to the Outcome Statements within the Corporate Plan in its review in July 2020.

Corporate Plan 2020/22 Outcome Statements:

- Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities
- Support a fairer sustainable economy and community
- To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities

5. Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial, legal or HR implications as part of this report as it is monitoring other projects that will or have been reported and have separately listed implications.

6. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 6.1 The CCRCO Annual Business Plan 2020/21 will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Regional Cabinet and six monthly reports will be presented to the Blaenau Gwent Scrutiny and Council meetings.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *N/A*

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Agenda Item 10

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Corporate Communications Strategy Performance Monitoring**

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

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
18.11.20	19.11.20	17.12.20			11.12.20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider the performance of the Communication Strategy, focus on the impact of the strategy during COVID19 Pandemic. The period covered will be from March to September 2020.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Corporate Communications Strategy was approved and accepted by Council in September 2020. Its main objective is to ensure that as a Commercial organisation the Council is seen as a trusted brand delivering quality services.
- 2.2 The overall objective of the strategy is to deliver excellent, innovative and cost effective two-way communications, building a positive reputation and increasing trust and confidence that the Council is delivering services that meet resident, businesses and visitors needs.
- 2.3 There are 6 ambitions or themes which will drive the communications delivery
- Build and maintain a strong reputation;
 - Residents know how we are delivering council priorities.
 - Informed and engaged staff;
 - Ensure marketing campaigns are well planned, targeted and provide value for money;
 - Promote the use of digital communications channels and encourage self-service where appropriate;
 - Make sure residents are informed in advance of and at times of emergency.
- 2.4 The response to Covid-19 pandemic which started in March 2020 and continues has meant that the delivery of the strategy has almost entirely

focused on the objective to ensure that residents (staff and Members) are informed at times of emergency. This is an unprecedented challenge and the move to remote working meant that the importance of digital and social media became even more significant.

2.5 This dynamic and fast moving environment required an almost constant flow of information and content being produced by the Communications team for these channels. Our aim was to produce clear and effective communication, coordinated between all sectors.

2.6 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Corporate Communications was a key member of Gwent LRF Warning and Informing Group. This group is responsible for aligning communications and communicating key information to the residents of Gwent during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring a consistent approach between local partners, PHW and Welsh Government. The content was a mixture of partner material (Welsh Government, Public Health Wales, Health Board) and content created by the team using their creative skills.

2.7 The **aims** of the communication plan for the Covid-19 response are:

- To provide strategic direction for organisations involved in communicating a major incident or a situation where a multi-agency response is required;
- To ensure that the Gwent public, stakeholders, the media are informed in a timely manner about an outbreak and what they need to do to reduce transmission and to keep Wales safe;
- To ensure consistent use of terminology;
- To ensure that there is clear leadership and coordination of all communications activities, and that all communications activities are aligned with and supportive of each other – in line with the Gwent Warning and Informing plan and the All Wales Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales (Welsh Government, 2020a);
- To ensure that communications activity and messaging around an outbreak in Wales is carried out in line with the overall Welsh approach to dealing with the pandemic;
- To effectively communicate and share information with the communities and individuals directly affected to maintain confidence and compliance with guidance / expectations;
- To align with existing Keep Wales Safe Communications campaigns.

2.8 Lead Responders ensure the following **objectives** feature prominently in the Prevention and Response Communication Plan:

- Reassurance
- Raising awareness of any risks
- Provide proactive information on how to protect family and loved ones
- Advise on steps being taken to handle the situation
- Explain steps that will be taken to return to normality.

Appendix 1 highlights the volume of communications and some information on channel usage during the crisis.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** That Executive Committee notes the performance of the Communication Strategy, particularly on the impact of the strategy during COVID19 Pandemic. The period covered will be from March to September 2020.

3.2 **Option 2:** That Executive Committee provides comments and challenges the performance of the Communication Strategy.

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

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

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***
There is no direct impact on budgets.

The majority of Council communications uses digital channels. Much of the material used in the first half of 2020 was created by partners like Welsh Government and Public Health Wales to manage the Covid-19 pandemic. Individual marketing campaigns are often externally funded by partners (eg WRAP).

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

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

5.3 ***Legal***

All internal and external communications activities will take account of any legal issues that may arise from publications and potential challenge.

Communication activities reflect the decision making of the Council and any exempt items will be treated in confidence. Communications relating to individuals will also protect their privacy rights.

5.4 **Human Resources**

There are no human resource implications.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

- Accurate and balanced media coverage
- Increased specialist and national media coverage.
- Increasing number of visitors to the Council website.
- More social media followers.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

The focus of the first half of 2020 has been on managing crisis communications and the response to Covid-19. The main objective has been regular and timely information for the public to keep them informed in a rapidly changing environment,

Communications regarding the delivery of essential public services, changes to service and introduction of brand new services has been a feature. Improving access to relevant information delivered in a timely manner utilising multiple channels.

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

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

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

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

This remains our long term objective but the response to Covid-19 and its unprecedented challenges has meant short term focus on this.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

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

This remains our long term objective but the response to Covid-19 and its unprecedented challenges has meant short term focus on this.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

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

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

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

6.8 ***EqIA***

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

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Summary of Activity and Key Facts

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Facebook

3,500
POSTS



19,000
FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS

2,000
INTERACTIONS

4.2
MILLION
REACH ON
FACEBOOK



Twitter

11,500
TWITTER
FOLLOWERS



17
MILLION
REACH ON
TWITTER



Website



176,000
VISITORS

1.5M
PAGE
VIEWS

VIEWING
5 **PAGES**
PER
VISIT

Top 5 most popular pages

HOME PAGE

MY SERVICES

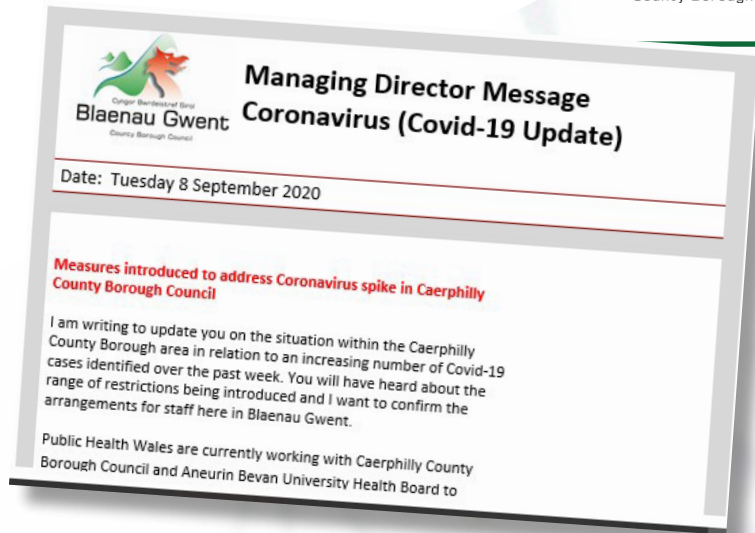
COVID-19 INFORMATION

HWRC

JOBS

Appendix 1 Internal Communications

MD Message



**Managing Director Message
Coronavirus (Covid-19 Update)**

Date: Tuesday 8 September 2020

**Measures introduced to address Coronavirus spike in Caerphilly
County Borough Council**

I am writing to update you on the situation within the Caerphilly County Borough area in relation to an increasing number of Covid-19 cases identified over the past week. You will have heard about the range of restrictions being introduced and I want to confirm the arrangements for staff here in Blaenau Gwent.

Public Health Wales are currently working with Caerphilly County Borough Council and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to

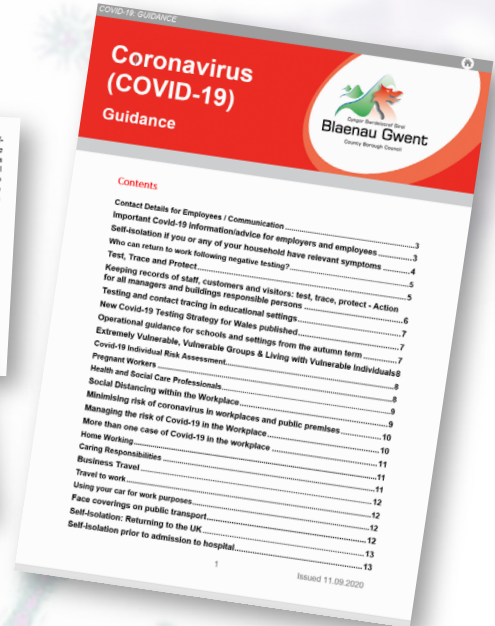
Weekly staff Guidance

Important Covid-19 information/advice for employers and employees

Important Covid-19 information and advice for employers and employees is now available on the [Healthy Working Wales website](#). The site brings together a raft of information from UK Government, Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and NHS Direct Wales to help signpost to the relevant guidance. It includes sector specific and general guidance.

Self-isolation requirements

- Self-isolation period for people with relevant symptoms - at least 10 days self-isolation from day of onset of symptoms (and as before, a test should be arranged within 5 days of symptoms starting). After 10 days, if you still have a temperature, you must continue to self-isolate and seek medical advice. We will require you to be a minimum of 48 hours fever free before returning to work. You do not need to continue to self-isolate after 10 days if you only have a cough or loss of smell or taste, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.
- Household contacts of people with symptoms should self-isolate for 14 days - If a household contact develops symptoms during this period / or tests positive for Covid-19, then after 10 days of their symptoms starting, if they feel better and sense of smell or taste - they can return to their normal routine. As before, a test should be arranged within 5 days of symptoms starting. If their test result is negative, they must continue with isolation as part of the household for the full 14 days.
- Self-isolation period for people without symptoms but identified as positive by symptoms develop during this 10 day isolation period then they must restart the 10 day self-isolation period from the day of onset of symptoms.
- Close contacts of confirmed cases should self-isolate for 14 days - if a close contact of a confirmed case develops symptoms during the period then they should self-isolate for 10 days from day of onset of symptoms (and an 'after-a' test should be arranged within 5 days of symptoms starting).



**Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Guidance**

Contents

- Contact Details for Employers / Communication
- Important Covid-19 Information/Advice for employers and employees
- Self-isolation if you or any of your household have relevant symptoms
- Who can return to work following negative testing?
- Test, Trace and Protect
- Keeping records of staff, customers and visitors: test, trace, protect - Action
- Testing and contact tracing in educational settings
- New Covid-19 Testing Strategy for Wales published
- Operational guidance for schools and settings from the autumn term
- Extremely Vulnerable, Vulnerable Groups & Living with Vulnerable Individuals
- Covid-19 Individual Risk Assessment
- Pregnant Workers
- Health and Social Care Professionals
- Social Distancing within the Workplace
- Minimising risk of coronavirus in the workplace
- Managing the risk of Covid-19 in the workplace and public premises
- More than one case of Covid-19 in the workplace
- Home Working
- Caring Responsibilities
- Business Travel
- Travel to work
- Using your car for work purposes
- Face coverings on public transport
- Self-isolation: Returning to the UK
- Self-isolation prior to admission to hospital.

Issued 11.09.2020

Regular members team briefings



**Briefing for Members
Caerphilly increase
in COVID-19**

4 SEP 2020

Dear Member:

I am writing to update you on the situation within the Caerphilly County Borough area in relation to an increasing number of Covid-19 cases identified over the past week.

Public Health Wales are currently working with Caerphilly County Borough Council and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to manage the clusters of cases which has been described as significant. Proactive communication has been issued today and you can read more about this on the AHB website - [https://abhwales.wales/news/newspec-in-caerphilly-updates-to-social-distancing-properly-as-clusters-of-coronavirus-give-cause-f](#)

Current investigations indicate that a lack of social distancing by a small group of people of all age groups, in a range of different locations, has resulted in the spread of the virus in the wider community. This lack of social distancing has resulted in possible identified cases and their contacts are being advised to self-isolate as per Welsh Government guidelines. The Gwent Test Trace Protect service, of which we are involved with this work.

The clusters are currently mainly confined to the Caerphilly town and surrounding communities which is why a temporary walk-in testing centre has now been opened at Caerphilly Town Centre.

Care homes in Caerphilly borough have closed again to visitors.

An important thing we can all do now is continue to encourage and promote the importance of social distancing and other Covid control measures, such as good hand hygiene, amongst our constituents. We will be doing this as a Council and for those on social media I would ask that you please share the messages from our Council Facebook & Twitter accounts and/or other official sources such as the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales. We all need to work together to Keep Wales Safe.

At present, cases in the Blaenau Gwent area remain stable. Please be assured we will communicate any changes to you as necessary.

Thank you for your continued support.

Damien McCann
Director of Social Services
(on behalf of Michelle Morris, Managing Director)

**Dear Elected Member,
Education Latest & Schools
Re-opening**

14 SEP 2020

Dear Elected Member,

This communication is designed to give you an update on the work of the Education Directorate & our schools in relation to the Covid-19 Pandemic. I'm sure you will continue to join me in giving thanks to our Education Directorate and our schools for their hard work and dedication to learners and families during this time.

Councillor Joanne Collins - Executive Member for Education

Childcare Provision for Children of Key Workers

As we continue to operate childcare provision for children of key workers, this week saw the highest attendance on a single day with 141 children and young people attending childcare and group sessions. There are 64% key worker children and 16% vulnerable children in our provision.

- We are currently helping to cover applications and continue to check with families on a regular basis that provision is still required.
- The hubs have been open from 7.30am to 6pm in accordance with the Welsh Government's guidance. They are currently open daily and have remained open during school and Bank Holidays. These hubs have been operating in line with the Welsh Government's current advice on social distancing.
- We also have pre-school children accessing childcare settings under the provision for key workers under the C-COVID protocol. More childcare settings are expected to re-open during the second half of the year.
- Childcare provision for key workers is set to continue, but will operate slightly differently from the start of the year. Planning work being undertaken to open all schools in June 2021. More

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Agenda Item 11

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Commercial Strategy Performance Monitoring**

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

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
18.11.20	19.11.20	17.12.20			11.12.20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To consider the performance of the Commercial Strategy and focus on the impact of the strategy on the period from March to September 2020. This strategy is aligned to the Council's priority 'An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities' and it is designed to cover all services and be a document that all staff, suppliers and partners can see their role in delivering.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The Commercial Strategy was approved and accepted by Council in September 2020. It brings together themes that will contribute to Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council being a commercially minded council. It covers the development of commercial activities and also highlights the conditions required for the Council to behave as a commercial organisation. This is within the context of maintaining the Council's core purpose to provide public services delivering social value.
- 2.2 The overall objective of the strategy is to deliver the following themes:
- A focus on the residents' experience of existing and new services;
 - An understanding of our investments including return on investment (benefits), profits and losses;
 - Developing our brand, trusted to deliver quality services;
 - Spend control;
 - Using data, technology and insights wisely;
 - Having an agile workforce aligned to opportunities
- 2.3 There are 5 ambitions that drive our commercial activities. These are delivered through the Commercial Services Team but clearly involve all services, suppliers and partners:

- Excellence in Commissioning and Procurement;
- Creation of an investment Portfolio;
- Managing commercial activities through profit and loss accounting;
- Creation of a Commercial and Entrepreneurial Culture;
- Excellence in Contract and Supplier Management.

2.4 The response to Covid-19 pandemic which started in March 2020 has and continues to have an impacted on the delivery of the strategy. During the period March to September, and building on the initial 'Bridging the Gap' Strategic Business Review of third party expenditure, the focus has been on:

- Excellence in Commissioning and Procurement;
- Excellence in Contract and Supplier Management.

2.5 It is intended that in the early part of the financial year 2021/22, it will be possible to re-ignite our approach to:

- Managing commercial activities through profit and loss accounting
- Creation of an Investment Portfolio
- Creation of a Commercial and Entrepreneurial Culture

2.6 Key performance information and data used to assess the impact of the strategy includes:

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

2.7 The ambitions are governed through a newly created Strategic Commissioning and Commercial Board. The work of this board has been significantly impacted by the pandemic. The terms of reference for the board are available at Appendix 1. The first meeting of the board took place on 4th December 2020. At the first meeting the board reviewed all the directorate procurement plans and agreed a check and challenge methodology to ensure all tender and retender arrangements are fit for purpose. This new board replaces the virtual Strategic Procurement Board. This board also has a role in reviewing the delivery of our Service Level Agreements to schools, monitoring the commercial viability of our traded services and in governing investment options using an investment framework. The Board has a delegated budget of £496k. This is to be awarded where purchasing manager or commissioners need to supplement

their budgets to meet additional inflationary uplifts where the allocated budget does not meet the uplift.

2.8 Excellence in Commissioning and Procurement/Excellence in Contract and Supplier Management

- 2.8.1 During the period March 2020 – September 2020 our focus has been on building on the initial work undertaken as part of the Bridging the Gap programme. There has been continued interrogation of all third party expenditure and in particular a forensic review of all ICT contracts.
- 2.8.2 This has resulted in a number of renegotiated contracts and more favourable contract terms and conditions being achieved. In addition, we have been able to establish more favourable terms in relation to any inflationary uplifts. All existing contracts were reviewed to establish those where an inflationary uplift was agreed. Provision was made to meet these obligations however where this was not part of the terms and conditions suppliers were challenged and we stopped automatically applying the inflationary uplift for the duration of the contracts. This provides greater transparency and more control on spend.
- 2.8.3 The Corporate Procurement Team now review all invoices received for any ICT expenditure to check that contracts are in place and challenge the need for systems.
- 2.8.4 Working with contract managers, the Corporate Procurement Team are now involved at a very early stage in any tender process. This means they can provide expert advice and also negotiate early payment arrangements. This had led to increased use of P-Cards and as a result a reduction in costs of approximately 1% of the overall charge.
- 2.8.5 A review of agency costs and the terms and conditions associated with our contracts identified some opportunities for rebates. This resulted in c£45k being returned to the organisation in overpayments.

2.9 Focus for the next quarter

- Review of all procurement plans and sequencing of check and challenge sessions;
- Review of all trading accounts for commercial activities and identification of any council subsidy for traded services;
- Review of application of inflationary uplift to newly awarded contracts;
- Strategic Commissioning and Commercial Board to meet in quarter 4 of 2020/21 financial year
- Commissioning of leadership development activities for roll out in 2021/22.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** That Executive notes the performance of the Commercial Strategy during the period March 2020 – September 2020.

3.2 **Option 2:** That Executive Committee provides comments and challenges the performance of the Commercial Strategy

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

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

4.2 The Commercial Strategy supports these objectives and the Corporate Plan priority 'An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services we know matter to our communities'. It is a critical organisational strategy for the future sustainability of the organisation. It is designed to secure the best use of our resources and to create ways of working that are fit for the 21st Century.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There is no direct impact on budgets.

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

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

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

5.3 ***Legal***

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

5.4 **Human Resources**

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

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

Key performance information and data will include:

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

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

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

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

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

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

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

This remains our long term objective but the response to Covid-19 and its unprecedented challenges has meant short term focus on this.

6.5 **Preventative focus**

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

This remains our long term objective but the response to Covid-19 and its unprecedented challenges has meant short term focus on this.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

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

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

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

6.8 ***EqIA***

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

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for the Strategic Commissioning and Commercial Board

Strategic Commissioning and Commercial Board

Terms of Reference

1. Background

As a key element of the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Commercial Strategy, the Strategic Commissioning and Commercial Board (SCCB), will provide strategic guidance to the Commissioning and Procurement community and assess major commercial and procurement projects that are on-going within the Council. The goal of the SCCB is to ensure shared ownership for the realisation of desired outcomes and efficiencies across the Council and to ensure that commercial activities become an enabling function and that fully supports Council priorities.

2. Purpose

The SCCB is an Officer Board which will:

- provide oversight and scrutiny of the Council's commercial activities, primarily commissioning, procurement, investments and trading;
- review and approve commercial activities at key stages of the commissioning and procurement lifecycle;
 - o Assess the intended outcomes and benefits of critical commissioning and procurement activities and their link to corporate priorities;
 - o Review procurement activity or contracts not performing against agreed standards;
 - o Ensure appropriate Contract Management resources are allocated;
 - o Review the performance of key commissioned and procured services to aid future scoping;
 - o Ensure adherence to constitutional requirements for all commercial activities;
- ensure alignment with corporate priorities, corporate objectives and ensure value for money;
- provide commercial expertise offering advice and support;
- inform best practice in the Council's commercial activities and ensure continuous development;

3. Objectives

The SCCB will focus on the strategic direction of the Council's commercial activities including the commissioning and procurement of the organisation's 3rd party spend,

4. Board Membership and Structure

- The SCCB is Chaired by the Managing Director;

- Membership includes Directors and/or nominated deputies for each Directorate and Chief Officer Service plus representatives from Procurement, Commercial Services and Finance officers and where agenda items require, Legal and OD representation;
- Board members are required to attend meetings regularly for continuity and consistency but may nominate deputies to attend by exception. Decisions will be taken by attendees of the meeting without referral to absentees wherever possible.

5. Authority

The Group's authority comes from the Corporate Leadership Team and the Executive as part of the Council's Commercial Strategy. The chair of the Group will report to Corporate Leadership Team after each meeting, normally by tabling minutes from the Group at the following meeting of the Corporate Leadership Team. Corporate Leadership Team may ask the SCCB to include specific reviews to seek assurances on value of money and delivery of intended outcomes. The work of this group will be reported through Corporate Overview Scrutiny on a quarterly basis and on an annual basis on the Commercial Strategy Council as part of the regular reporting on the Commercial Strategy.

6. Budget

The Group has a delegate budget of £496k. This is to be awarded where purchasing manager or commissioners need to supplement their budgets to meet additional inflationary uplifts where the allocated budget does not meet the uplift.

7. Quorum

The Group will be quorate with the Chair, representation for each directorate (Environment and Regeneration, Education, Social Services, Commercial Services and Resources), and representatives from the organisation's Commercial and Procurement team.

8. The Role of the Secretariat (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Commercial and Procurement Service)

- The Secretariat is responsible for:
 - a. Development of the Forward Plan;
 - b. Ensuring that the Corporate Contracts Register is completed and maintained;
 - c. Initial assessment and acceptance or rejection of all submissions from the commercial lead;
 - d. Selection and submission of items for the Board agenda (in consultation with the Chair);
 - e. Providing commercial advice and guidance for papers/commercial issues which do not get included on the Board Agenda;
 - f. Reviewing and providing quality assurance for waiver requests prior to submission to Commercial and Procurement Services;
 - g. Providing feedback to the commercial lead on outcomes and issues discussed by the Board;
 - h. Dissemination of information and guidance to officers involved in commercial activities;

- i. Supporting the standardisation and continuous improvement of Council's commercial approaches;

9. Submission Process

- a) All pre-contract activity (such as early thoughts or initial plans for commercial activities and sourcing strategies), contract award recommendations and all variations to contracts subject to the criteria outlined within the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) must be submitted to the Board for review and approval to proceed. A checklist and template for presenting information will be provided to all commercial leads in advance.
- b) The commercial lead must submit a report to the Board Secretariat in advance of the meeting (for early thought or initial plans this must be done in the quarter before the intended start date for the procurement process. Other timings will be dictated by the forward plan allowing sufficient time for due diligence and challenge).
- c) The Board Chair and Secretariat will review the Contracts Register and Forward Plan at or before each meeting and may also request progress reports or information on any of the commercial activities identified.

10. Frequency of meetings

The Group will meet quarterly in February, May, September and November. Special meetings may be called if required.

11. Evaluation

The Group's effectiveness and terms of reference will be reviewed annually by Corporate Leadership Team and the Group, including a review of membership and relevant skills. Changes to the terms of reference must be agreed by Corporate Leadership Team. The Group will review its handling of any significant project it manages within three months of the end of the project and will report back to Corporate Leadership Team on any lessons learned.

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Agenda Item 12

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Preparations for EU Transition**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader of the Council**

Report Submitted by: **Bernadette Elias, Head of Governance & Partnerships and David Arnold, Policy Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	26/11/20	17.12.20			11/12/20	13.01.21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**

This report provides an update on the preparatory work undertaken during the EU Transition Period prior to it ending on 31st December 2020.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The UK left the EU on 31st Jan 2020 and entered a transition period until 31st December 2020, during which the UK's relationship with the EU has remained largely the same as it was.
 - 2.2 A level of uncertainty still remains of what the full implications of exiting the EU will be for local authorities in Wales. This uncertainty, combined with the ongoing impact of the Covid19 pandemic, has impacted the scope of preparedness activity and modelling that can be undertaken at local authority level.
 - 2.3 The officer Core Planning Group has continued to meet during the pandemic to facilitate EU transition preparations. The Corporate Policy Team receives information from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Welsh Government about the national picture, as well as information from the Home Office regarding the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). The policy officer supporting this work is represented on the WLGA Brexit Coordinator network.
 - 2.4 An update report was presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee in September 2019, with a further report agreed to be presented when the national state of play became clearer. In addition, Elected Members received a briefing on exiting the EU in October 2019. A follow up all Member briefing session was held on 3rd December 2020.
3. **Options for Recommendation**

The Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee considered this report and supported Option 2, at its meeting on 11th December 2020.

- 3.1 **Option One**
The Executive Committee:
I. Notes the progress made during the transition period; and
II. receives update reports as part of its forward work programme.

- 3.2 **Option Two**
The Executive Committee:
I. notes the progress made during the transition period and make any specific comments; and
II. receives update reports as part of its forward work programme.

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

Ensuring the Council is prepared to take advantage of any opportunities or mitigate against the risks associated with exiting the EU supports the Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan priorities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

Preparing the Council for the opportunities and risks associated with the UK's exit from the EU is currently being managed through existing resources.

The WLGA submitted a bid to the Welsh Government's EU Transition Fund for each Welsh local authority to receive £45,000 funding during 2019/20 and 2020/21 towards corporate capacity support for resourced work on preparing for and responding to exiting the EU. The Council has now received this funding to support the corporate Brexit planning work already being facilitated by the Corporate Policy Officer. This funding for all 22 councils in Wales was secured by the WLGA as part of their Brexit Transition Support Programme. We are currently awaiting a decision from Welsh Government on whether this funding for local authorities will continue in 2021/22, with representations being made about the importance of the funding for councils to prepare and respond to the impact of EU transition.

There is a UK Treasury guarantee that current EU Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) allocations will be honoured up to the end of the current EU funding programme (December 2020, with spending until 2023) but nothing confirmed beyond this point at present. The UK Government has announced that they will provide further clarity about replacement EU funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) soon.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Exiting the EU has been identified as a risk in the corporate risk register. This informed the risk register developed by the core officer group which is based on available intelligence and information (attached at Appendix A). The local risk assessment has also been informed by the WLGA's EU transition support programme for local authorities (Appendix B) and the Welsh Government's own End of EU Transition Action Plan (Appendix C).

5.3 **Legal**

Some existing governance processes and officer authorisations for Council services who implement activity currently delivered by EU directives may need to be amended. Current indications suggest that the majority of EU legislation relating to Council regulations will be transposed into UK law.

5.4 **Human Resources**

The Head of Governance and Partnerships has been assigned as the Council's lead officer for EU transition working with a lead Policy Officer within the Corporate Team coordinating the council-wide approach working closely with services, the WLGA and the UK Government.

The Organisational Development department carried out an analysis of Council staff nationalities in order to identify potential gaps in provision for any services areas reliant on staff who are EU nationals without British citizenship. This work revealed <10 members of staff across all Council directorates (including Schools) who are EU nationals. They have received support and information they need about the EUSS through their line managers and via the staff Intranet.

Two additional community cohesion coordinators for West Gwent (covering Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Caerphilly) were appointed in June 2019, funded by the Welsh Government's EU Transition Fund. The coordinators have been working closely with local community groups, libraries and businesses etc. to engage with vulnerable or hard-to-reach groups of EU citizens in West Gwent.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

The core planning group developed an impact and risk assessment to identify and respond to the local risks and opportunities associated with leaving the EU. The assessment includes measures to mitigate against the risks outlined in Appendix A.

6.1.1 **Summary of key activity**

Analysis of the December 2019 Electoral Register revealed that there were around 650 non-UK, non-Irish EU citizens registered to addresses within Blaenau Gwent. This figure for EU citizens in Blaenau Gwent as a whole is expected to be higher once European children under 18 and adults not registered to vote are taken into account.

6.1.2 One of the national risks identified for businesses and local authorities has been the introduction of new rulings around Export Health Certificates (EHC). The Council is currently working with local food manufacturers to signpost them to information about the new regulations and establish the levels of EHC demand from 1st Jan 2021 onwards.

6.1.3 In addition to the Covid-related financial support from Welsh Government currently available to local businesses, guidance from Welsh Government is

also available in order to highlight any supply chain issues or how they can meet new import and export regulatory requirements. The Council is working to promote and maximise this support to local businesses.

- 6.1.4 Blaenau Gwent has a high proportion of manufacturing, retail and automotive businesses who face the dual risk of financial implications associated with Covid19 and the end of the EU transition period. Combined with above Wales average rates of people with no qualifications, people claiming unemployment related benefits since March 2020, and employees working in sectors most at risk from Covid19, vulnerability from ongoing economic impact is a risk. These risks inform the activity being undertaken across the Council to support communities in Blaenau Gwent and to mitigate impact where possible.
- 6.1.5 The Council is also working to identify and maximise opportunities for Blaenau Gwent as the UK exits the EU.
- 6.1.6 The UK Internal Markets Bill would introduce a new legal power for UK Government to replace EU funds through the new UKSPF, enabling UK Government to provide funding throughout the UK in relation to infrastructure, economic development, culture, sport, skills and training. It is not yet clear what role Welsh Government and local authorities in Wales will have in administering this new funding locally, the Council is continuing to monitor these developments closely.
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
Monitoring the local impact and undertaking preparatory work in order to maximise opportunities or mitigate against any risks from the UK's exit from the EU will help to create a more resilient and prepared local authority for the public.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
The core planning group is coordinating engagement activities with local business groups and individual businesses to determine their views, concerns and preparations for EU transition, as well as to understand any local reliance on goods or skills from the EU. Community Cohesion Coordinate engagement, WLGA network etc.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
Putting robust preparations in place will enable the Council to prepare for and take advantage of any long-term funding opportunities created by the UK's exit from the EU. The preparation work undertaken during transition aims to assist BG meet the challenges and impact of exiting the EU
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
The preventative nature of the sub-regional Community Cohesion Officer work programme includes work to champion diversity and promote social inclusion amongst people of all different backgrounds.

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**

We are receiving advice from Welsh Government and working closely with the WLGA as part of the WLGA Brexit coordinators network to assist with best-practice and information sharing amongst Welsh councils.

At an appropriate time, any impact of exiting the EU on residents and public services may need to be considered by the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board. However, opportunities to link the impact of EU Transition into the PSB's strategic work programme are being considered; for example, the economic impact Covid19 recovery theme and the PSB Foundational Economy and Sustainable Food Partnership programmes will help to mitigate against any local economic impact of EU Transition going forward.

6.7 **Integration (across service areas)**

The core planning group reports to CLT, which is chaired by the Council's Managing Director. Planning group membership includes representatives from across all council services. It is a mechanism for sharing and disseminating information across the organisation using a coordinated, integrated and collaborative approach across services.

6.8 **EqIA**

Work undertaken by the community cohesion staff will contribute towards support for people with protected characteristics.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

EU transition preparatory work is being monitored by the core planning group, which reports to CLT. There are also update reports that will form part of the forward work programme of the Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix A – BGCBC EU Transition Action Plan*
- *Appendix B – [WLGA EU Transition Support Programme Local Authority Brexit Exposure Dashboards](#)*
- *Appendix C – [Welsh Government End of EU Transition Action Plan 2020](#)*

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Risk	Description	Impact	Mitigating Actions	Timeframe
Loss of EU funding	BG currently benefits from EU funding as part of the 2014-20 funding programme, but existing projects receiving EU funds will only be guaranteed up to 2023 + any new projects developed after exit day will not be entitled	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map current levels of EU funding then consider alternative future funding streams for any new projects developed from 2021. 	Mar-21
Health and Social Care provision (impact on vulnerable people)	Economic sustainability of health and social care systems (market and staffing - EU nationals etc) and continuity of priority supplies including PPE, medicines, food, fuel, medical devices.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with health and social care community to ensure that they are prepared for no-deal and signpost them to relevant advice. 	Jan-21
Local Economy	Loss of income for businesses due to economic impact of Brexit (& coronavirus), plus any economic downturn could further reduce local people's spending power, placing additional pressures on households and local businesses.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with businesses to determine their priority concerns, risks and opportunities and share best practice to help them prepare 	Jan-21
Council budget	Cost increases for essential goods and services that could impact negatively on current and future council services and budgets	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider potential immediate impact on council budget as well as implications of leaving the EU during Welsh Gov 21/22 budget setting period. 	Mar-21

Food	Limited food supplies affecting schools, care settings and vulnerable/low income residents, as well as potential for new food supply sources that do not meet previous food safety standards	High	Food sub-group to consider issues	Mar-21
Supply chains	Increased border controls resulting in supply chain disruption to supplies like fuel, medicines, medical supplies, and other essential goods.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the reliance of council, contractor, supplier and local businesses' supply chains on EU goods/materials 	Jan-21
Community Cohesion	Any rise in community tensions either due to food, fuel and medical supply shortages or as a result of any increases in hate crime towards EU and other non-UK BG residents	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to monitor community cohesion, including any possible future tensions arising towards EU residents or as a result of supply shortages. 	Mar-21
Demand on Council workforce	Increase in staff workload and lack of capacity for services responding to increased demand / regulatory changes as a result of the UK's exit from the EU	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for expected impact on council staff in terms of any increase in workload / lack of capacity for services responding to increased demand or implementing regulatory changes. 	Jan-21
Data flows to / from EU	UK becomes a "third country" in the eyes of GDPR under no-deal scenario. Any suppliers handling/processing personal data based outside of the UK could choose to not return or send the info to the Council.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services to identify any suppliers based outside of UK handling/processing personal data from the council 	Jan-21
EU national residents	Ensuring approx. 1,000-1,500 EU national BG residents (particularly the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups) can secure Settled or Pre-Settled Status through the EU settlement scheme by June 2021	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a link on BG council website to Home Office and WG guidance on EUSS and continued to communicate the scheme to raise awareness. Identify groups of more vulnerable EU residents who may need additional support in applying before the June 2021 deadline. 	Jun-21

Local EU workforce	Recruitment and retention issues for local businesses and contractors who carry out services commissioned by the council	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with local businesses, contractors and agencies to establish their current reliance on EU national staff 	Jan-21
Council EU workforce	Recruitment or retention issues for council workforce due to reduction in numbers of EU citizens arriving to UK	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly monitor numbers of EU national staff Provide advice on how to apply through EUSS via line managers and on intranet 	Jun-21

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Local Authority Brexit Dashboards

Blaenau Gwent

2020 update

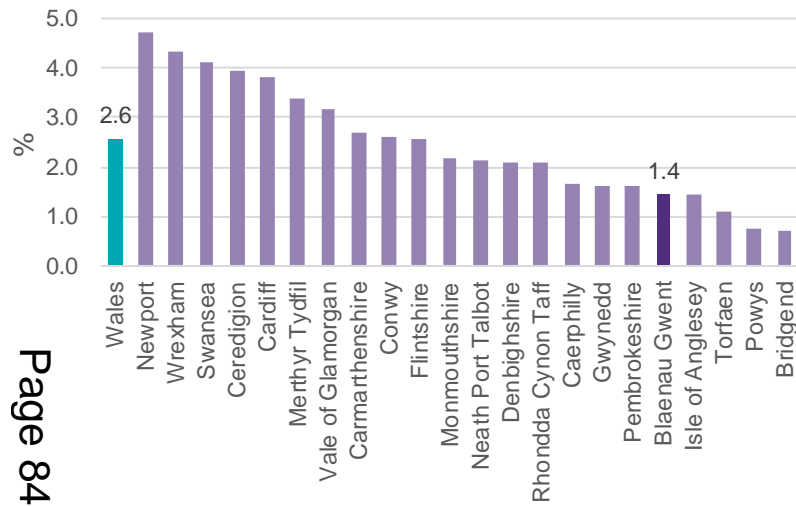




Blaenau Gwent. People

EU residents

Proportion of population that are non-UK EU born residents



Long-term international migration

'Net migration' shows how many more people are coming to live in the UK than leaving the UK to live abroad

Net migration (total)

Wales: 7,812
UK: 230,514

Blaenau Gwent
39

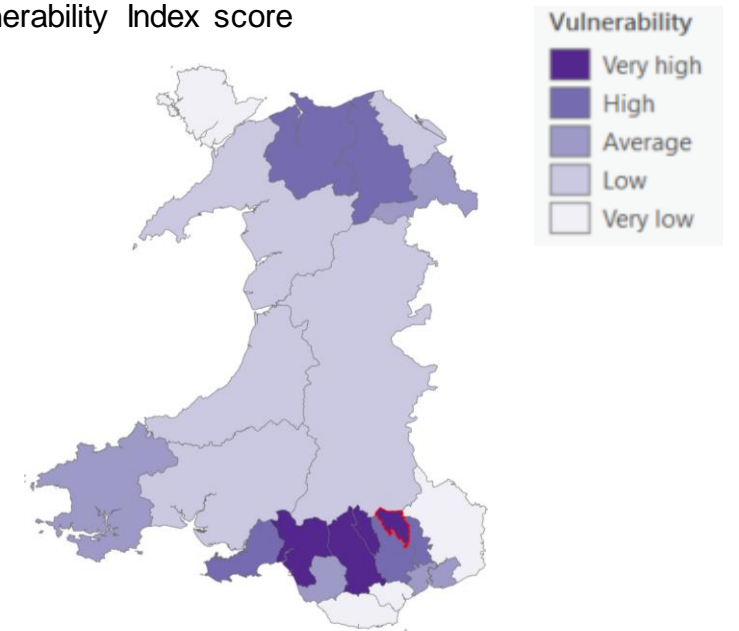
Net migration (per 1,000 pop)

Wales: 2.5
UK: 3.5

Blaenau Gwent
0.6

Community Vulnerability Index

Vulnerability Index score



Skills

"Those with fewer formal qualifications, are more likely to be employed in the most exposed industries"

Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2018

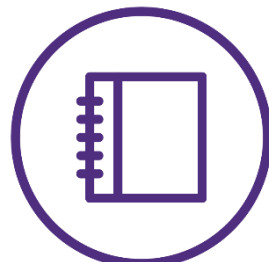


No qualifications

Blaenau Gwent: 13.8%

Wales: 8.5%

UK: 7.9%



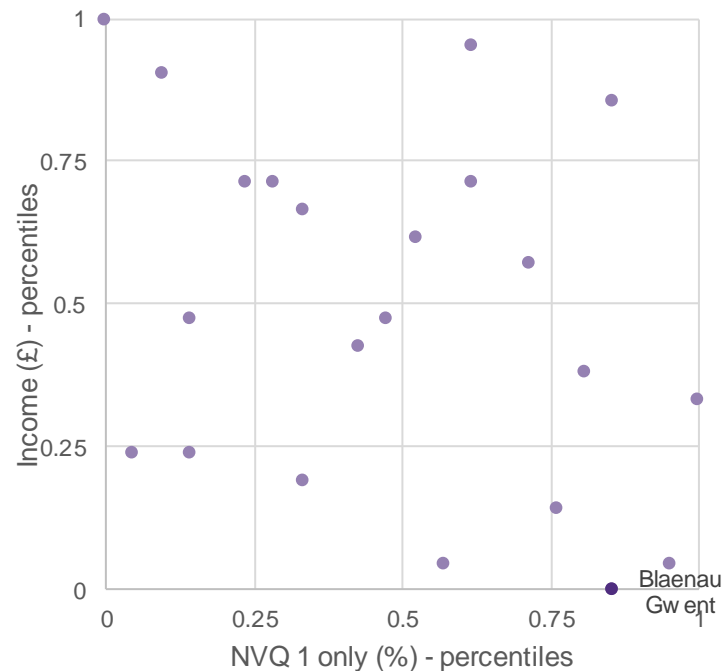
NVQ 1

Blaenau Gwent : 13.4%

Wales: 11.2%

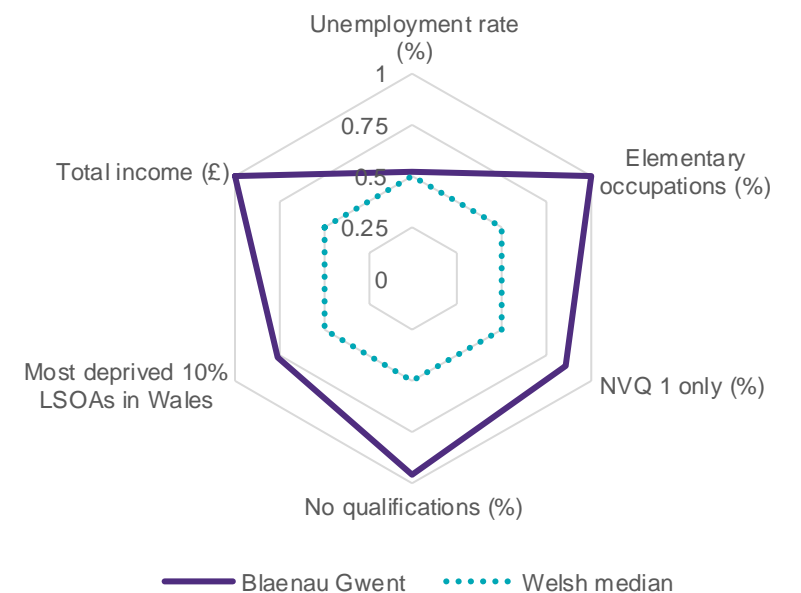
UK: 9.9%

Low skills vs. Income



Community Vulnerability Index Profile

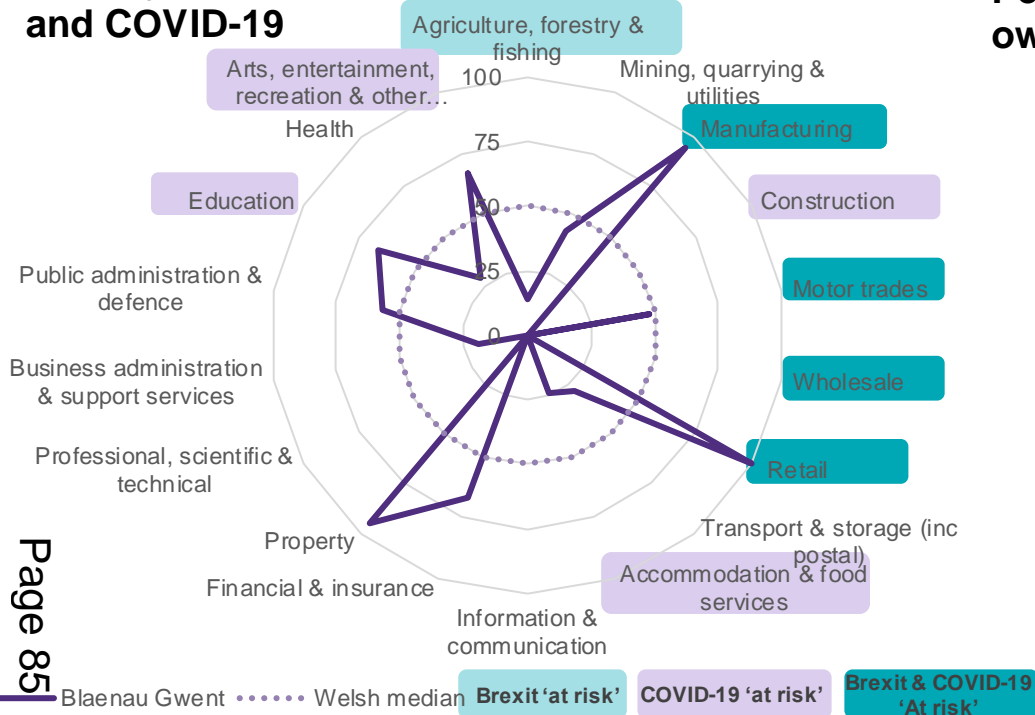
Larger the shape, the higher the vulnerability



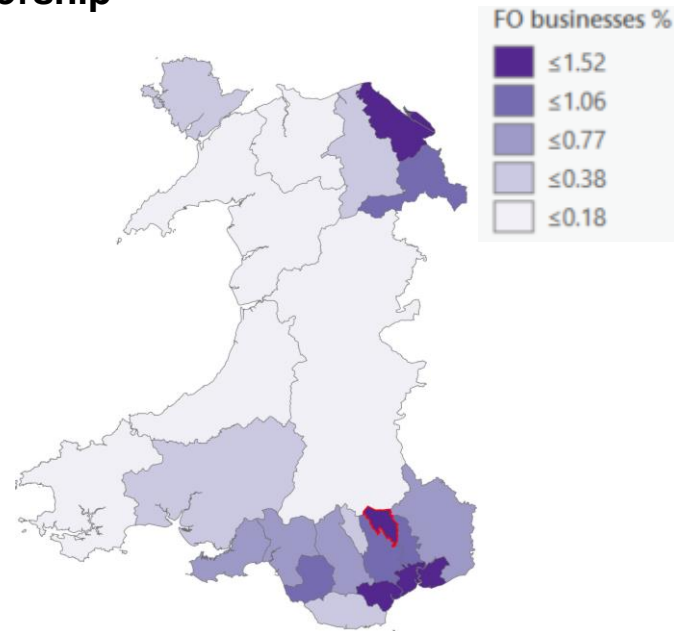


Blaenau Gwent. Economy

Employment sectors – At risk from Brexit and COVID-19



Percentage of all businesses with foreign ownership



Gross Value Added per job

GVA per filled job
Blaenau Gwent: £43,696
 Wales: £46,132
 UK: £56,387

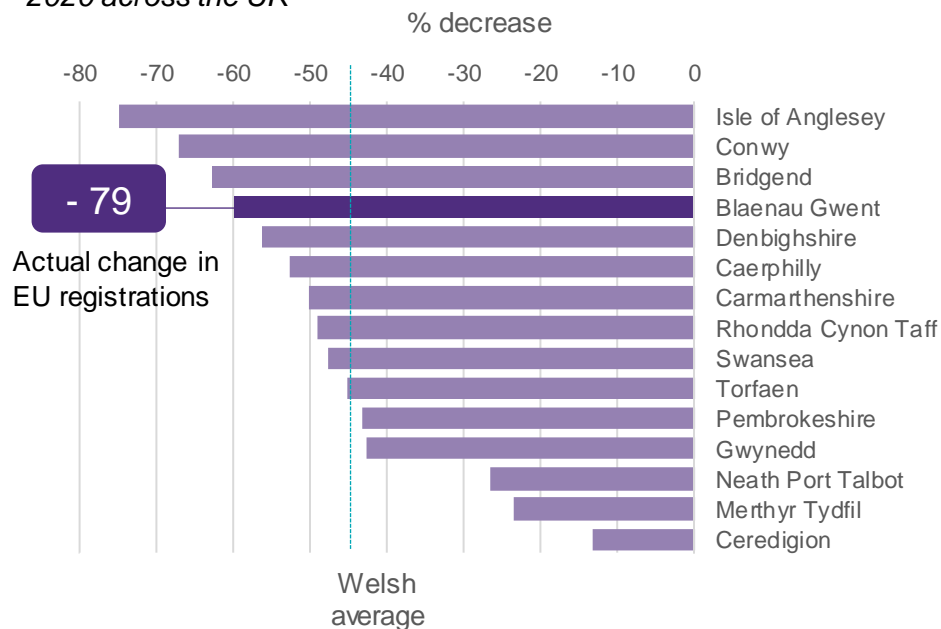


Rank out of 22 Welsh authorities...

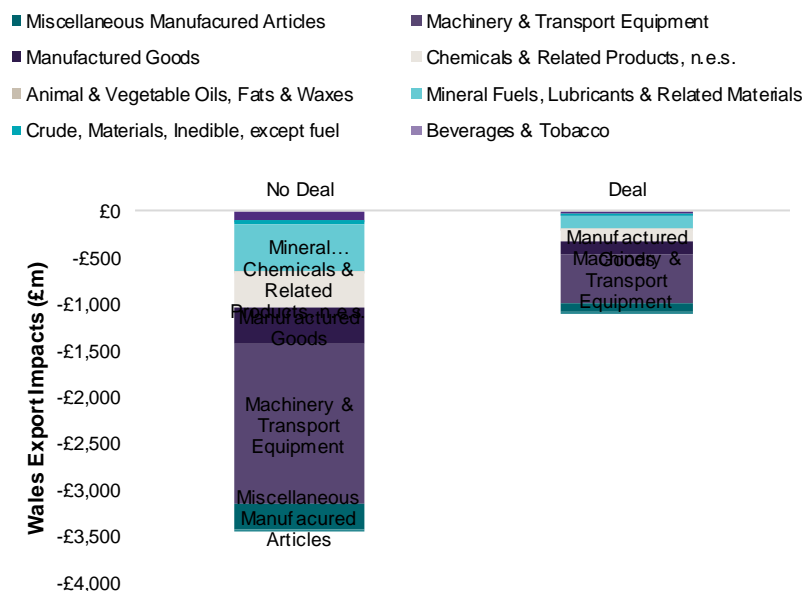
13th

National Insurance Number (NINO) registrations

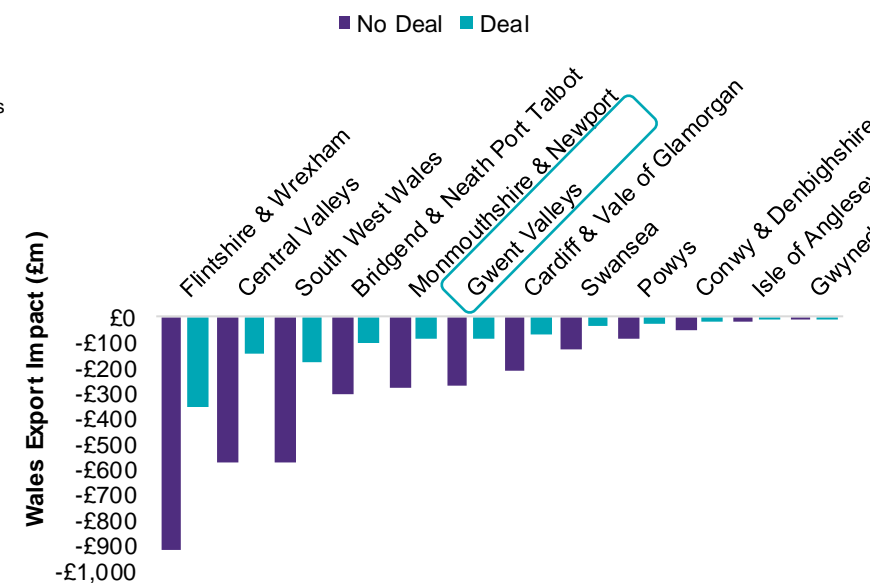
47% reduction in EU registrations between June 2016 and June 2020 across the UK



Export impact value ('No-deal' & 'Deal') by SITC codes, Wales, (Annualised, £m)



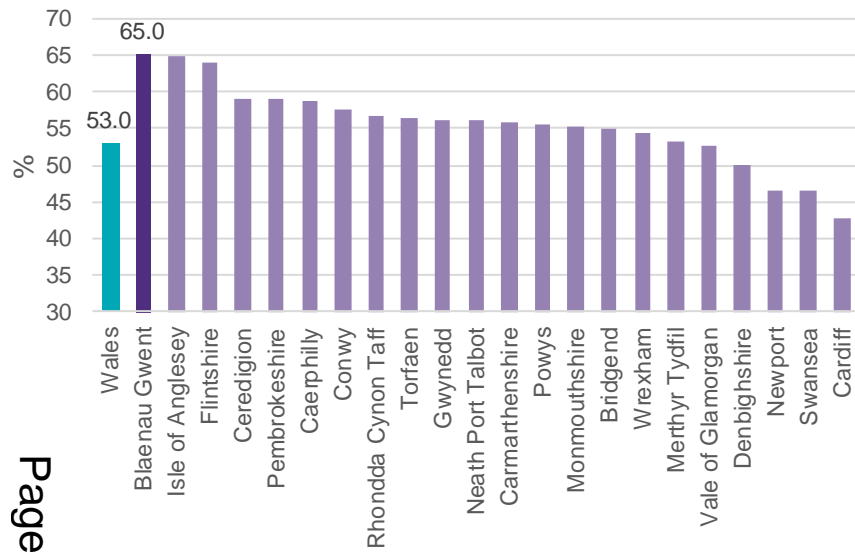
Total Export impact value by Welsh NUTS3 Regions (Annualised, £m)



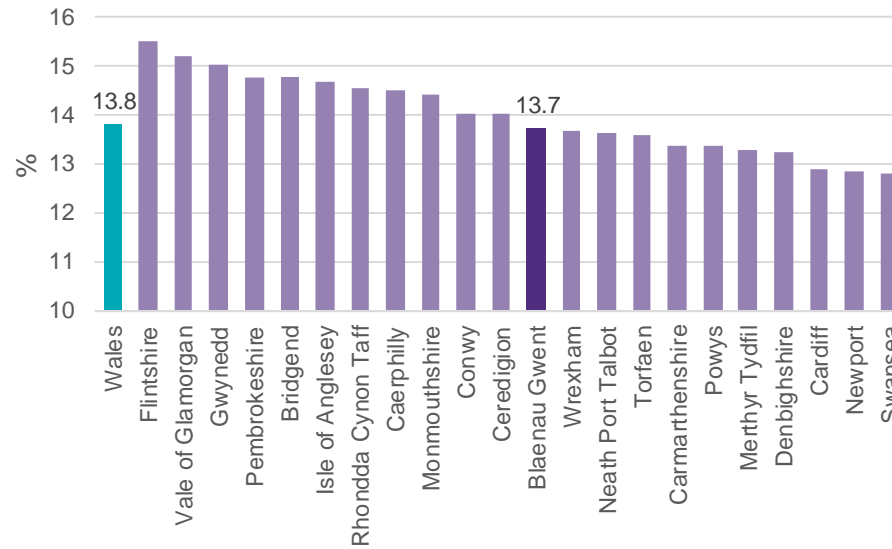


Blaenau Gwent. COVID-19

Percentage of employment in COVID-19 'at risk' sectors



Estimated decline in total annual GVA resulting from COVID-19



Government support take-up rate

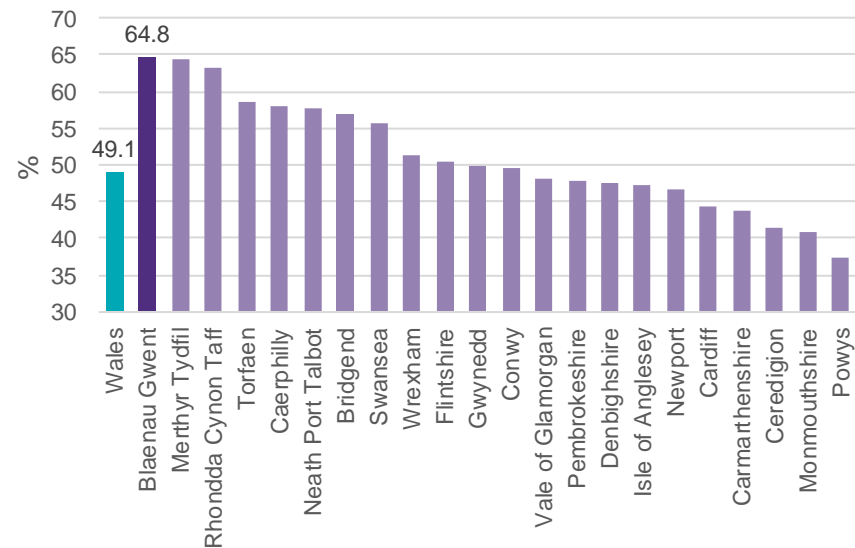


Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
Blaenau Gwent: 30%
 Wales: 31%
 UK: 32%



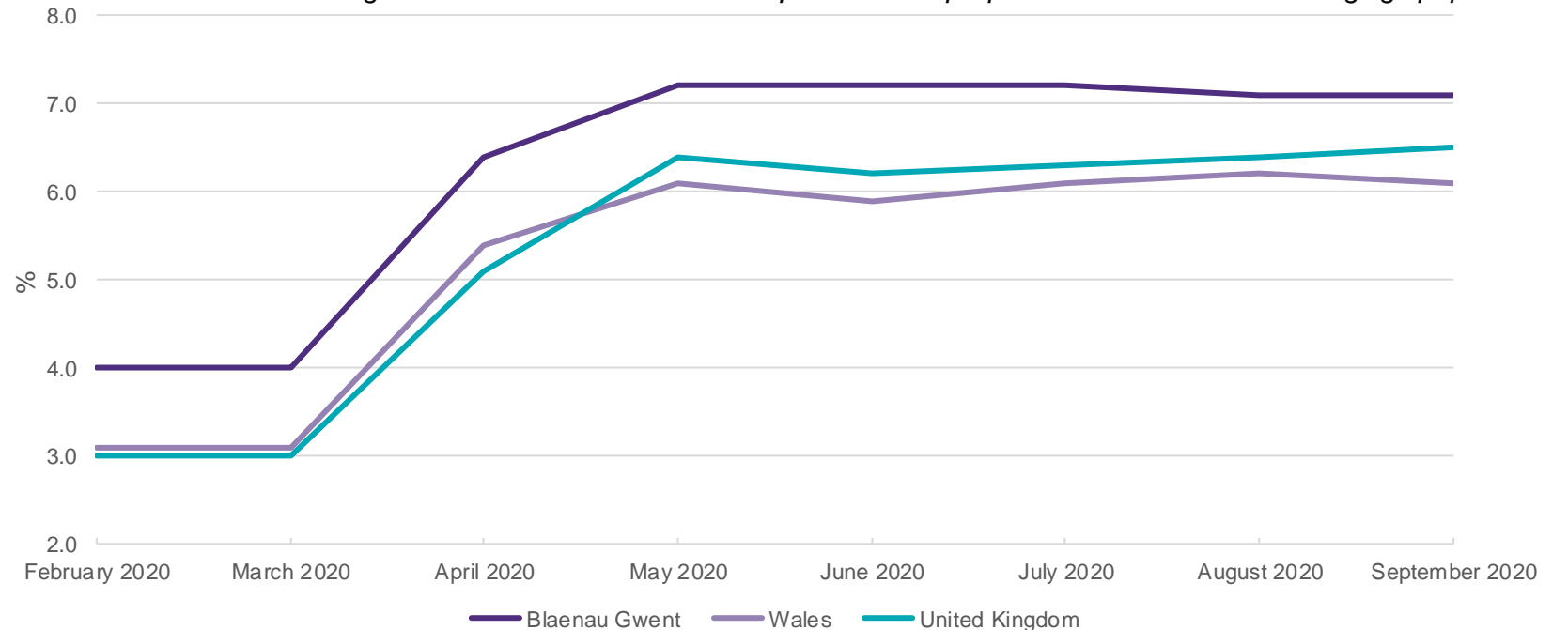
Self-Employment Income Support Scheme
Blaenau Gwent : 80%
 Wales: 78%
 UK: 77%

Percentage of businesses in COVID-19 'at risk' sectors



Claimant rate (Feb 2020 to Sept 2020)

The number of people claiming unemployment related benefits in the UK reached 2.7 million in September, an increase of 1.5 million since lockdown began in March. The rate below is expressed as a proportion of the resident working age population.





Blaenau Gwent. Summary

Key findings

- Compared to the rest of Wales, Blaenau Gwent has a low proportion of its population who were born in the EU, at 1.4%, which compares to a Welsh average of 2.6%.
- Blaenau Gwent ranks in the top 20% on our Community Vulnerability Index, indicating very high levels of social vulnerability to Brexit.
- Notable areas of vulnerability in Blaenau Gwent include the very high levels of people employed in elementary occupations, the very low skills levels, and very low total incomes.
- Blaenau Gwent has seen the one of the largest declines in EU NINO registrations of all Welsh authorities, reducing by 59.8% between 2016 and 2020.
- Blaenau Gwent has a high proportion of employment in both Manufacturing and Retail, which are both identified as 'most at risk' industries by UK Government.
- Productivity, as measured by GVA per job, is average in Blaenau Gwent ranking 13th out of 22 authorities.
- In terms of COVID-19, Blaenau Gwent has a the highest proportion of people employed in 'at risk' sectors out of all Welsh authorities, as well as a high proportion of businesses in 'at risk' sectors.
- The estimated decline in GVA as a result of COVID-19 is predicted to be 13.7% which is slightly below the Welsh average.
- The claimant rate has risen since March this has remained above the Welsh and UK average.
- Blaenau Gwent has had an above average take-up rate of the Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Key implications

To add once Toolkit finalised



Data sources

Indicator	Output	Why include?	Source
EU born residents	Bar chart shows proportion of residents that are born in the EU compared to other authorities in the region and the Welsh average.	EU migrants form a crucial part of the economy. In order to understand the potential impacts of changes in migration, it is important to have an overview of what proportion of the current population is made up of EU born residents.	ONS, Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality (Dec 2019)
No qualifications, NVQ 1 only	Factoid showing the proportion of working age residents with no qualifications and the proportion of working age residents qualified to NVQ 1 only.	A study by the Institute of Fiscal Studies found that those with fewer formal qualifications are more likely to be employed in the most exposed industries.	Annual Population Survey (Dec 2019)
Community Vulnerability Index	Thematic map shows overall performance on the 'Community Vulnerability Index' relative to the rest of Wales. Spider chart shows how the area performs on the individual measures, relative to the national median.	Our 'Community Vulnerability Index' takes into account factors which are most likely to impact on a place's ability to adapt in a post-Brexit world, including unemployment, low skills, low level occupations, no qualifications, income and deprivation. NB: Income has been inversed in the spider chart so that a point towards the outer edge of chart indicates lower income levels.	Annual Population Survey (June 2020, Dec 2019); Survey of Personal Incomes (2018); Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019);
Long-term International migration	Factoid showing net long-term international migration	Changes to the free movement of people could have significant impacts on international migration into areas.	ONS, Local area migration indicators, UK (2019)
National Insurance Number (NINo) registrations	Bar chart to see how the number of new registrations has changed between referendum and now.	NINo numbers are often used as an indicator for the number of migrants moving into a geographical area for work. This is an important consideration given the contribution that EU workers make to the economy.	NINo registrations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK by Region / Local Authority and world region - registrations year to June 2020, DWP (June 2020)
Employment sectors	Spider chart showing proportional employment in different sectors.	Some employment sectors are more vulnerable to the impacts of Brexit, therefore it is important to understand which sectors are most prominent and whether these are any of these are high risk.	Business Register and Employment Survey (2018)
Foreign Owned businesses	Map showing the proportion of businesses that are foreign owned.	High dependence on foreign owned businesses could pose a risk as there is uncertainty as whether some of these businesses will remain within the UK or relocate.	FAME, Bureau Van Dijk (2019)
Total Gross Value Added	Factoid showing total GVA	Gross value added (GVA) is a measure of the increase in the value of the economy due to the production of goods and services. This is an important consideration given the potential impact that Brexit could have on economic output.	ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) local authority by NUTS 1 region: UKL Wales (2018)
GVA per filled job	Bar chart showing GVA per job	GVA per filled job provides a direct comparison between the level of economic output and the direct labour input of those who produced that output. The level of productivity is useful to consider as it is a current weakness in the UK economy and may be further hindered post-Brexit.	Nominal (smoothed) GVA (£) per filled job (£); Local Authority District (2018)
Trade impacts	Bar charting showing the total Export Annualised Impact in a Deal and No deal scenario by Welsh NUTS 3 Regions (£m), NUTS 3 Regions		HMRC & Grant Thornton Analysis. Note: The data doesn't include the impact on WA BTTA, WA Energy exports & WA Other

Data sources (cont.)

Indicator	Output	Why include?	Source
Employment in 'at risk' sectors	Bar chart showing percentage of employment in 'at risk' sectors compared to the Welsh average.	The sectoral make-up of areas will have a strong influence on the economic impacts of COVID-19. For example areas with a high proportion of the workforce employed in accommodation and food services will be more heavily impacted than areas with high levels of professional and technical workers.	GT calculation based on: Business Register and Employment Survey (2018)
Businesses in 'at risk' sectors	Bar chart showing percentage of businesses in 'at risk' sectors compared to the Welsh average.	The sectoral make-up of areas will have a strong influence on the economic impacts of COVID-19. For example areas with a high proportion of the workforce employed in accommodation and food services will be more heavily impacted than areas with high levels of professional and technical workers.	GT calculation based on: Business Register and Employment Survey (2018)
Estimated decline in total annual GVA resulting from COVID-19	Factoid showing estimated percentage reduction in annual GVA under Covid-19 scenario. The modelled GVA data is based on OBR output losses by sector in 2nd quarter of 2020. A higher figure indicates greater vulnerability.		GT calculation based on: ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) local authority by NUTS 1 region: UKL Wales (2018) and OBR output losses table
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) take up rate	Factoid showing take up rate relative to Welsh and UK average.	Certain sectors have been more heavily impacted by COVID-19 than others and as a result a high level of employees have had to be put on furlough. This measure therefore gives an indication of the immediate impacts that COVID-19 is having on local areas.	ONS, Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) Statistics: August 2020
Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) take up rate	Factoid showing take up rate relative to Welsh and UK average.	Research has shown that self-employed people are more at risk to the economic impacts of COVID-19. This new dataset gives an early indication of the level of self-employed people in an area who are requiring support.	ONS, Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) Statistics: August 2020
Foreign Owned businesses	Map showing the proportion of businesses that are foreign owned.	High dependence on foreign owned businesses could pose a risk as there is uncertainty as to whether some of these businesses will remain within the UK or relocate.	FAME, Bureau Van Dijk (2019)
Total Gross Value Added	Factoid showing total GVA	Gross value added (GVA) is a measure of the increase in the value of the economy due to the production of goods and services. This is an important consideration given the potential impact that Brexit could have on economic output.	ONS, Regional gross value added (balanced) local authority by NUTS 1 region: UKL Wales (2018)
GVA per filled job	Bar chart showing GVA per job	GVA per filled job provides a direct comparison between the level of economic output and the direct labour input of those who produced that output. The level of productivity is useful to consider as it is a current weakness in the UK economy and may be further hindered post-Brexit.	Nominal (smoothed) GVA (£) per filled job (£); Local Authority District (2018)
Brexit impact on GVA	Factoid showing predicted decline in GVA under hard and soft Brexit scenarios.	One of the big concerns around Brexit is the impact it will have on economic output, with many studies predicting negative impacts. A recent study by Dhingra et al (2017) found that every local authority is predicted to see a decrease in economic output, measured by GVA, as a result of Brexit. However, it should be noted that the method used in this analysis does not factor in leaving without a Withdrawal Agreement in place, which appears now to be the most likely scenario.	The Local Economic Effects of Brexit, Dhingra et al (2017).

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Sickness Absence Performance**

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

Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser
Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
30.09.20	01.10.20	17.12.20			11.12.20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members the opportunity to scrutinise and challenge the sickness absence performance for 2019/20, the continued actions to support improvement in attendance and recognise the positive attendance of the majority of the workforce.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Staff attendance is critical in delivering services and the Council's priorities and is a key performance indicator reflected in the quarterly Finance and Performance report. Whilst sickness levels remain high, it is important to note that the majority of employees have little or no sickness absence and attend work regularly.

2.2 Improving attendance does remain a key priority and is identified as a key risk for the Council as it is acknowledged that high levels of sickness absence will have a detrimental impact on the ability of the Council to deliver services effectively. Therefore, the need to reduce the impact and cost of sickness absence has been identified as a corporate priority.

2.3 Performance Information 2019/20

2.3.1 The overall year end outturn figure for the Council of 13.91 days per full time equivalent (FTE) employee (13.48 days excluding Covid 19 sickness) sees an increase from the previous year's outturn of 12.66 days and exceeds the target set of 11 days.

2.3.2 The total days lost represents a loss in productivity equating to 135 extra employees being available to work for the full year. The calculation applied is based on 220 working days per year per FTE employee.

- 2.3.3 Over the last five years the Council has had sustained absence levels with three of the last five years exceeding 12 days sickness absence per FTE employee and the outturn for 2019/20 exceeding the previous four years. Appendix 1 sets out the trend over the current and previous years.
- 2.3.4 The absence pattern is further illustrated at Appendix 2 (Table 1 and 2) which details the rank order of days lost and the highest three months of absence and the lowest month of absence within the reporting period.
- 2.3.5 It is recognised that typically when comparing different organisations that absence is normally more heavily weighted towards short term with a 70/30 split between short and long term. 69.19% of all absences in the Council are more than 4 weeks and are classed as long term. The Council is almost meeting its total FTE days lost target in long term absence alone. Table 3 at Appendix 2 details the breakdown of short and long term absence by directorate.
- 2.3.6 In managing long term absence, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) report *that 'if you have been off work for six months you have an 80 per cent chance of being off for five years'*. Effective management to facilitate a return to work sooner or to expedite a termination where a fair process has been followed and a return to work is not foreseeable significantly impacts in reducing sickness absence.
- 2.3.7 In line with the Attendance Management Policy where an employee's absence exceeds the absence triggers identified in the policy an Absence Review Meeting is held. These reviews are an essential way of managing sickness absence, maintaining contact and reinforcing the level of expectation in relation to attendance at work. Table 4 at Appendix 2 details the number of formal warnings, dismissals and ill health retirements during 2019/ 20 and the previous two years.
- 2.3.8 The Office of National Statistics (ONS) latest published data quantifies that more than a quarter (27.2%) of all days lost through sickness absence in the UK were attributed to minor illness such as coughs and colds This was followed by musculoskeletal problems at 19.7%. After "other" conditions, mental health conditions were the next most common reason, accounting for 12.4%.
- There are more individual classifications (789) of gastro-intestinal absences which includes vomiting and diarrhea than any other form of absence but the main cause of **total days lost** in the authority is related to mental health (stress personal, stress at work, anxiety and depression). Stress at work accounts for 27% of the total days lost to Psychiatric / Mental Health.
- 2.3.9 The table at Appendix 3 sets out the sickness absence categories for 2019/20. The table is ranked by calendar days lost during the period and includes absences that commenced prior to the reporting year that remained open during the year. The table also provides the detail breakdown of the number of absences and employees against each sickness absence category.

2.4 External Benchmarking

2.4.1 The publication of the all Wales comparative data for 2019/20 has been delayed and is not yet available. Set out in Appendix 4 is the comparative data for the previous two years. In 2018/19 the Council reported the highest days lost of all reporting councils moving from the fourth highest reporting in 2017/18.

2.4.2 Blaenau Gwent reported lower quartile results for two consecutive years’.

2.4.3 The best performing Local Authority reported 8.3 days with a year on year reduction and was only one of two authorities to deliver a result that was less than 9 days.

2.5 Historical Measures to Improve Attendance

2.5.1 The Council has, over many years, introduced a range of initiatives to assist in the effective management of attendance. Detailed below, are some of the key aspects of the Council’s improvement programme:

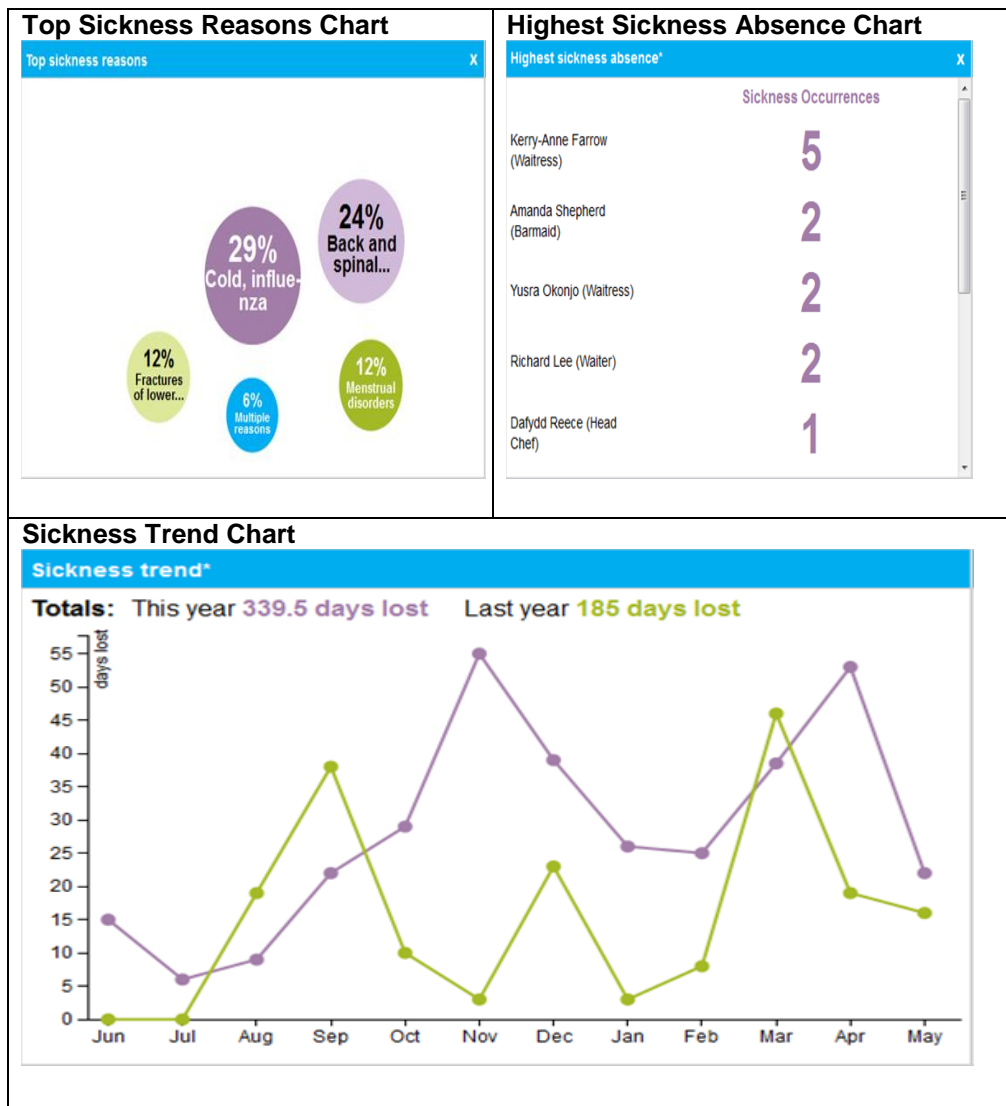
- An Attendance Management Policy that defines the expectations for attendance and sets out guidance on the management of sickness absence.
- Training/briefing sessions for front line managers on the management of attendance.
- A policy and practical toolkit for managers in managing stress related issues with an immediate referral to the Occupational Health Service for stress related absences.
- A fundamental review of the management of sickness absence by an Elected Member Task and Finish Working Group.
- An extensive range of flexible working arrangements which are more than comparable to other Local Authorities in Wales.
- A guide signposting managers and employees to sources of practical advice to improve support for staff experiencing stress or dealing with mental health issues.
- Regular discussion and learning nationally and regionally.
- A review of the top 20 trigger cases for both the Council and Schools.
- The Corporate Leadership Team reviewing sickness absence data for 2018/19 and setting out key managerial actions:
 - Target setting per service and seasonally
 - Hold focussed sessions quarterly to review sickness absence – on agenda for team meetings.
 - 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.
 - Push ownership to the individual.

2.6 Ongoing Measures to support improvements in attendance

2.6.1 HR/Payroll System (iTrent)

Managerial self-service is an enabler in managing sickness absence, the manager can record and view sickness absence directly in iTrent. Further enhancements have been rolled out to managers including:

- Availability of absence management information reports for Managers to extract data from within iTrent.
- Scheduled reports published to Managers on the 1st of each Month, if a Manager has had sickness in their team.
- Removal of manual reporting of sickness statistics which are now extracted from the data inputted by managers into iTrent.
- Introduction of a Manager Dashboard for sickness absence which provides quick and easy-to-view absence data for a service as set out below:



2.6.2 Continued Actions for Managers

- Target setting per service and seasonally
- Hold focussed sessions quarterly to review sickness absence – on agenda for team meetings.
- 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.
- Push ownership to the individual

2.6.3 Performance information

Quarterly sickness absence outturn figures are provided to senior management and reported into Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee as part of the performance management framework and an annual performance report is presented to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee by the Organisational Development Service.

Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee agreed that each Directorate is to report sickness data into their respective Scrutiny Committee as part of the forward work programme. The first two quarters of 2019/20 were reported to the relevant Scrutiny Committees and Executive during the earlier part of this year prior to the lockdown.

Workforce profiles providing service workforce data and management information to help managers to plan and lead service performance and improvement are issued to directorates and all Schools. The Corporate Leadership Team considers a corporate workforce profile for the Council and Schools.

To support the analysis and action planning for sickness, the Organisational Development Service also attends Directorate Management Teams and there are annual focussed sessions held within schools with each Headteacher.

2.6.4 Performance Targets

Sickness absence targets were set by the Corporate Leadership Team for a three year period – 11 days for 2019/20, 10.5 days for 2020/21 and 10 days for 2021/22. These targets are set based on an analysis of previous performance and recognising the need for the targets to be realistic but also challenging.

In addition Service Managers have been requested to set targets for their respective service areas for 2020/21.

2.6.5 **Attendance Management Policy**

The Policy remains a key aspect of the Authority's commitment to improving performance and the policy sets out a modern, strategic approach to the management of attendance. Following the most recent review the Task and Finish Group confirmed that the policy framework remained fit for purpose, albeit there was some scope to simplify and make better use of managerial guidance. This work has commenced and is running alongside developments within iTrent where manual processes can be automated.

2.6.6 **Training**

In addition to the development of managerial guidance, a reviewed line management training session has been developed utilising case studies. The Corporate Leadership Team has approved that this training becomes mandatory for all managers as part of a Leadership Development Programme.

The Council working in partnership with the Trade Unions and other partners is developing a proactive approach to raising awareness in relation to mental health in the workplace. Training for a number of managers and staff has initially been rolled out which will equip them with the skills to support in managing mental health issues and staff will benefit from increased awareness of how they can support employees with mental health.

In addition to the above training there is a plan to introduce Mental Health Champions. These Champions are employees in the workplace who offer assistance and signposting for colleagues who are or may be experiencing mental health issues. The expectations are that they are volunteers who are trained to identify, assist and direct colleagues to further support if and when required.

2.6.7 **Wellbeing**

Employee wellbeing is intrinsically linked to levels of attendance. Wellbeing is more than an avoidance of becoming physically sick. It represents a broader concept that includes physical, mental and social health.

The Organisation Development Strategy which is under review will include a strategic focus on wellbeing. An externally facilitated workshop on developing a 'Healthy Organisation' was held in August 2019 with senior management representation from each directorate and there were plans to run a Healthy Organisation Workshop for CLT in July 2020 – this has been postponed as a result of the response to the Covid-19 emergency.

An Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for employees has been reintroduced which provides a range of services including counselling, advice and information, ranging from practical and emotional issues such as wellbeing, family matters, relationships and debt management. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is accessible by phone or online.

In addition, a number of workshops and drop-in sessions were held as part of Wellbeing in Work month in March of this year. The aim of which was to increase awareness of mental health and other wellbeing issues and to

signpost the support and resources available to help employees deal with such issues. The drop-in sessions involved advice and support from organisations such as the National Exercise Referral Service, The Library Service, Aneurin Bevan UHB Wellbeing Service, Weightwatchers, etc. There were also workshops and activities on the following topics; Influencing Skills, Unconscious Bias, Nutrition, Mindfulness, Digital Communities, Personality Dynamics, Confidence Building. Some sessions had to be cancelled due to the lockdown.

Other initiatives implemented to support employee wellbeing include:

- A retendered Occupational Health Service – working in partnership with the Council to support attendance management and wellbeing.
- A weekly wellbeing bulletin introduced and issued to all staff.
- Signposting and encouragement of employees to self-access the flu immunisation

2.6.8 **Flexible working and special leave**

The Council continues to offers an extensive range of flexible working and special leave provisions which compare favourably with other Local Authorities. These policies provide a range of support for employees which could support a reduction in sickness absence. Managers play a key role in promoting these policies to employees.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 CLT in consideration of the performance information and the proportion of sickness absence that is attributed to long term absences will undertake, through Directorate Management Teams, a review of the Top 20 long term absence cases to understand what this is telling us and what are the barriers/challenges in dealing with these cases. This exercise will also take account of the data available for 2020/21 to understand the impact of the Covid-19 emergency. The first quarter outturn figure of 2.49 days (2.21 days excluding Covid-19 related absence) has demonstrated an overall reduction in the level of sickness absence from 3.05 days during the same period in 2019/20.

3.2 **Option 1**

That Members having considered the sickness absence performance information and the ongoing actions to support improved attendance within the Council identify any further areas for improvement in order to drive forward performance improvement.

3.3 **Option 2**

That Members endorse the report and the ongoing actions to support improvement in attendance.

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

- 4.1 **Impact on Budget** (short and long term impact)
There are direct and indirect costs of sickness absence which are a key driver in the Council's approach to effectively improve attendance at work.
- 4.2 **Risk including Mitigating Actions**
The underperformance in relation to the high levels of sickness absence does present a significant risk in terms of the impact on front line service delivery and continuity through lost time and staffing changes. In addition, the financial implications associated with sickness absence directly impact on the Council's budget. Mitigating actions are detailed within the report.
- 4.3 **Legal**
There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 4.4 **Human Resources**
The staffing implications are detailed within the content of the report.
5. **Supporting Evidence**
- 5.1 **Performance Information and Data**
The detailed performance evidence is detailed in the body of the report as well as the actions taken to address the level of underperformance.
- 5.2 **Expected outcome for the public**
Information included within the report will provide opportunity for the public to scrutinise the Council's performance and provide accountability across the Council.
- 5.3 **Involvement** (consultation, engagement, participation)
- Trade Union Comments
- The Trade Unions believe it is everyone's interest to reduce sickness absence levels to an acceptable level and will continue to work positively with the Council to achieve this. High sickness levels have a significant impact on staff who have to undertake a greater compressed workload for absentees resulting in those helpful staff reporting sick themselves with stress and anxiety.
- In previous scrutiny meetings The Trade Unions have stated there needs to be a consistency in approach by managers in addressing absenteeism in staff's one to one meetings. The Trade Unions call upon the Council to ensure that the current sickness and absenteeism policies and procedures are being followed by all managers, and to address the small percentage of sickness absenteeism.
- 5.4 **Thinking for the Long term** (forward planning)
Options detailed in this report contribute directly to enabling the workforce for the future.
- 5.5 **Preventative focus**
The review of the Organisational Development Strategy will focus on prevention.

- 5.6 **Collaboration / partnership working**
There are regular discussions with the national Human Resources Directors Network and regionally in terms of good practice or emerging practice in reducing sickness absence.
- 5.7 **Integration** (across service areas)
NA
- 5.8 **EQIA**
The review of sickness absence performance was carried out and included all employees of the Council.
- 6. Monitoring Arrangements**
- 6.1 Sickness absence statistics are reported to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis and an annual performance report is presented to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee. Biannual workforce profiles are discussed with Managers and Headteachers.
- 7. Background Documents /Electronic Links**
Appendices 1 – 4

Council – Sickness Days Lost Per Full Time Equivalent Employee

Council - Days Lost per FTE				
2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
11.39	12.49	11.23	12.66	13.91

Directorate - Days Lost per FTE						
Directorate (Historical)	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Directorate	2018/19	2019/20
Resources	4.83	5.46	7.38	Corporate Services	8.29	8.81 ↑
Corporate Services & Strategy	7.07	11.08	6.65			
Education	14.94	8.19	6.11	Education	6.94	8.07 ↑
Education School based (Teachers)	13.65	11.82	9.07	Education School based (Teachers)	12.20	11.57 ↓
Education School based (excluding Teachers)	11.29	9.77	9.71	Education School based (excluding Teachers)	10.64	13.98 ↑
Environment	10.35	18.67	19.19	Regeneration and Community Services	11.21	16.15 ↑
Social Services	12.59	14.45	13.60	Social Services	18.19	17.81 ↓

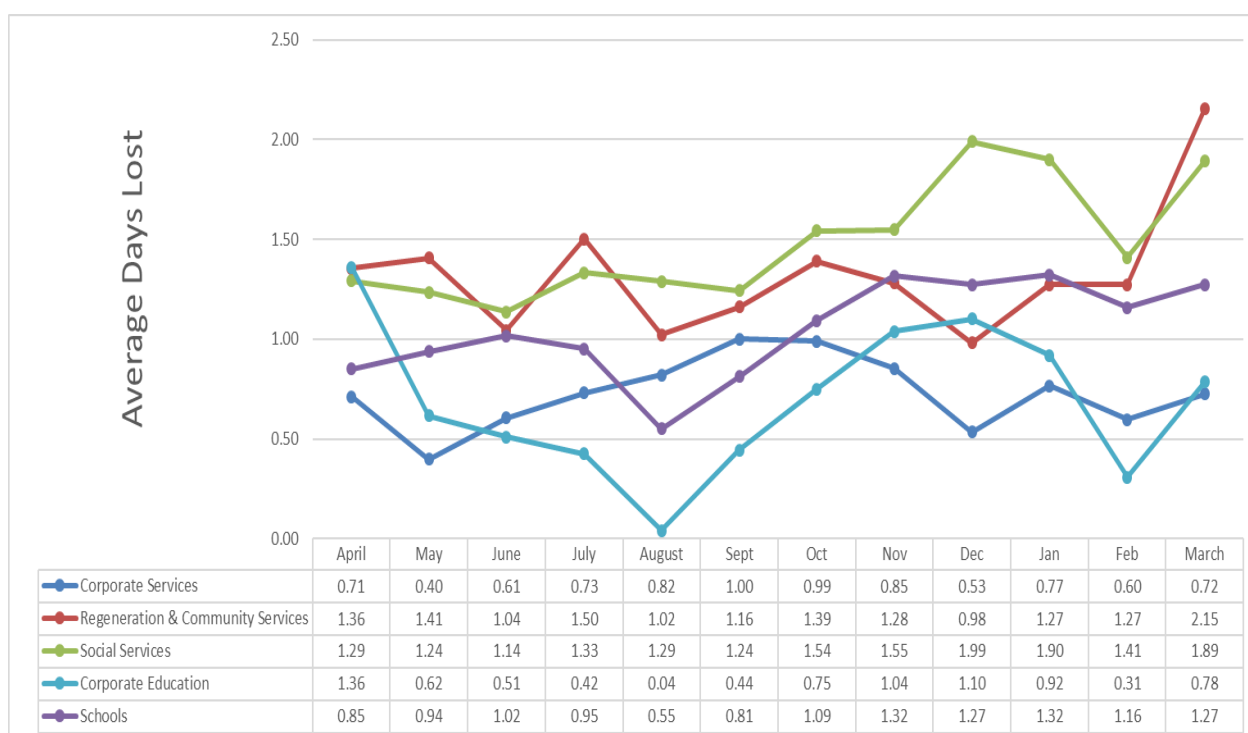


Table 1 - Rank order of FTE days lost per month

Rank	Month	Total FTE days lost	% of total days lost
12th	March	3210.40	10.84%
11th	January	2923.16	9.87%
10th	November	2783.18	9.40%
9th	December	2730.16	9.22%
8th	October	2655.28	8.97%
7th	February	2465.45	8.32%
6th	July	2372.94	8.01%
5th	April	2239.15	7.56%
4th	May	2186.82	7.38%
3rd	September	2147.33	7.25%
2nd	June	2104.10	7.10%
1st	August	1798.35	6.07%

Table 2 – Rank order by Directorate

Directorate	Bottom 3 months (i.e. highest absence)			Best month (lowest)
	12th	11th	10th	1st
Corporate Services	September	October	November	May
Regeneration & Community Services	March	July	October	December
Social Services	December	January	March	June
Education	April	December	November	August
Schools	January	November	December	August

Table 3 - Short and long term sickness absence by Directorate.

Directorate	Short Term %	Long Term %
Corporate Services	37.97	62.03
Regeneration & Community Services	29.75	70.25
Social Services	26.74	73.26
Education	45.05	54.95
Schools	32.51	67.49
BGCBC	30.81	69.19

Table 4 - Number of formal warnings, dismissals and ill health retirements

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of formal warnings issued	11	28	22
Dismissals	17	12	6
Number of ill health retirements	7	9	8

Sickness Absence Reasons

Rank	Category	Calendar Days	Number of Absences	Number of Employees
1	Psychiatric / Mental Health	22792	444	371
2	Musculo-skeletal & Injuries	15232	392	348
3	Cancer, malignancy	3387	48	45
4	Gastro-intestinal	3300	789	658
5	Cardiovascular	3283	48	40
6	Gynaecological, obstetric, pregnancy related	3159	138	114
7	Respiratory	1967	156	129
8	Infectious diseases	1933	387	343
9	Neurological	1573	164	145
10	COVID19	1455	166	155
11	Ear Nose and Throat	1212	160	141
12	Dermatological	880	36	29
13	Haematological	616	5	5
14	Genito-urinary	608	52	49
15	Debility	418	27	22
16	Ophthalmological	337	33	29
17	Endocrine / Metabolic	244	7	6
18	Dental	67	23	23

All Wales Comparative Data

Local Authority	FY 2018-19	FY 2017-18	Movement Year on Year
Blaenau Gwent	12.7	11.2	1.5 ↑
Bridgend	11.9	10.8	1.1 ↑
Wrexham	11.5	10.9	0.6 ↑
Cardiff	11.5	11.3	0.2 ↓
Monmouthshire	11.5	10.9	0.6 ↑
Caerphilly	11.3	12.3	1.0 ↑
Torfaen	11.2	11.1	0.1 ↓
Swansea	11	10.8	0.2 ↓
Ceredigion	10.9	13.6	2.7 ↓
Flintshire	10.5	8.9	1.6 ↑
Isle of Anglesey	10.3	10	0.3 ↑
Conwy	10.1	9.7	0.4 ↑
Newport	10.1	10.1	→
Carmarthenshire	9.8	10.1	0.3 ↓
Neath Port Talbot	9.8	9.5	0.3 ↑
Gwynedd	9.5	8.7	0.8 ↑
Pembrokeshire	9.3	10.2	0.9 ↓
Powys	9.1	9.7	0.6 ↓
The Vale of Glamorgan	9.1	10.1	1.0 ↓
Merthyr Tydfil	8.7	7.8	0.9 ↑
Denbighshire	8.3	8.4	0.1 ↓

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Agenda Item 14

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**
Report Subject: **Energy Prospectus Annual Review**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Submitted by: **Amy Taylor, Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
11.11.20	12.11.20	17.12.20			02.12.20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To present members with an update on the Energy Prospectus and the activities carried out since its approval in 2019.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. In December 2019, Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee were asked to consider the draft Energy Prospectus. Both Committees agreed to approve the document and to move forward with a proactive approach to projects that will help meet our future energy challenges.
- 2.2. The prospectus document provides a mechanism through which, a range of available development opportunities within Blaenau Gwent can be promoted; and as a means of engaging proactively with potential investors, scheme developers, other Local Authorities and community groups in an effort to stimulate local energy development and supply. This will in turn address the fuel poverty challenges we currently face.

Review of Activity 2019-20

- 2.3. An annual review report containing highlights for each of the Projects identified within the Energy Prospectus has been included as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.4. Since its approval we have utilised the Energy Prospectus in a number of ways. We have utilised the document to set out our aspirations of taking a pro-active approach to addressing future energy challenges. This has enabled us to build further collaborations and take forward existing opportunities and identify future opportunities for us to consider.

- 2.5. One of the key areas which will directly impact on our work around future energy requirements is the understanding of energy infrastructure across the area. In some parts of Blaenau Gwent there are constraints within existing grid infrastructure that will impact upon the deliverability of projects. Over the past 12 months we have worked with Western Power Distribution to better understand the current position.
- 2.6. In February 2020, the Smart Living Team at Welsh Government brought together key departments across Welsh Government including Property, Tech Valleys etc. to present the work we had already completed and to explore how we can deliver upon the results of the Phase 2 Smart Living work. This helped raise awareness of the work we are doing across Departments of Welsh Government and discussions around further projects that can deliver upon areas identified within the prospectus.

Emerging Opportunities

- 2.7. Alongside delivery of existing projects within the Prospectus several new opportunities have emerged which would add value to work already being undertaken and create a pipeline of further opportunities for us to consider.
- 2.8. Whilst Brexit places uncertainty over our future participation in research projects across Europe we have received confirmation that the UK is able to participate in funding calls within the current Horizon 2020 programme. As a result of this confirmation we were invited to join a consortium for the call 'Upgrading smartness of existing buildings through innovations for legacy equipment'. The proposal was submitted in September, we can expect a decision as to whether the Project has been successful in early 2021.
- 2.9. Cardiff Capital Region City Deal through Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council have secured £1.3million from the Welsh Government Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) fund to support the delivery of infrastructure to support taxis in the transition to low emission vehicles. Blaenau Gwent has identified sites where infrastructure would be required and shared details of the procurement approach taken by the Gwent Authorities.
- 2.10. CCRC has also recently announced the launch of a £10 million Challenge Fund. The Fund will invite public sector organisations to develop challenges and connect with organisations that are able to provide innovative solutions to the challenges identified. One of the three priority themes that CCR wishes the challenges to address is decarbonisation.
- 2.11. Welsh Government invited Local Authorities to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) in becoming a pilot for Local Area Energy Planning. An expression of interest has been submitted and it is expected that Welsh Government will identify their pilot Local Authority at the end of November.
- 2.12. If chosen as the pilot Local Authority, Blaenau Gwent would receive support to carry out Local Area Energy Planning which will inform, shape and enable key aspects of the transition to a low carbon energy system. It will identify what

needs to happen, where and by when. It takes a whole system approach and looks at heat, power and transport.

3. Options for Recommendation

Option 1 – Do Nothing

- 3.1. To not undertake any further work to promote the energy prospectus and the projects within it.

Option 2 – Continue to support the Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus

- 3.2. To continue to support, promote and develop the projects within the energy prospectus and to ensure that the document is updated to reflect any additional projects that have emerged. To also continue to identify future projects that will also meet the vision and objectives of the Council with respect to energy and decarbonisation.

Preferred Option

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

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

- 4.1. This topic supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Refresh 2020-2022 in the following areas:

- To create strong and environmentally smart communities we are taking a strategic approach to the management of buildings;
- To be a carbon neutral Council by 2030;
- To develop a portfolio of potential energy opportunities to deliver economic, business and community benefits; and
- To develop a more commercial organisation to generate income and deliver cost reductions to make local services sustainable and raise money to re-invest in our priorities.

- 4.2. It will also work towards addressing some of the key challenges identified within the Council's Decarbonisation Plan 2020-2030. For the Council to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 we will have to exploit local opportunities for renewable energy generation and using energy differently.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

- 5.1.1. Background research and initial feasibility work is carried out within existing staff resources. Further work to determine feasibility of projects has been completed with either external funding or support from the Welsh Government Smart Living Programme and Welsh Government Energy Service.
- 5.1.2. Works carried out through the Re:FIT programme are being funded through a Salix interest free loan. We expect the overall programme to reach £4.1 million with the portfolio achieving savings that enable payback within 8 years (or less).
- 5.1.3. Horizon 2020 Projects are 100% funded from the European Commission. As outlined in the Prospectus these projects attract circa. £300,000 of funding per project. We expect the VIRTUOUS project to provide a similar level of funding if approved by the European Commission.
- 5.1.4. The Gwent EV Charging Infrastructure Network received circa. £450,000 of funding through the UK Government funded Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV). This was matched with funding from the five Local Authorities to deliver a Gwent EV Charging network.
- 5.1.5. Within the energy prospectus we also provided a snapshot of the level of investment required to deliver each of the projects together with some high level projections of the level of return per annum that could be achieved once completed. Further financial modelling has been carried out for the projects and this will be built into business cases for investment over the coming months.
- 5.1.6. Salix funding would continue to present an opportunity for interest free loans to support investment in energy initiatives. The main criteria for securing such funding would be that investments must achieve carbon savings and have a return on investment of below eight years.
- 5.1.7. There are also some more modern forms of generating funding which offer the local community a chance to become involved in creating a better future for Blaenau Gwent. Such forms of investment could include Green Energy Bonds these will be investigated further as feasibility studies determine there are viable projects to be taken forward.

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

- 5.2.1. The risks associated with option 1 outlined within the report is that energy development within Blaenau Gwent remains low, especially relating to private open market development.
- 5.2.2. The risks associated with option 2 outlined within the report are minimal. There is a risk that the prospectus fails to stimulate interest; utilising the prospectus

as a method through which relationships with a range of interested parties within the Welsh energy sector would reduce this risk.

5.3. **Legal**

5.3.1. There are no direct legal implications associated with this report. The projects identified within the prospectus are located on sites within the ownership of Blaenau Gwent.

5.3.2. Some of the Projects within the prospectus will look at different business models for delivery. As part of the Phase 2 work for the Blaenau Gwent Energy Catalyst project funded through Welsh Government, legal advice was commissioned to consider potential business models that could be used to deliver the project. These will be considered in more detail within Smart Living Phase 3.

5.4. **Human Resources**

5.4.1. Regeneration Services continue to manage any enquiries, with input from relevant departments as necessary, not least planning policy and Estates, Legal Services and Asset Management.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1. **Performance Information and Data**

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

6.1.2. For each of our projects we will look at overall impact upon carbon footprint and this will be included in future annual reviews. To demonstrate the impact these projects, have on our carbon footprint we can use the REFIT project. It is expected that through installing the energy conservation measures across the portfolio we can save circa. 880 tonnes of carbon per annum.

6.2. **Expected outcome for the public**

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

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

6.3.1. Officers from across Regeneration and Community Services were involved in the development of the prospectus. They have continued to be involved in its development and delivery over the past 12 months. Project development support has been received from the Welsh Government Energy Service.

6.3.2. To understand our local grid infrastructure availability and constraints we have established good working relationships with representatives of Western Power Distribution.

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

6.4.1. The prospectus has been designed to stimulate interest in energy development within Blaenau Gwent that will facilitate a supply of renewable energy that will meet the changing and future energy needs of Blaenau Gwent.

6.4.2. It will also contribute towards our target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

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

6.5.1. Continuing to maximise the impact of the prospectus will be dependent on strong collaboration and partnership working with communities, the public and private sector and businesses. Progressing opportunities from the prospectus would require partnership working across the Council.

6.5.2. Members of the team have been asked on a number of occasions to present and share our model for partnership working and collaboration to deliver projects such as the Gwent Electric Vehicle Charging Network.

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

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

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1. Annual reports to update on progress of projects within the energy prospectus sit on the forward work programme for the Council's Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Energy Prospectus Annual Review

Energy Prospectus, Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Report and Appendix – December 2019

Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus

Annual Review 2019-2020

Page 111

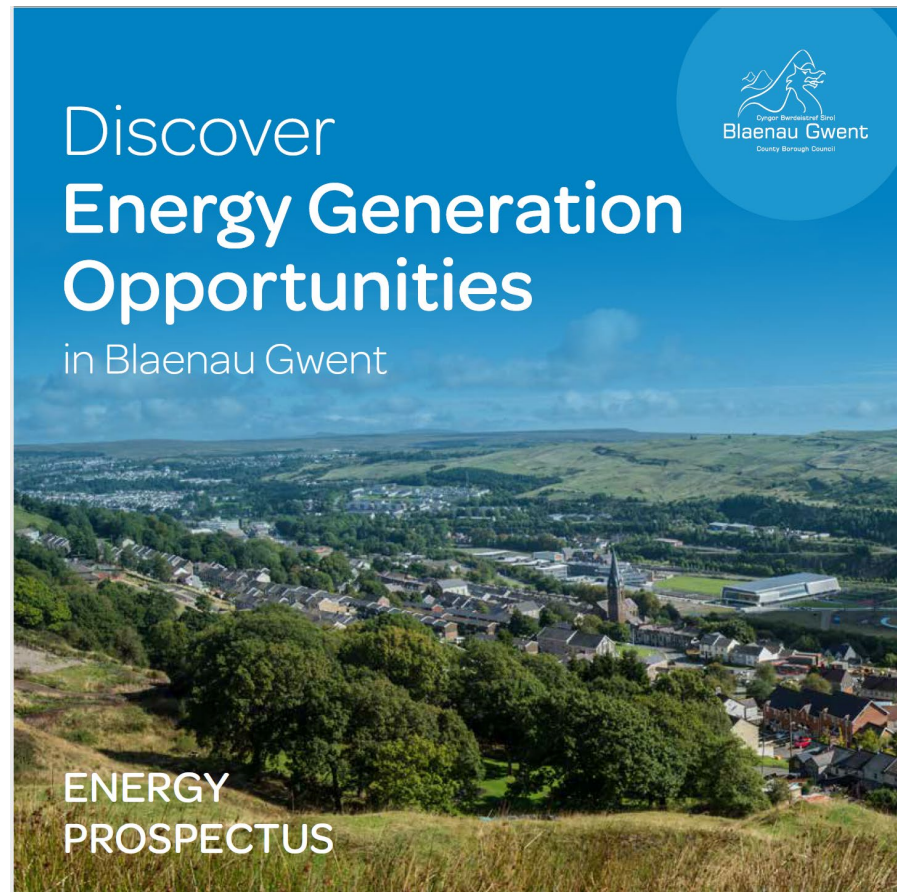


1. Introduction

The Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus was approved by Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee in December 2019.

This review provides a progress update on projects for the last 12 months. Within the document we have included a summary of the projects identified within the prospectus and their BRAG status followed then by more detailed summaries for each of the projects throughout the document.

The work and projects carried out to date will deliver upon the Energy Prospectus ambitions whilst also supporting the work required as a result of the Council's decision to declare a climate emergency. The Council have developed a Decarbonisation Plan to become net zero by 2030 and the Energy Prospectus will be complimentary to and support the Council in fulfilling this ambition.



1. Introduction

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Decarbonisation Plan



2020 to 2030



Transition Pathway

Challenges in reaching Carbon Neutrality

The Council approved the Decarbonisation Plan in September 2020 and declared a Climate Emergency.

The Decarbonisation plan looks at our current Carbon Impact as an organisation and sets out the key challenge areas that would support us in becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030.

The Projects within the Energy prospectus will help us on the journey to Carbon Neutrality through identifying opportunities for renewable energy generation and ways that we can use energy more efficiently in the future.

Collaboration across the organisation and with stakeholders will be key in delivering upon the work challenges identified within the Decarbonisation Plan and achieving our net zero target.

2. Projects Overview

The table below provides a quick reference to the status of current projects. Further detail for each of the projects is included throughout this document.

Project Name	Total Cost / Capex	Funding Source	BRAG Status	Comments
RE:FIT	£4.1 million	Salix Loan		Corporate and leisure trust buildings completed. Street lighting works commenced.
The Works District Heating Expansion	£1.2 million	Private & Public sector		Hybrid business units have been connected to the network
District Energy Network Development	£9 million	Private & Public sector		Opportunities identified but dependent upon future development across the sites
Wind Generation	£4.6 million	Private & Public sector		Progress has been made to identify site constraints and potential for grid connection
Hydro Generation	£500k	Private & Public sector		Funding secured for feasibility studies, tenders issued to commission feasibility
Horizon 2020 – PENTAGON	£324k	EC Horizon 2020		Project reached a conclusion December 2019.
Horizon 2020 – DRIVE	£300k	EC Horizon 2020		Project is in final year and will end November 2020.
Energy Brokering	TBC	TBC		Potential routes to delivery considered, further work on delivery models to be carried out
Material Broker (Solar PV and Lighting)	TBC	TBC		Pilot phase for Council to purchase and install LED lighting being developed.
Electric Vehicle Charging	£650k	OLEV, Local Authorities		Charge points installed and commissioned across Gwent. Works delayed due to COVID-19.
Council Fleet Review	TBC	TBC		Consultants commissioned to develop a route towards low emission fleet.

3. Energy Efficiency – Re:Fit Programme

The Re:Fit Programme is an overall programme of projects to consider the installation of Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) across BG buildings with a view towards achieving long term energy savings and carbon reduction.

The ECMs are being delivered across a portfolio of buildings, including:

- Corporate Buildings,
- Schools,
- Leisure Buildings; and
- Street Lighting.

The types of ECMs being installed include energy efficient lighting, solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, variable speed drives, boilers and combined heat and power units.

The contract used for this programme is performance based and is required to deliver guaranteed Energy (kWh) and Carbon Savings. Performance is monitored through an accredited process called Measurement and Verification. If savings are not achieved the Contractor is required to compensate the Council for savings that should have been achieved.

To fund the cost of the works, the Council has utilised Salix Interest Free Loan Funding to do this the overall programme must achieve savings that would enable payback of the investment within 8 years.

It is expected that the projects will enable us to save circa. 880 tonnes of carbon per annum.

3. Energy Efficiency – Corporate Buildings

Corporate Buildings

A range of Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) have been installed throughout our Corporate Buildings.

The range of ECMS being installed across the buildings included:

- LED Energy Efficient Lighting;
- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels;
- Boilers; and
- Building Management Systems.

Our Corporate Landlord Team worked with the Contractor to identify the most appropriate ECMs for each building, potential energy savings and carbon impact.

Some of the buildings within this part of the portfolio were completed before 31 March 2019 and so they benefit from the Feed In Tariff subsidy.

To ensure that the savings achieved are in line with those guaranteed through the Contract, Measurement and Verification Plans will be put in place and reviewed for up to 8 years after the installation.



Solar PV Installation at Silent Valley Waste Transfer Station

3. Energy Efficiency - Schools

Schools

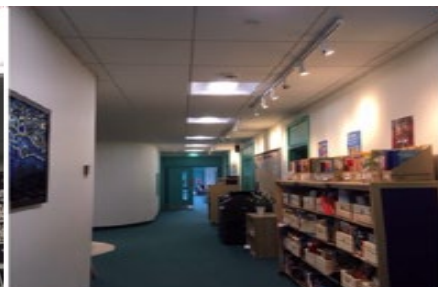
A range of Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) have been installed across three Schools within Blaenau Gwent. The ECMS being installed across the buildings included:

- LED Energy Efficient Lighting; and
- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels.

Working together with the Schools we were able to identify the most appropriate ECMs for each school building. Due to the age of some of our schools we also had to carry out asbestos surveys and ensure works did not enter areas where asbestos was present.

The results are improved lighting levels, better quality of lighting and long term source of renewable energy.

Measurement and Verification will also be carried out for these buildings to ensure that savings are achieved in line with guaranteed performance.



3. Energy Efficiency – Leisure Trust Buildings

Leisure Trust Buildings

Through the collaborative working of the Council and the Leisure Trust we have also been able to install a range of Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) across Leisure Trust Buildings. The range of ECMS installed across the buildings included:

- LED Energy Efficient Lighting;
- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels;
- Combined Heat and Power (CHP); and
- Variable Speed Drives (VSDs).

Work between the Council and the Leisure Trust helped identify the most appropriate ECMs for each building across Sports Centres, Libraries and Learning Action Centres. The results for most of the buildings are improved lighting levels and better quality of lighting and for those who had Solar PV fitted, a long term source of renewable energy.

Measurement and Verification will ensure that the trust will achieve the guaranteed energy savings through the measures installed.



Solar PV Installation at Ebbw Vale Sports Centre

3. Energy Efficiency – Street Lighting

Street Lighting

A total of 6,442 of the Council's street lighting stock was non-LED and therefore not the most energy efficient. The Council also operated multiple management systems some of which were obsolete and no longer supported.

We looked at the Councils street lighting inventory and identified that there were 6,099 lights suitable for replacement with LED.

By replacing these lanterns with more energy efficient LED lighting together with management system nodes would assist in reducing our dependence upon obsolete systems to run our Street Lighting stock.

To ensure that the savings achieved are in line with those guaranteed through the Contract, Measurement and Verification will be put in place and reviewed for up to 8 years after the installation.



Street Lighting Installation Before and After

4. District Energy Networks

BGCBC established its first Energy Network as part of 'The Works' project, it provides energy (heat and electricity) to:

- General Offices and Gwent Archives (Heat);
- Leisure Centre (Heat);
- 11 – 16 School (Heat);
- Learning Zone (Heat and Electricity);
- Multi Storey Car Park (Electricity);
- Funicular (Electricity);

Our newest development of Hybrid Business Units at the Works have also been connected to the network. This means the businesses in the units will not have their own boilers and will receive heat from our centrally located Energy Centre.

The network at The Works still has further room for expansion and the technology installed within the Energy Centre has sufficient capacity to meet potential demands.

We also remain committed to exploring the opportunities for the development of additional district heat network opportunities in the Northern Ebbw Vale area. Development of the network in this area is dependent upon developments that may take place on sites in the area and their potential energy demands.



Energy Centre at 'The Works'



'The Works'

5. Renewable Energy Generation – Wind Power

Within the Energy Prospectus we identified two opportunities for Wind Generation within Blaenau Gwent.

Over the past year we have continued to consider these opportunities and have been working on a number of areas to determine whether the projects would be feasible and offer suitable levels of financial return to be taken forward.

Discussions have been taking place with the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) to identify whether there is capacity within the current network to accommodate the proposed projects and establish the costs that would be required to install the required grid connections.

We have also looked at local users of energy which could improve the overall financial picture of the project. Using energy onsite or locally would reduce energy directly exported to the grid. This may have financial benefits and the localised generation and use of energy would play a key role in our ongoing journey to carbon neutrality.

These are being further developed with a view towards confirming high level feasibility before further work such as environmental studies etc. are commissioned.



6. Renewable Energy Generation – Hydro power

A Tender brief has been issued (closing 11th November) seeking technical consultants to carry out modelling and feasibility of sites across Blaenau Gwent.

To support this £20,000 of funding secured to investigate opportunities within the Llanhilleth and Cwm Wards through the Rural Development Fund LEADER programme.

The Consultants will be asked to use the sites already identified within the prospectus and shortlist up to two sites to take forward to feasibility stage.

In addition they will carry out further investigations in the Cwm and Llanhilleth areas alongside the river Ebbw to see if there are additional opportunities that could be feasible and carry out feasibility studies on up to two sites.

At the end of this work we will be able to determine whether hydro generation is feasible along with the costs and potential community benefits.



7. Research and Innovation - PENTAGON

PENTAGON was an Horizon 2020 funded Project with a consortium of 10 partners representing 5 EU Countries including the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Belgium, France and Italy. It was the first project we secured through the Horizon 2020 Programme.

The Council used its district heating network on The Works site as the demonstration site for the project. This required us to provide data and information about how our site operates that can be used to develop simulation models that will be used to explore the benefits technologies such as power to gas can bring.

Real world information and data about the way our network operates and performs in light of changes in weather and temperature enable the models to move beyond the theoretical and be more realistic in terms of potential results.


The Project lasted three years and started in December 2016. It came to an end in November 2019. We are currently completing project closure and final funding claims.



SysCon limited **EBBW VALE ENERGY CENTRE** **TREND**

Plantroom Space Temp: 26 °C
Amenity Area Space Temp: 18.5 °C

25 °C
29 %RH



Menu Page
LTHW Boiler Overview
Boiler No.1
Boiler No.2
Boiler No.3
Boiler No.4
Plate Heat Exchangers
CHP
District Heating Pumps
Misc
Meters
Biomass Boiler System
Heat Meters

7. Research and Innovation - DRivE

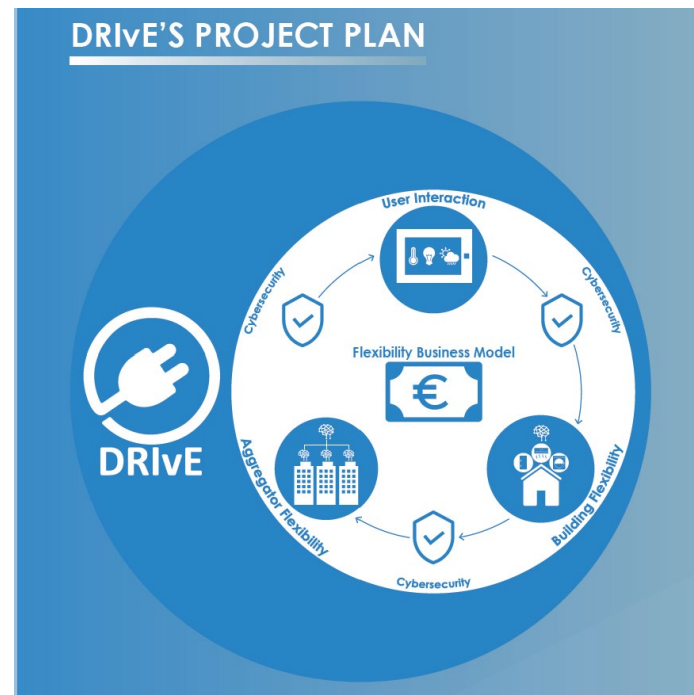
DRivE is an Horizon 2020 funded Project with a consortium of 8 partners representing 7 EU Countries. It is the second project we have secured through the Horizon 2020 Programme.

DRivE has sought to demonstrate the effectiveness of demand response by using 5 demonstration sites to validate simulation models that will measure the potential benefits of technology deployment. Blaenau Gwent's District Heating Network at 'The Works' is one of these pilot sites.

DRivE brings together cutting-edge science in artificial intelligence, forecasting and cyber security with emerging innovative SMEs making first market penetration in EU Demand Response markets.

Using forecast data, current performance data together with information about current energy costs and the potential impact of renewable energy technology and storage deployment they have considered the impact that this would have upon the demonstration site. The results are still being reviewed but this may lead to further projects that will enhance the way buildings on the site operate.

The Project has lasted three years and started in December 2017. It expected to come to an end in November 2020.



7. Research and Innovation – Smart Living

Catalysing Local Energy Blaenau Gwent CBC

Introduction

The Welsh Government Smart Living Initiative has been supporting the Council on its ambition to catalyse local energy through the building of separate but then integrated energy platforms across commercial/business – public – social/domestic assets.

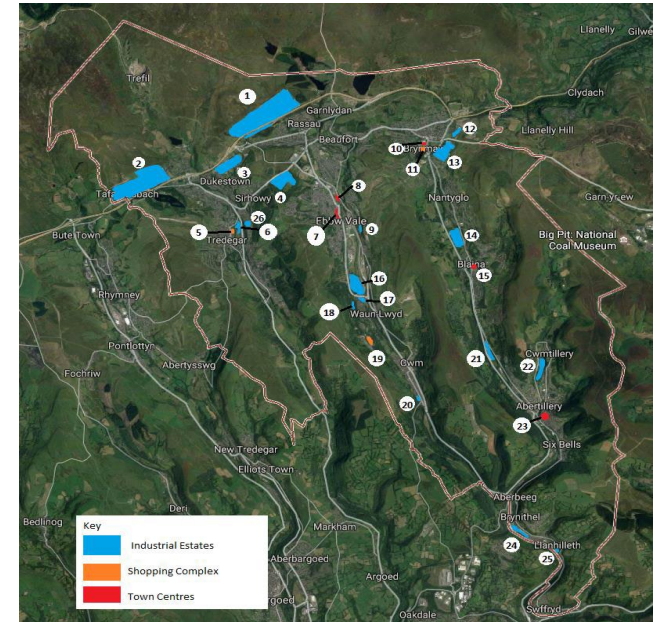
The aim of Smart Living is to catalyse ambitions and help progress them to the point where they are able to progress independently of the initiative. To-date over 85% of initial schemes have achieved this and for £1m Smart Living facilitation support, schemes have attracted over £47m of investment of which nearly £20m was from the private sector.

Page 125

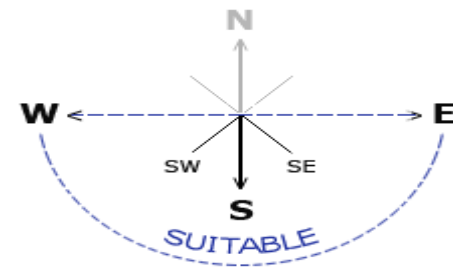
Background

In gathering evidence on the opportunities and potential for Blaenau Gwent, Smart Living has supported two phases of development:

- **Phase One 2016** – A report by BRE Wales looked at the scope and potential opportunities available to help develop energy platforms and what these could achieve. Although recognising the difficulties in establishing renewable energy in the Valley, the report acknowledged there were opportunities for development and provided a range of recommendations to pursue. These recommendations were agreed and this led to support for Phase Two activities.



Industrial Estates Across BG



7. Research and Innovation – Smart Living

- **Phase Two 2017/2018** – AECOM and Miller Research UK were commissioned to pursue development of the business/commercial energy platform taking forward the dual recommendations of the need to engage with the business community as well as an improved understanding of the technical aspects of local commercial buildings.

To assist with this, AECOM developed a commercial park tool which extracted characteristics from all the business parks in Blaenau Gwent and allowed for development of an overall picture of potential opportunities and benefits for the County borough. They also looked at potential roles and responsibilities which the Council could consider in support of developing local business parks covering both public and private buildings.

Miller Research UK engaged with the local business community and provided an analysis of business drivers and willingness to engage with business park improvements. However, further detailed work was required to test out emerging assumptions and options and so in Phase 2B 2018/2019, five business parks were chosen to focus on compiling more detailed understanding and engagement with businesses on the five parks. The further research work confirmed the potential to create net zero business parks leading to proposed Phase Three actions

- **Phase Three 2020/2021** – this phase will provide support to access technical detail to draw in support for developing a test pilot business park alongside Tech Valleys on a pathway to net zero involving both public and private buildings for deployment. It will kick start the potential link across to a social/domestic energy dimension in line with the original ambition.

8. Collaborative Project – EV Charging Infrastructure

The Gwent Regional Local Authorities EV project is a collaboration between:

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

Under this project we have installed 65 charge points across 34 sites. Blaenau Gwent acted as the Lead Partner for the procurement and has overseen Project Management of the Installation of the charge points.

One of the main drivers behind our decision to work collaboratively and submit a joint funding application to OLEV was a desire to deliver a consistent EV charging network across the Gwent region. The project is reaching a conclusion and the charge points will be fully operational by the end of November 2020.



9. Collaborative Project – Low Emission Fleet

As outlined in the Prospectus the Gwent Local Authorities commissioned a carbon reduction – fleet review and this included collecting data about mileage driven, fuel used by the directly operated fleets (owned, leased and rented) along with the business mileage driven by the staff owned grey fleet.

Each of the Authorities received a report for their area alongside a Gwent wide report.

The Council have since commissioned a follow up to this report and engaging consultants to develop a plan for the transition of our current fleet to low carbon emission vehicles and the energy infrastructure that will be required to support large scale charging or fuel storage.

We are also looking at options where an initial pilot of electric vehicles can be considered for some of our smaller fleet vehicles.

We will continue to work alongside the Gwent Authorities to ensure that our work aligns with that of neighbouring authorities and where possible a collaborative approach to delivery is taken.



City of London 26t electric RCV supplied by NRG Fleet Services



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Agenda Item 15

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Civil Parking Enforcement – Service Update**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Joanna Wilkins**

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
11.11.20	19.11.20	17.12.20			07.12.20	13.01.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019.

2. Scope and Background

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)

- 2.1 Blaenau Gwent CBC has had the powers to enforce its own Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) since 1st July 2019. Enforcement proper commenced on the 10th September 2019, whereby any Penalty Charge Notices (parking tickets) issued carried a financial penalty.
- 2.2 Caerphilly CBC currently provides the enforcement staffing resource via a Service Level Agreement. This provides Blaenau Gwent CBC with two civil parking enforcement officers. Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC provide a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) processing service, under the name of the South Wales Parking Group. Both these vital administration arrangements are working well in supporting Blaenau Gwent civil parking enforcement.
- 2.3 Civil Parking Enforcement gives the Council the powers to tackle wider transport and environmental issues such as traffic congestion, road safety and to safeguard the interests of residents, blue badge holders, transport operators and local businesses. It also allows the Authority to target enforcement in key areas such as town centres and other areas where indiscriminate parking creates potential risks to pedestrians & other road users, like parking congestion in the immediate vicinity of schools. This is in line with the Council's priorities around safe and sustainable communities.
- 2.4 The Council would not be able to manage and enforce Traffic Regulation Orders within the Borough without an effective CPE service. Indeed, the introduction of CPE has allowed the Council to successfully monitor and target areas where complaints of illegal and dangerous

parking are received. The council receives a high volume of requests for consideration of parking enforcement.

- 2.5 The current pandemic has however affected the service delivery. CPE was suspended on the 20th March 2020 and did not resume until the 20th July 2020. During this suspension, the two civil parking enforcement officers were temporarily redeployed to assist at the New Vale Household Waste and Recycling Centre. With one officer attending the HWRC site per day in accordance with their shift rota.

Financial Update

- 2.6 The approved business case and associated financial modelling considered the following items: -

- Size of population within the five main towns
- Number of enforceable traffic regulation orders within the five main towns
- The cost of deployment of Civil Enforcement Officers for a total of 52hrs per week @£17.50/hr (6 day a week operation)
- Issue of 1.28 Parking Charge Notices(PCN) per hour
- **3500 PCNs issued annually**
- Projections based on the band 2 level of PCN set at £70/£50 in the Traffic Management Act 2004
- **A 75% collection rate of PCNs.**
- £5.25 administrative charge per PCN
- 3% inflation over a 5 year term
- 0.2 FTE Internal Parking Management
- 0.2 FTE Internal Administration Staff

Capital set up costs

TRO review	£40k
TRO remedial work	£190k
New TRO	£5k
Misc.	£28k

Annual Operational costs

Enforcement resource	
@52 hrs per week including CCBC management	£59k
Back Offices Licences (2 No.)	£3k
PCN administrative fee (approx 3500@£5)	£17.5k

Surplus (Deficit), after 5 years if capital set up costs included £232k

Average annual operational surplus/(deficit) over 5 years £32k

- 2.7 Since enforcement proper commenced on the 10th September 2019, the following information is to be noted by Committee:

- 2750 PCN's have been issued (from 10th Sep' 2019 to 31st Oct' 2020)
- 88% collection rate of PCN's (this figure relates to the percentage of PCN's paid)

The number of PCN's issued has been sub-divided into geographical areas as detailed in table 1 below.

2.8 Table 1

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of PCN's Issued</u>
ABERTILLERY	621
BLAINA & NANTYGLO	29
BRYNMAWR	427
EBBW VALE*	1218
TREDEGAR	455
Total	2750

***Note** Ebbw Vale includes 724 PCN's issued at The Works development.

2.9 The CPE service was suspended for 4 months (from 20th March to 20th July), this has impacted against the forecasted number of penalty charge notices issued this year (estimated at 3500 per year) with a potential reduction over the four-month period of approximately 1165 PCN's. However, an 88% PCN collection rate is higher than the financial modelling estimate. To off-set the income lost as a result of the suspension of the CPE service, £27k has been received from the Covid-19 hardship fund. The latest budget monitoring forecasts a £4k budget surplus for this financial year. This will be monitored and reviewed going forward.

2.10 There are over 35 different on-street and off-street parking contraventions in the Blaenau Gwent Enforcement Policy. Predominantly the most common types of contravention enforced are in regards to vehicles parking in contravention of Prohibition of Waiting and Overstays. Table 2 indicates the number of PCN's issued for each contravention code.

2.11 Table 2:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Type of Contravention</u>	<u>Number of PCN's Issued</u>
01	Waiting Prohibited	1306
02	Loading Restricted	34
22	No Return	8
23	Prohibited Vehicle Class	10
24	Out of Marked Bay	10
25	Loading Area	71
27	Dropped Footway	121
30	Overstay	825
40	No/Invalid Blue Badge	318
45	Taxi Rank	14
47	Bus Stop Clearway	18

48	Outside School	9
99	Pedestrian Crossing	6
	Total	2750

Review of existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) - Update

- 2.12 These are the legal orders that govern the regulations on streets and car parks, in Blaenau Gwent these have been consolidated into two single orders – one for on-street parking and one for off-street parking.
- 2.13 Following on from the implementation of these consolidation orders the Council has received a significant number of requests from Members, Town Centre business forums and the general public to review existing parking restrictions at various locations throughout the county borough. Due to the significant level of requests received the Council has had to prioritise this work, with our Town Centres and strategic routes being considered first.
- 2.14 This work is currently being progressed, with two schemes fully completed. A further seven schemes are anticipated to be available for public consultation before the end of this year. Details of these schemes are contained in Table 3. Unfortunately, the progression of these schemes have been significantly delayed due to the current pandemic.
- 2.15 Table 3

<u>Completed Schemes</u>	<u>Orders ready for public consultation</u>
Queen Street, Nantyglo	Tredegar Town Centre Parking
King Street, Abertillery	Bethcar Street, Ebbw Vale
	Tillery Street, Abertillery
	Church Street, Abertillery
	Rees Street, Ebbw Vale
	High Street, Blaina
	Lime Avenue, Ebbw Vale

- 2.16 A full list of the TRO review areas is attached as Appendix 1.

Update on Pavement Parking

- 2.17 The Welsh Government is proposing to give Local Authorities the power to fine people parking on pavements.

Pavement parking is where one or more wheels of a stationary motor vehicle are on the pavement (also known as the footway). Pavement parking obstructs pedestrians and is a serious and widespread problem across Wales. It puts people in danger when they are forced to walk in the carriageway where they may come into conflict with moving traffic. It is a particular problem for disabled people as well as anyone with a child or a pushchair

Although there is no specific offence of parking on pavements in Wales (as in most of England), causing unnecessary obstruction of any part of the highway is an existing criminal offence. The police have powers to enforce against vehicles obstructing the highway, which includes the pavement, under a number of statutes and regulations. However, these powers are little used, mainly due to a lack of resources, but also because

of the burden of proof necessary to achieve a criminal conviction for obstruction. As a result, little enforcement against pavement parking currently takes place in Wales.

There will be places, for example narrow residential streets with no off-street parking, where some parking on pavements will need to be tolerated. Local authorities should indicate those locations where pavement parking is permitted through Traffic Regulation Orders.

Clear, workable and detailed guidance will need to be produced by Welsh Government, in partnership with local government and other stakeholders, to guide local authorities in the execution of their new powers. This should be achieved by amending the existing statutory and operational guidance on civil parking enforcement. Changes will be needed to the Highway Code to make it clear to drivers that they will be subject to penalties issued by local authorities if they park on pavements in Wales. Local authorities will need to extend their existing enforcement operations to discharge their new powers and some additional resources may be required, but this will depend largely on the extent to which enforcement is proactive, rather than by complaint, which will be a matter for local policies.

The aim is to commence civil enforcement of pavement parking in Wales by July 2022.

3. Options for recommendation

3.1 Option A (preferred option)

Members accept the update on progress relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019.

3.2 Option B

Members accept the update on progress relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019, but present alternative priorities for the service.

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

4.1 The report has been developed to provide an update on progress of the current civil parking enforcement service, which is a statutory responsibility of Blaenau Gwent CBC. Strong Communities, and their economic development and regeneration are key priorities within the Corporate Plan. Good accessibility and connectivity are critical in allowing our residents to achieve these, and the management and efficiency of the core highway network is key for this.

5. Implications Against Each Option

Option A - Members accept the update on progress relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019.

The CPE service is currently operating in accordance with the original business case. The service is currently showing a small budget surplus for this financial year and will be monitored and reviewed going forward.

Option B - Members accept the update on progress relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019, but present alternative priorities for the service.

If it is proposed that the existing service is expanded, by way of additional CPE operational resources, this will increase the revenue costs for delivering the service. For the service to remain financially positive this would require the serving of additional PCN's to cover these additional costs.

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

Funding

Option A - Members accept the update on progress relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019.

The CPE service is currently operating in accordance with the original business case. The service is showing a small surplus for this financial year, forecasted at £4k.

Option B - I Members accept the update on progress relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019, but present alternative priorities for the service.

If it is proposed that the existing service is expanded in the future, by way of providing additional CPE operational resources, this will increase the revenue costs for delivering the service. For the service to remain financially positive this would require the serving of additional PCN's to cover these additional costs.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

Option A: Members accept the update on progress relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019.

None identified, the CPE service delivery continues as existing and in accordance with the criteria as set out in the business case.

Option B: Members accept the update on progress relating to Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) since its introduction in 2019, but present alternative priorities for the service.

Alternative member priorities and options would require changes to the current business case model and the current service level agreement with Caerphilly CBC. Whereby any increase in CPE enforcement hours would need to be off-set by increasing the number of PCN's issued in order to deliver a sustainable revenue budget going forward. Any resource changes would need to be agreed with Caerphilly CBC and the existing service level agreement will need to be amended accordingly.

5.3 Legal

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no staffing implications associated with this report. Any changes to the current CPE staffing/ enforcement hours would however need to be suitably resourced.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data:

Performance is currently monitored in the following ways:

- Monthly Pay-Over Reports from RCT CBC
- Imperial 360 Database Access
- Quarterly Meetings Held with Caerphilly CBC

6.2 Expected Outcome for the Public

Improved and consistent levels of service delivery across civil parking enforcement.

6.3 Involvement (Consultation, Engagement, Participation)

Informal discussions are held with neighbouring authorities to ensure that BGCBC's delivery of civil parking enforcement is consistent with other local authorities. Where relevant, consultation, engagement and involvement with the public, members and interested parties will be carried out as part of any traffic order review consultation process.

6.4 Thinking for the long term (forward planning)

The ability for the Council to operate a Civil Parking Enforcement function is critical for the safe and efficient management of the Borough's highway network.

6.5 Preventative Focus

The CPE service provides appropriately trained and qualified staff to ensure key services are efficiently and effectively delivered in line with the Corporate Plan 2018 to 2022 and any other relevant statutory or legislative requirements.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

The service delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement is a collaboration between Blaenau Gwent CBC, Caerphilly CBC and Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC (who provide a PCN processing service under the name of the South Wales Parking Group).

CPE will wherever and whenever possible look to work with local communities and businesses to maximise economic and regeneration benefits associated with both revenue & capital services and projects.

6.7 Integration (across service areas)

CPE will wherever and whenever possible look to work with others service areas. For example, with the Education Department to provide parking enforcement at schools to supplement road safety initiatives.

6.8 EQIA (screening and indemnifying if full impact assessment is needed)

An EQIA is not relevant to the content of this report.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 The ongoing management of the Civil Parking Enforcement function is undertaken by the Community Services department.

8. Background Documents / Electronic Link

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – List of traffic order review requests

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**BGCBC CPE Traffic Orders
Review Schedule**



KEY	
	Under Review

No.	Member	Ward	Street/Location	Description of Traffic Order	Change Required	Reason for Change
1	Julie Holt	Abertillery	Tillery Street (Nos 14 - 27)	No Waiting at Any Time	Removal of double yellows	Lack of residents' parking. Residents from opposite side of the street take up all the spaces and spaces behind the houses.
2	Nigel Daniels	Abertillery	Alma Street	No Waiting at Any Time	Introduce single yellow lines along a section to provide parking for residents after 6pm	Lack of parking at Alma Street for residents.
3	Nigel Daniels	Abertillery	Church Street	Limited Waiting Mon - Sat 9 am - 6pm, Disabled Persons Parking, loading only	Rationalise parking bays to maximise parking for shoppers	Lack of parking at Church Street for shoppers.
4	Lisa Winnet	Blaina	Abertillery Road	No Waiting at Any Time	Removal of double yellows	To provide extra parking by the plumbing shop
5	Lisa Winnet	Blaina	Cwmcelyn Road	No Waiting at Any Time	Removal of double yellows	To provide extra parking by the plumbing shop and reduce number of cars racing the road
6	Lisa Winnet	Blaina	High Street	No Waiting at Any Time	Removal of double yellows	To provide extra parking by the plumbing shop and reduce number of cars racing the road
7	Lisa Winnet	Blaina	Railway Terrace	No Waiting at Any Time	Introduction of Resident Permit Parking	Requested by local residents
8	Garth Collier	Blaina	Abertillery Road	No Waiting at Any Time	Remove DYL on west side	No longer necessary on western side
9	Garth Collier	Blaina	Cwmcelyn Road	No Waiting at Any Time	South Side Part Only	To allow better flow of traffic
10	Garth Collier	Blaina	High Street	No Waiting at Any Time	Open to advice from officers	As change is required
11	Garth Collier	Blaina	Hope Street	No Waiting at Any Time	Remove short section near Llys-y-Capel rear car park	Not needed now road is one-way
12	Garth Collier	Blaina	Surgery Road	No Waiting at Any Time	Remove section at Park Terrace	No longer required
13	Derrick Bevan	Cwm	Marine Street (from junction with Aubrey Terrace)	Limited Waiting Mon - Sat 8 am - 6pm	Revocation	Since Cwm By-Pass was built, this restriction isn't required.
14	Keith Pritchard	EVS	Rees Street	Single Yellow Lines	Revocation	They don't serve any purpose
15	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Church Crescent Outside Christ Church	Double yellow lines	Two parking bays 2hr time limits	Allow public to access amenities and businesses in the area
16	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Church Street	1 hour restriction	Resident permits	The area is predominantly residential, ratio of 3/1 residential and although some residents have off road parking to the rear of the properties many do not. To be fair to residents this should be introduced for them similar to King Street, Brynmawr. I canvassed the area last night, speaking to businesses and residents and the majority said that permits were the way for residents, and shouldn't be penalised for living in a mixed use area.
17	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Alexandra Street	Double yellow	Single yellow 9 - 5pm	Would allow access for delivery etc,
18	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Holland street north entrance	Double Yellows	Move to 15ft of junction, remove others	No required, in my opinion

19	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Hills of bottom road , Tyllwyn	Double yellow	Moved to 15 ft of junction	To short
20	Jonathan Millard	EVS	Lime Avenue Hospital to thales/regain/ mill lane	Time Restricted bays	1. Removal of time restrictions 2. increase time	Will help the hospital in regards to visitors for appointments and businesses in the area, meetings/appointment typically are 1.5hrs 30 minutes
21	Keith Pritchard	EVS	Steeworks Road B4485 Junction with Eastville Road	No Waiting at Any Time	Extension of DYL by 10m into Eastville Road	Cars parking too close to junction causing restrictions to visibility
22	Keith Pritchard	EVS	Alexandra Street	No Waiting at Any Time	Revocation	The DYL serve no purpose and limits number of parking spaces
23	Keith Pritchard	EVS	Drysiog Street Pen - Y - Bryn Junction	No Waiting at Limited Times	Change to Double Yellow Lines	Cars parking too close to junction causing restrictions to visibility
24	Lee Parsons	Llanhilleth	Blaencuffin Road, Llanhilleth NP13 2RN	No Parking 7am-7pm.	Traffic Restrictions lifted of No Parking from 7am-7pm from numbers 1-10 and number 17-19 inclusive	Request from residents of limited parking in area.
25	Lee Parsons	Llanhilleth	Commercial Road Llanhilleth NP13 2JA	No Parking at any time Double Yellow Lines	Change to Single Yellow Line	Request from retailers! Safety issues of speeding cars if no cars are present.
26	Phillip Edwards	Ebbw Vale North	Bethcar Street (outside Morgan's Bar)	Loading Only Bay	Change to 30 minutes limited waiting	Greater turnover of vehicles
27	Phillip Edwards	Ebbw Vale North	Bethcar Street (outside Roberts Estate Agents)	Loading Only Bay	Change to 30 minutes limited waiting	Greater turnover of vehicles
28	Phillip Edwards	Ebbw Vale North	Bethcar Street (outside Davies Carpets)	Disabled Persons Parking Bays x 2	Change to 30 minutes limited waiting	Greater turnover of vehicles
29	Phillip Edwards	Ebbw Vale North	Bethcar Street (outside Greggs)	Disabled Persons Parking Bays x 1 Loading Bay x 2	Change to 30 minutes limited waiting	Greater turnover of vehicles
30	Gareth Davies	Rassau	Honeyfield Road (67 - 69)	None	Prohibition of Waiting	Road safety/visibility for drivers at roundabout heading towards Garnlydan/Reservoir Road
31	Wayne Hodgins	Brynmawr	Staleybridge Terrace	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required
32	Resident	Abertillery	Vivian Street	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required
33	Resident	Brynmawr	Glamorgan Street	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required
34	Resident	Sofrydd	Rectory Road	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required
35	Tredegar Members	Tredegar	Tredegar Town Centre	Limited Waiting Traffic Orders Varying	Review Tro's introduce time waiting Bays	Improve Town Centre Parking
36	John Mason	Nantyglo	King St, Queen St to Parrot Row	Prohibition of waiting, Limited Waiting	To Consider areas of restriction to be removed	To create additional on street parking
37	Nigel Daniels	Abertillery	King Street	Previous restriction revoked	Introduce 1 hour waiting with no return within 2 hours	To ensure on street parking I not sterilized near businesses
38	Resident	Beaufort	Beaufort Hill	Prohibition of waiting of waiting 8am - 6pm	Consider revoking TRO	Restriction has not been enforced and is no longer relevant
39	Resident	Abertillery	Portland Street	Prohibition of waiting	Part removal of yellow lines	To create additional on street parking
40	Councillor S. Thomas	Ashvale	Tredegar	Prohibition of Waiting	Amending yellow lines to create parking	Removing some yellow lines will create parking with no road safety implication
41	Resident	Abertillery	Portland Street	Prohibition of waiting	Consider revoking TRO where appropriate	To try to create on street parking
42	Cllr Trollope	Tredegar	Lay By Opposite Barclays Bank, Queen Victoria Street	Double Yellows	1 hour / No return within 1 hour	To try to create on street parking
43	Nick Smith / Residents	Nantyglo	Barleyfield Road	Introduction of Prohibition of Left Turn	Prohibition of Left Turn	Restrict left turns from the industrial estate towards limestone road
44	Ebbw Vale RFC	Ebbw Vale	Station Approach / Pontygof	None at present	Introduce Double Yellows	Prevent obstructive parking on matchdays
45	Nick Smith / Residents	Brynmawr	Gurnos Estate	None at present	Introduce Double Yellows	Prevent obstructive parking.
46	Nick Smith / Residents	Nantyglo	Brynawelon	None at present	Introduce one way system	Improve traffic flows / safety
47	Residents	Blaina	Brnteg Road/ Abertillery Road	None at present	Introduce Double Yellow Lines at Junction	Improve traffic flows / safety

48	Residents	Beaufort	Wesley Place/Park Place	None at present	Introduce Double Yellow Lines at Junction	Improve traffic flows / safety
49	Resident/ Cllr Hodgins	Brynmawr	Greenland Road Car Park	None at present	Control of Use Order Prohibiting Parking of motor caravans	Improve capacity of car park
50	Cllr Gareth Davies	Rassau	Unnamed access road from A4281 to Rassau	None at present	Environmental weight restriction order or sun advsing no access t	Restrict HGV to Rassau
51	Resident	Ebbw Vale	Fair View (side road to No 12)	Double Yellows	Remove Double Yellows	Provide additional parking
52	CPE Team	Tredegar	Bank Lane / Gwent Shopping/ Commercial Street (rear of) car parks	None at present	Control of Use Orders to car parks	No TRO's at present
53	Resident	Ebbw Vale	44 Holland Street	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required
54	Cllr Collier	Blaina	6 Coronation Street	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required
55	Member Public	Ebbw Vale	Junction of Bryn Deri / Tredegar Road, Hilltop	None at present	Introduce Double Yellows at junction	Prevent parking close to junction
56	Resident	Tredegar	Junction of Parkville / Park Hill	None at present	Introduce Double Yellows at junction	Prevent parking close to junction
57	Residents	Abertillery	Gladstone Street	Double Yellows	Part removal of yellow lines	To try to create on street parking
58	Cllr Hodgins	Brynmawr	22 George Street	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer required

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Agenda Item 16

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**
Report Subject: **Activities Report – Littering and Dog Control Order Enforcement for the Financial Year 2019/20**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanne Wilkins / Executive Member Environment**
Report Submitted by: **Andrew Long – Team Manager, Environmental Protection**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
11/11/20	18/11/20	17.12.20			7/12/20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update Members on the progress of the Litter and Dog Control Order enforcement initiative that has been operating in Blaenau Gwent since October 2011. The report will outline outcomes for the financial year of 2019/20.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The report will detail how the partnership with the LA Support Ltd (previously called Kingdom Security Services) has tackled the community and corporate priority of improving street cleanliness. Against the backdrop of a difficult financial climate, Blaenau Gwent has utilised a cost effective environmental enforcement service that reinforces the Authority's zero-tolerance approach to these Environmental Offences.

2.2 For several years Blaenau Gwent has been identified as having some of the dirtiest streets in Wales by annual surveys carried out by Keep Wales Tidy. Street cleanliness is consistently considered to be a priority for both Councillors and constituents.

2.3 During 2018/19, Blaenau Gwent CBC was one of the top performing local Authorities in Wales for the issuing of Litter and Dog Control fixed penalty notices, issuing the sixth highest number. National figures for 2019/20 are yet to be released. In addition to having full-time patrols of our streets and problematic areas for littering and dog control offences by dedicated Enforcement Officers, the scheme has delivered the following benefits;

- i. 842 FPNs have been issued in 2019/20 for Litter and dog control offences;
- ii. There has been an approximate 25% reduction in the number of fixed penalty notices issued for littering compared to 2018/19 and a slight decrease for dog control offences. Complaints/service requests relating to dog fouling have significantly reduced for the third year;

- iii. 220 prosecutions were undertaken following non-payment of a fixed penalty notice for littering and dog control order offences;
 - iv. a cost effective enforcement solution in a difficult economic climate;
 - v. Up to 4 full-time jobs for local people.
- 2.4 The Corporate Plan 2018-22 identifies street and environmental cleanliness as a priority and, as such, a zero-tolerance, cost effective, enforcement capability is key to ensure offences such as littering and dog fouling are detected and dealt with appropriately.
- 2.5 The service standards of the LA Support Contract (up to March 2020) provided for 4 full time enforcement officers and administrative support to be provided to the Authority. These officers were provided on the following financial terms.
- Two officers are provided on an hourly rate - £20 per hour per officer and the Authority retains all income received from fixed penalty notices issued by these hourly rate officers. Fixed penalty rates are currently £125 for a littering offence, reduced to £100 if paid within 14 days and £100 for dog control offences with no early repayment reduction.
 - Two officers are provided on the basis that LA Support receive £50 for every fixed penalty notice that these officers issue, with the Authority receiving the residual amount from each fixed penalty.
- 2.6 On this basis, with income received from fines and court costs awarded to the Authority following successful prosecutions, the service generated a small net cost in 2019/20 of £4,235 (see Appendix 2). This obviously represented good value for the number of staff employed (four) to undertake the work. (This figure does not include internal management and other recharges and imputed costs.)
- 2.7 During the third quarter of 2019/20 there was initial concern about the end of year net- cost of the service arising from on-going financial monitoring and as a result the service level agreement (SLA) for 2020/21 was re-negotiated with LA Support Limited. The new SLA provides for a guaranteed zero cost service for the Local Authority with LA Support Limited now retaining all income received from fines generated and not charging the Local Authority for any staff costs.

Unfortunately, as a result of current Coronavirus pandemic the service was suspended in March 2020 because of the need to minimise human to human contact. At the time of writing the service has still not been reinstated for a number of reasons including;

- the fluctuating rate of Coronavirus infection in our community
- new local and National lockdowns
- reduced footfall and therefore offending behavior in our community as a result of Coronavirus restrictions
- the possible perception that the Local Authority is issuing fines to generate income at a time when there is significant financial hardship in our community as a result of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic

Re-instigating the service is under continuous review and it is anticipated that this will happen when the legal and public health restrictions around the current pandemic enable the service to return in a viable form.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 – That Members accept the report as presented.

Option 2 - That Members challenge the performance elements of the report.

4 Recommendation(s)/Endorsements by other Groups

4.1 Corporate Leadership Team, Regeneration & Community Services Leadership Team and the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee have considered this report.

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

5.1 Well-being Plan, Objective 2 – Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities. The use of proactive enforcement to target littering and dog control offences helps to create clean and safe environments. By identifying and issuing financial penalties to those individuals who choose to commit environmental crimes in the Borough, the Authority is taking positive steps to try to create clean and safe streets and open spaces.

5.2 Corporate Plan – Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities Priority objective - To re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control. The use of proactive enforcement to target environmental offences will assist in achieving this goal.

5.3 While the Local Authority is not under a statutory duty to enforce litter and dog control legislation, it does receive hundreds of service requests annually in relation to street cleanliness and alleged environmental offences, so by retaining a strong enforcement presence the Authority can respond to service demand and take steps to achieving the goals set out in the Wellbeing and Corporate Plan.

6. Implications Against Each Option

6.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

6.2 With income received from fines and court costs awarded to the Authority following successful prosecutions, the service generated a small adverse variance of £4,235 (see appendix 2). This does not include internal management and other recharges and imputed costs. The service contract has since been renegotiated.

7. Risk including Mitigating Actions

7.1 Reputational risk- While litter and dog control enforcement are not a statutory duty the use of fixed penalty enforcement enables the Authority to proactively target environmental offences while also responding to service requests for improvements in street cleanliness and helps in achieving the Authority's corporate goals.

8. **Legal**

8.1 There is no legal duty to provide the environmental enforcement service currently provided by LA Support Limited however the benefits that it provides have been highlighted.

9. **Human Resources**

9.1 There are no implications for Blaenau Gwent staff associated with this report.

10. **Supporting Evidence**

10.1 **Performance Information and Data**

10.2 **Enforcement Activity.** Table 1, below, outlines the number of fixed penalty notices issued for the full year of 2019/20 and a comparison against outcomes from previous years.

Table 1	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
FPN Type						
Public Space Protection Order (Fouling)	48	29	11	17	14	6
Public Space Protection Order (Exclusion)	60	3	4	8	5	2
Public Space Protection Order (Lead Only)	37	20	14	10	22	29
Sub-Total	145	52	29	35	41	37
Litter	1,497	1,381	1,631	726	1,070	805
Total	1,642	1,433	1,660	761	1,111	842

10.3 842 FPNs were served for the full year for 2019/20. This is a 24% reduction in the total numbers issued for the previous year. The key issues to point out are as follows:

10.3.1 **The total number of litter fines has decreased.** This is likely to be due to staff turnover in year on the part of LA Support Ltd, compared to 2018/19, which led to reduced frontline staff while recruitment and training of new staff was conducted and therefore reduced fixed penalty notice numbers. Littering complaints have reduced slightly (see Table 2, below) compared to 2018/19.

10.3.2 **The number of fines being issued for Dog Control Order offences has decreased slightly.** While there has been a slight decrease in fines issued for dog control offences, the 10% (4) decrease in numbers is not considered significant given the overall numbers involved (37 for 2019/20 compared with 41 in 2018/19). Complaints about dog fouling decreased significantly during 2019/20, reducing from 352 in 2018/19 to 210 last year. This level of complaint about dog fouling is the lowest recorded since the enforcement initiative began (see Table 2, below).

- 10.3.3 Enforcement Officers are directed to patrol specific areas based on complaints received from both Councillors and members of the public, particularly in relation to dog control offences. Enforcement Officers work closely with the Authority's dog warden to identify and seize unattended stray dogs, which can be the cause of significant issues associated with dog fouling. A list of the current hotspot areas for dog fouling patrols has been provided in Appendix 3.
- 10.3.4 **Keep Wales Tidy.** Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) compile an annual report on the street cleanliness of all Local Authorities in Wales. For the full KWT 2018/19 report visit: <https://www.keepwalestidy.cymru/surveys>.
- 10.3.5 **Comparative Performance.** Based on 2018/19 data Blaenau Gwent served the sixth highest number of fixed penalty notices. Members are directed to the returns made annually to Welsh Government (visit: [Welsh Government Environmental Fixed Penalty Notice Data 2018/19](#)). At the time of writing, the 2019/20 comparative data had not been published.
- 10.3.6 Further detailed breakdowns of the FPNs issued can be found in Appendix 1. This shows FPNs served by location, age group, gender etc and there is also a breakdown by outcomes. The three potential outcomes for each FPN issued are:
1. Fixed Penalty Notice paid.
 2. No further action, (due to mitigating circumstances or administrative errors etc).
 3. Offender faces prosecution for the original offence in the event of non-payment
- 10.3.7 **Prosecutions.** The payment rate in 2019/20, of 52%, represents a decrease compared to 61% in 2018/19. There is an early repayment reduction scheme in place for the offence of littering, which means the fine level is reduced to £100 from £125 if the fixed penalty notice is paid within the first 14 days of receipt. (A full financial breakdown of the service is provided in appendix 2).
- 10.3.8 Non-payment leads to prosecution in most cases. In 2019/20 there were 220 cases subject to prosecution resulting from non-payment of fixed penalty notices (in 2018/19 there were 349 cases prosecuted) representing a 36% reduction. Typically, guilty pleas incur a fine of £125 and a £20 victim surcharge with up to £120 costs awarded to the Authority, although receipt of costs can take several months to come thorough to the Council as the court often allows offenders to pay in instalments. Other cases can incur higher fines/costs especially where a not-guilty plea fails.
- 10.3.9 **Service requests.** Table 2, below, shows the number of service requests received from constituents and Members over the last seven years:

Table 2	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Service Requests							
Dog Fouling	841	655	327	348	635	352	210
Litter	325	420	397	335	506	597	570
Total	1166	1075	724	683	1141	949	780

11. **Expected outcome for the public**

11.1 Improved street cleanliness and the ability to respond to service requests in relation to street cleanliness and environmental offences.

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

12.1 Relevant internal colleagues in Cleansing have been consulted on the content of this report.

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

13.1 The scheme outlined in this report is necessary to ensure long-term improvements in the Authority's street cleanliness and to create pleasant public open spaces.

14. **Preventative focus**

14.1 The scheme will help to change cultural attitudes to littering and dog control by ensuring offending behaviour is punished appropriately.

15. **Collaboration / partnership working**

15.1 The scheme is run in partnership with a local authority support service.

16 **Integration(across service areas)**

16.1 The scheme contributes to relevant well-being and environment Agendas.

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

17.1. The proposals will no adverse effects against the protected characteristics.

18. **Monitoring Arrangements**

18.1. The scheme will be monitored by Public Protection Managers and by way of relevant reports to the Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services, CLT and Scrutiny Committee, as necessary.

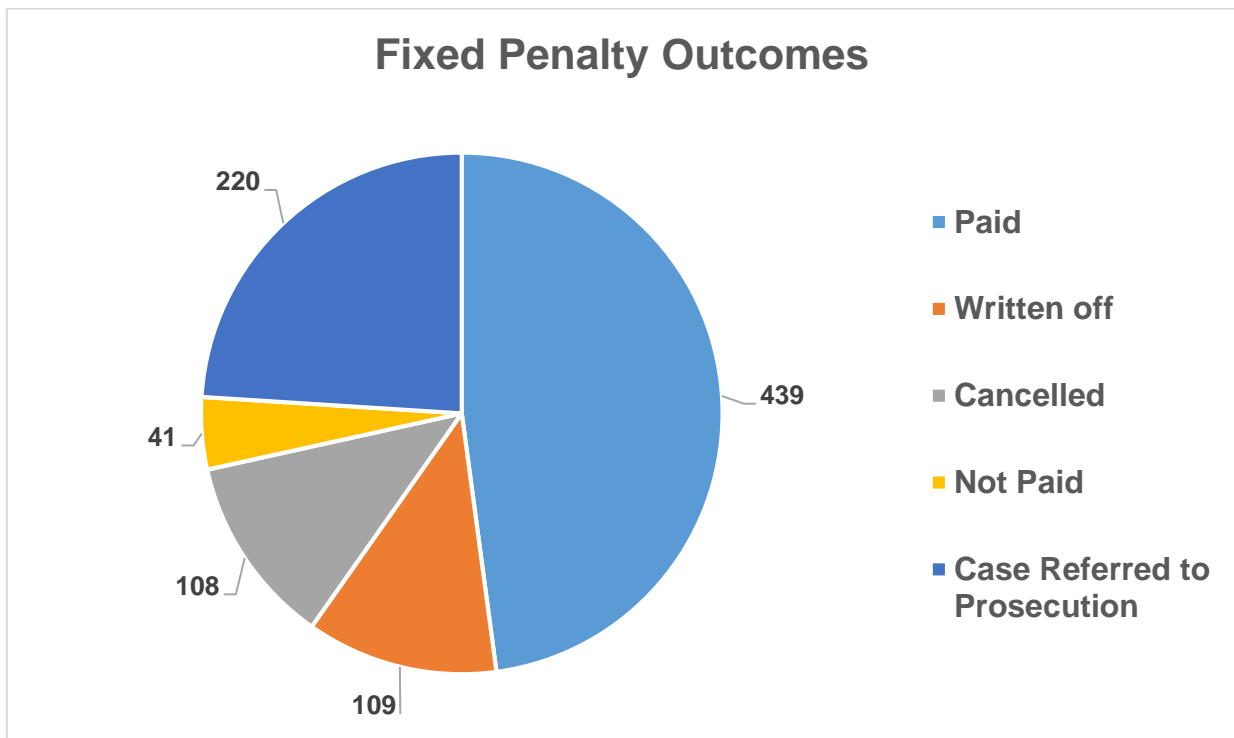
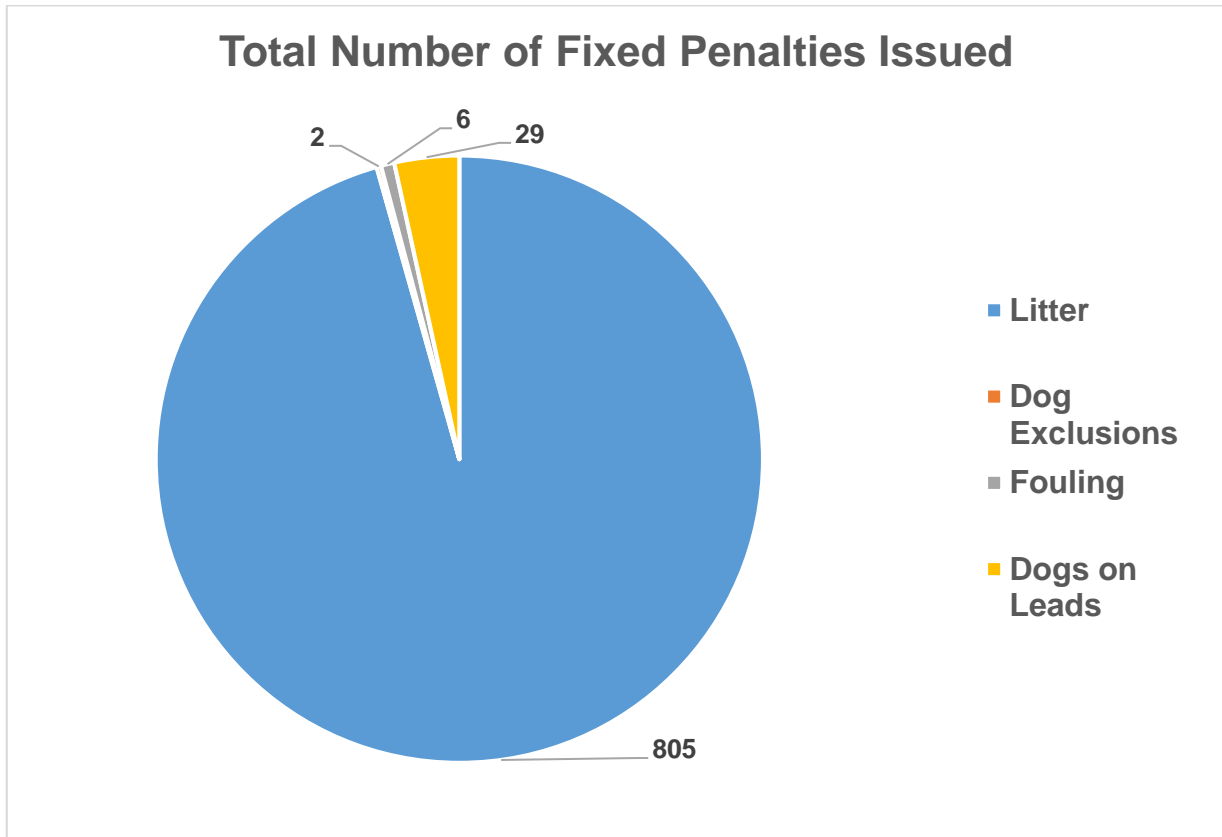
Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Fixed Penalty Notice Geographical Breakdown

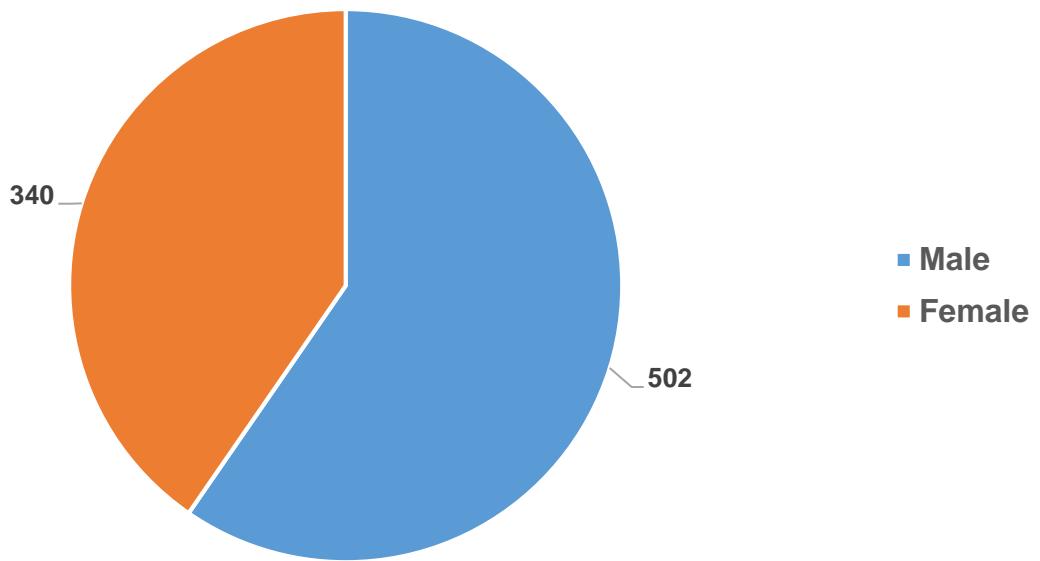
Appendix 2 – Financial Breakdown Service Cost

Appendix 3 – Dog Patrol Areas

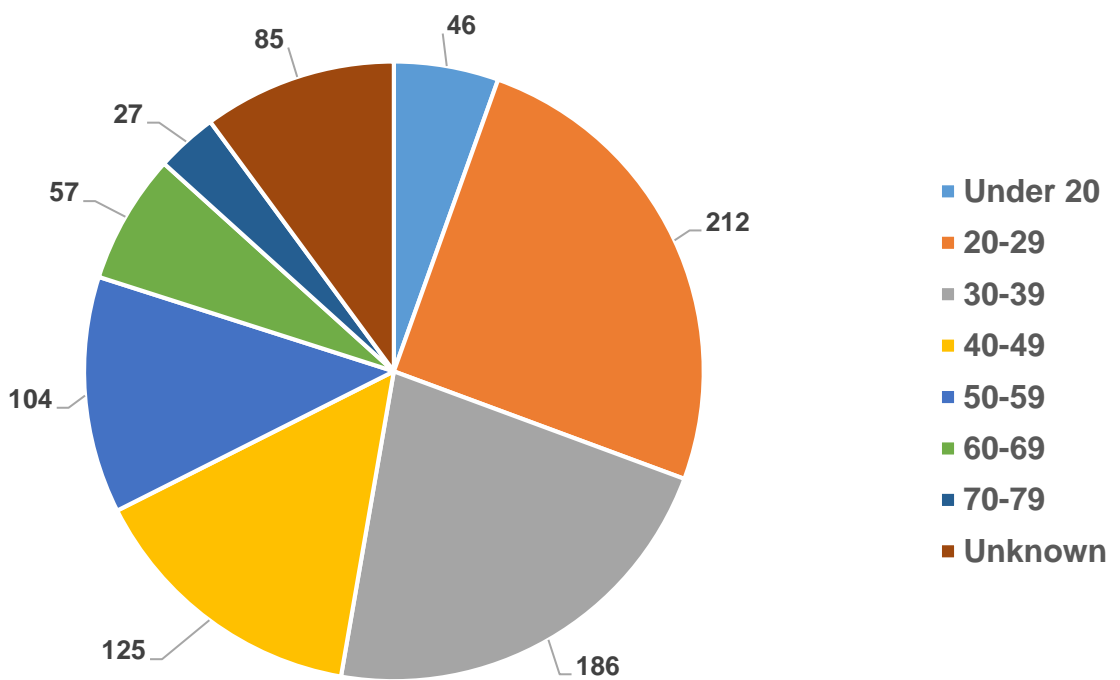
Appendix 1 Fixed Penalty Notice Geographical Breakdown



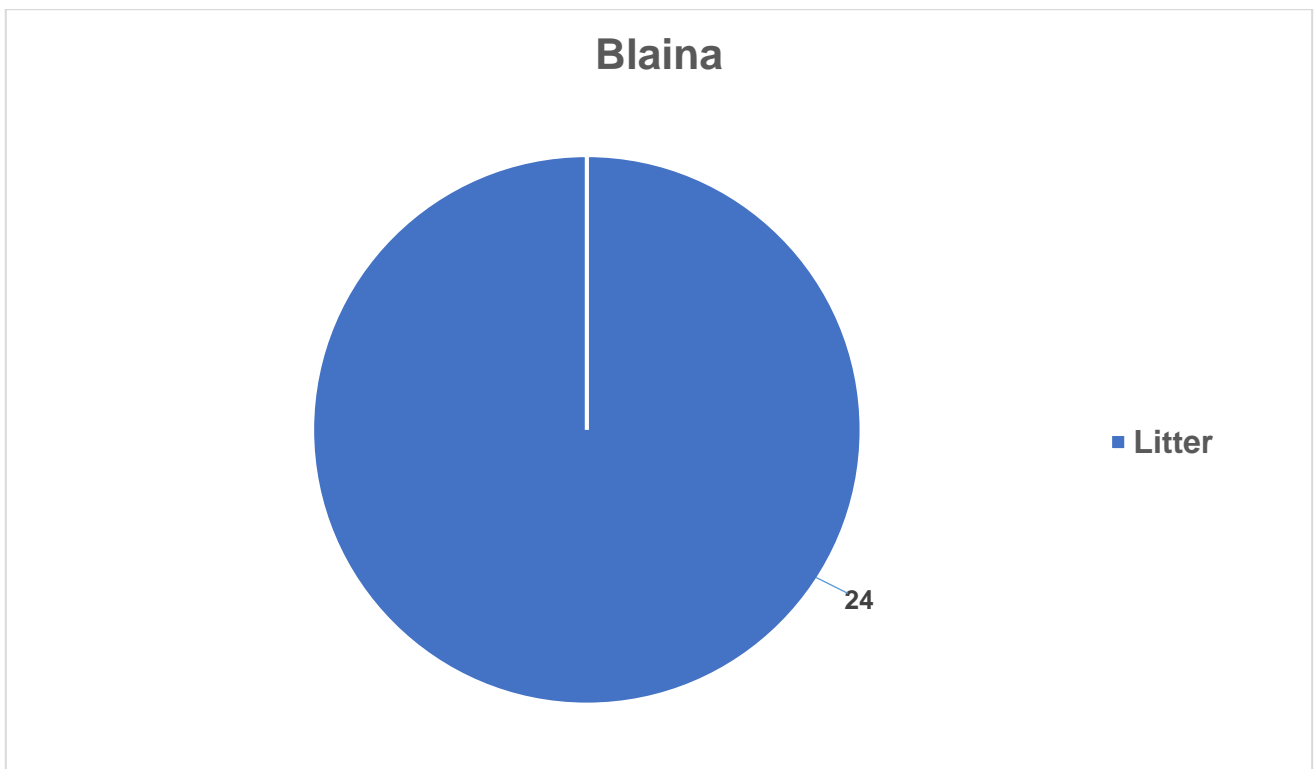
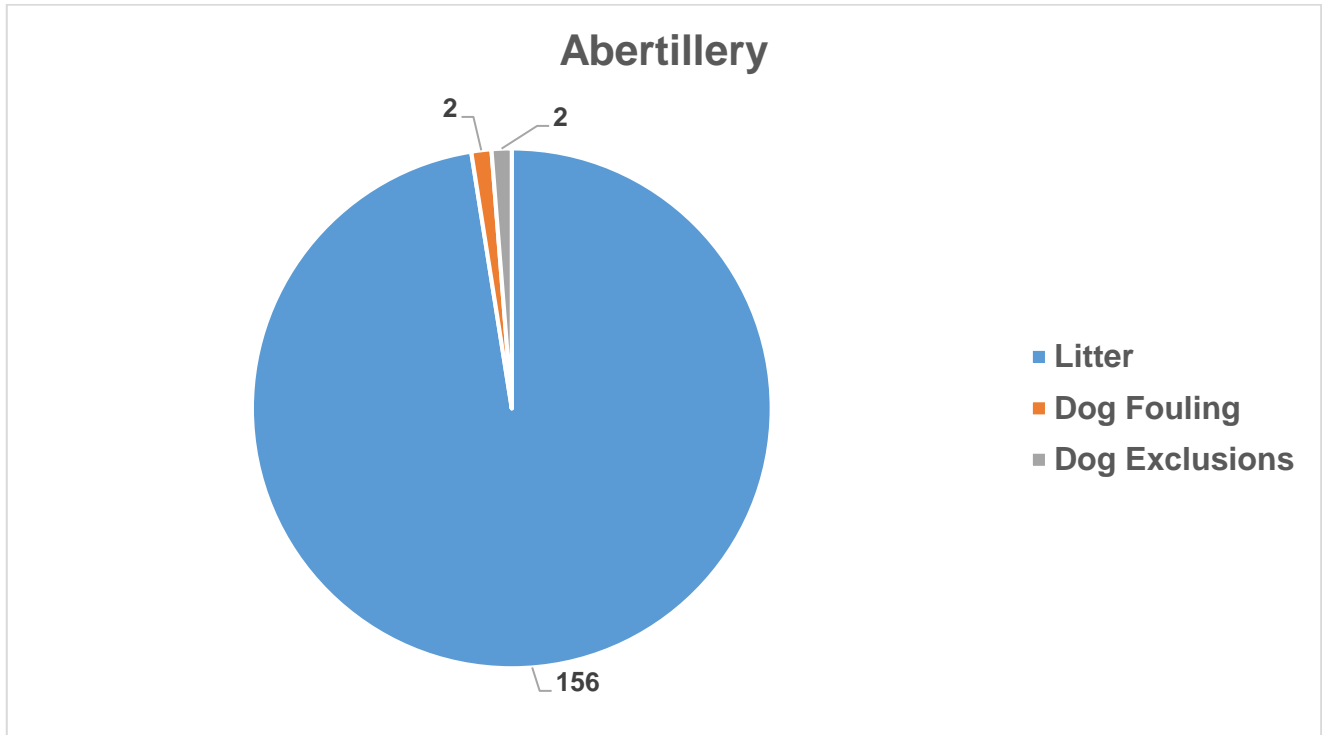
Fixed Penalties Served by Gender



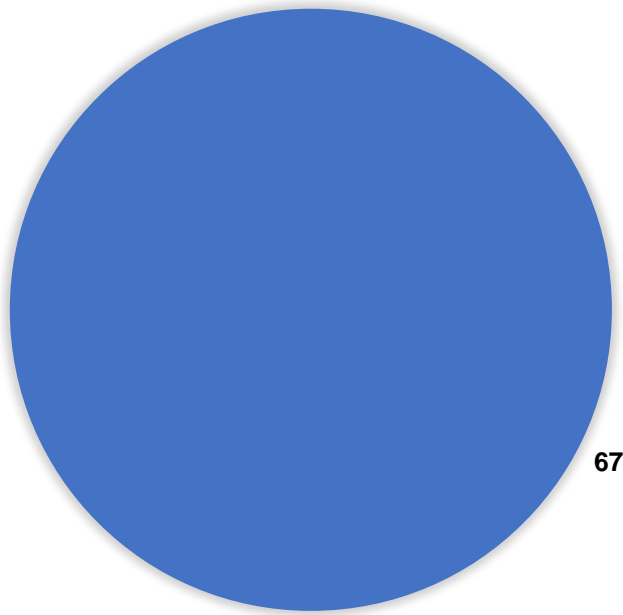
FPN's Served by Age Group



FPN's Issued by Area



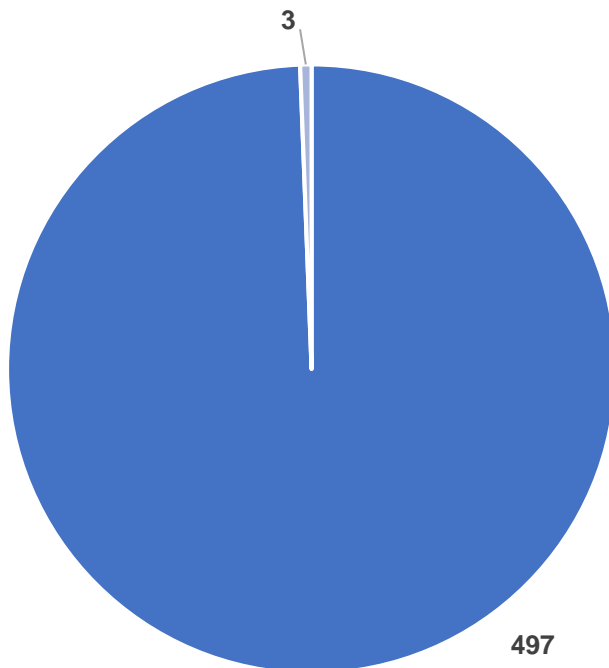
BRYNMAWR



■ Litter

67

Ebbw Vale

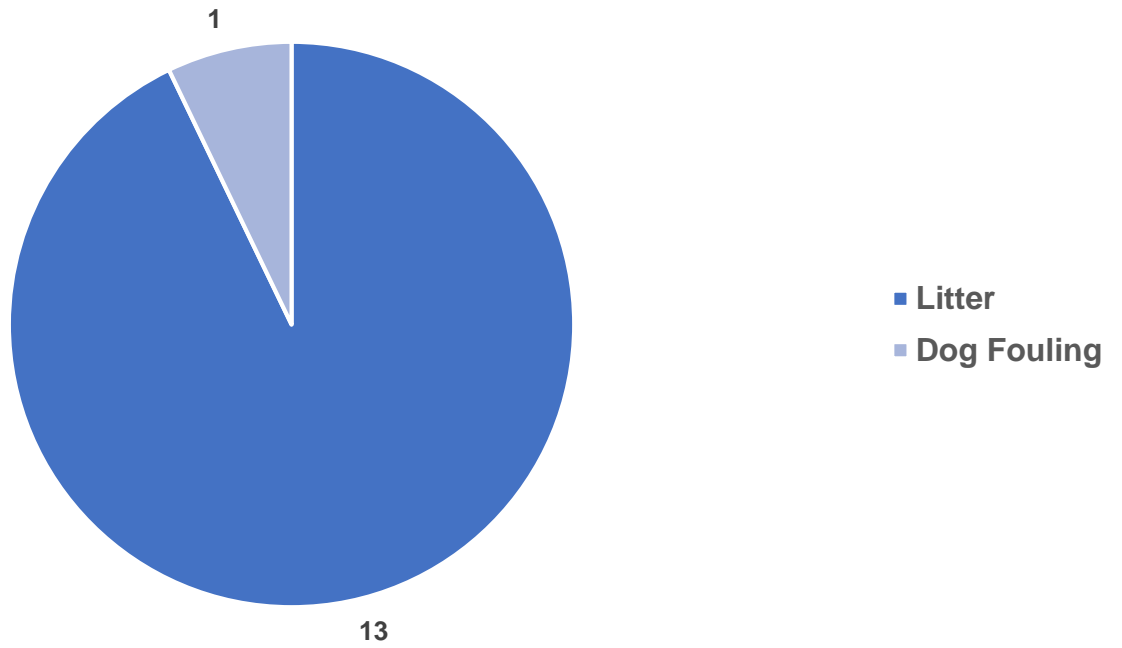


■ Litter
■ Dog Fouling

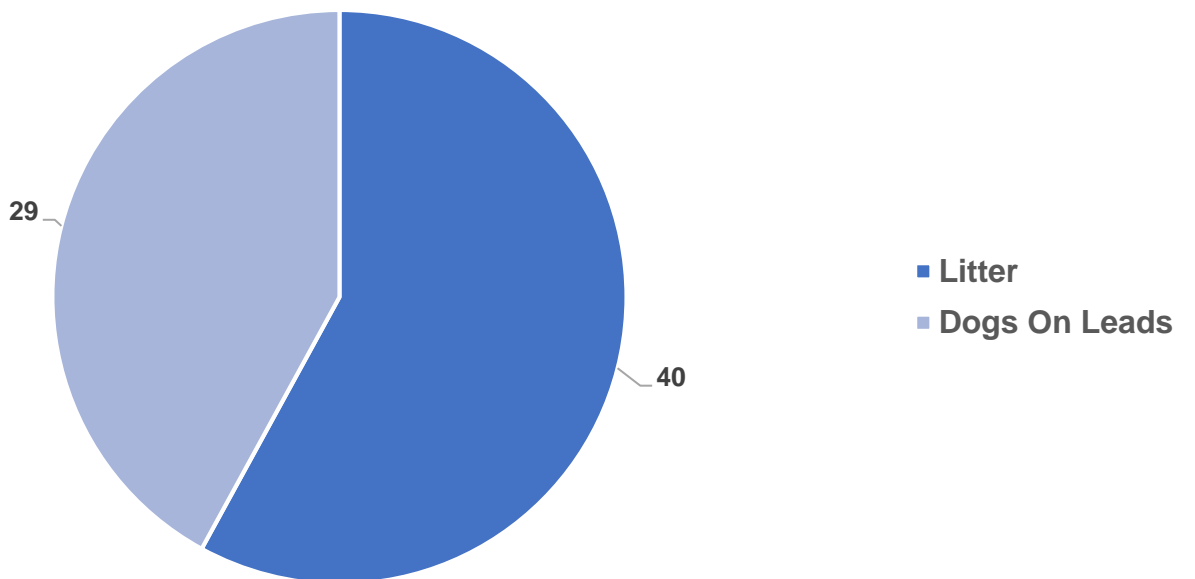
497

3

Nantyglo



Tredegar



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APPENDIX 2
BUDGET MONITORING 31st March 2020

Littering & Dog Control Orders

	Revised Estimate 2019/2020 £	Actual Expenditure Month 12 £	Variance (Over)/ Underspent £
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Employees	0	0	0
Premises Related Expenses	0	0	0
Transport Related Expenses	0	0	0
Supplies & Services			
Printing/Photocopying	0	709	(709)
Kingdom	128,561	92,050	36,511
Corporate and Business Support Services	143	42	101
Fleet and Transport	0	0	0
Food and Drink	0	0	0
Information & Communications Technology	61	2,000	(1,939)
People Services and Utilities	0	0	0
Professional Services	0	0	0
Other (Bank Charges)	0	53	(53)
Total Expenditure	128,765	94,854	33,911
<u>Income</u>			
Customer & Client Receipts	0	325	325
Court Income	0	33,259	33,259
Fine Income	128,765	57,035	(71,730)
Total Income	128,765	90,619	(38,146)
Net Expenditure	0	4,235	(4,235)

Appendix 3 Dog Fouling Patrol Areas

Ebbw Vale

Cwm- Curre St, Canning St, (rear lanes) King St, Marine St and rear lane (front and rear)) Shops, Carne Street, Station Terrace, Cycle Path by river, Stewart St, Cwm Bridge, Scout Hut Canning St rear lane, Crosscombe Terrace, Emlyn Rd Stanfield St Garden Festival, Playground at Garden City, Victoria area Cwm Craig Bungalows, Victoria Business Park, Acorn Villas

Waunllwyd- Brynhyfryd Terrace, Cwm Road, Excelsior St, Park View green foot bridge that is up from Pen y cwm Junior School, Waun-lwyd Garn Terrace Rear Access Lane, Waunllwyd

Ty Llwyn- Eastville Rd, rear of Clovelly Avenue Greenfield Terrace

Beaufort- Hawthorn Road to Yard Row. Bryn Coch, lane behind Frost Road, Beaufort Wesley Place Canterbury Road, Beaufort Rise, Park Place, Beaufort Terrace, Baptist Place Bangor Road Heol Siloam, Arfryn Terr, By the Farmers Pub Southbank, Bryn Kendall, Waungoch Estate, Church View, Primitive Place Hereford Road early morning Beaufort Rise, path way next to the War Memorial. lane leading from Park Place down to Beaufort Rise Reservoir Road, Beaufort Blaen Cendl, Pant-y-forest, Bryn Awelon Road, Rear lane Ty Cendl, Beaufort Back Alley Radford Terrace Bryngwyn Road Glan yr Afon Yard Row Waungoch District Penycwm Special School, Beaufort Hill Lansbury Terrace foot path on the way to Hawthorn Road

Rassau- Graig Ebbw, Land at the rear of Honey Field Rd, Howy Rd, Rassau Rd, Rowen Way, Honeysuckle Close, Stonebridge Road, Maes Glas Nant y Croft Moor View, Usk Place, Ivy Close, Ferndale Close Morgans Row Coed Cae, Rassau, pavement opposite the Ty Bryn Club, Rassau Road, Rassau, Ebbw Vale, Surgery, Summerfield Road, Rassau

Central- Heol Cae Ffwrnais, Eureka place, Pennant Street, Alfred Street rear of odd numbers Letchworth Road, Willowtown Stores Mount Pleasant Road rear lane Brynheulog and Square Council Street Garfield Terrace, Libanus Road, Fairview, Hughes Avenue, junction of mount pleasant road and Hughes ave Ebbw Vale Green at the rear of Western Terrace, Bryn y Gwynt, Mount Street Victoria Rd, Church Cres, Harcourt St Valley Road Holland Street Western Terrace Pen-Y-Lan, Ebbw Vale roads leading to Willowtown School Tredegar Road Moor View Newtown Bridge Road (Town – Newtown) Tynewydd, Newtown, Ebbw Vale, Fair View, Valley Road, Ebbw Vale lane between Eureka place and garden street Alexander Street Briery Hill, Pleasant View rear lane Excelsior Street, Ebbw Vale, The Crescent, Ebbw Vale, Mount Pleasant View Mount Pleasant road, Eureka Place Garage Church Crescent to Eureka Place, including Spencer Street, Palace sq, Car Park by Christ Church Church Street, armoury terrace, lane to the rear of Eureka Place, Ebbw Vale, Church Street, Ebbw Vale, George Parry Court residential home situated on Rees Street Drysiog Street, Bottchers UK Incline by G.O., Bethcar Street, Wordsworth Close, Ebbw Vale Armoury Court, Armoury Hill, Ebbw Vale Brynteg Terrace, Newtown Princess Court Flats, Adams Square, Pant Y Fforest

Garnlydan- Prince Phillip Avenue Queensway Commonwealth Rd

Briery Hill- Church Street, Angel Square Bethesda Place

Glyn Coed- Glyn Coed Area, Heol Pen Y Cae, Cwm Hir, Queen Villas, Beaufort Road, Beaufort Terrace Clos Gwaith Dur, Clos Bronwydd Badminton Grove Pen y Dre Rear lane Lilian Grove, Bevan Crescent, Bryn Ebbw Glan yr Afon Pen Y Lan, Riverside Funeral Home Fitzroy Ave, Bevan Crescent

Emlyn Avenue, Panteg, Glanfryd Avenue Pant y Fforest Cambridge Gardens, Bryn Kendall, Bryn Awelon, Beaufort Ter,(back land and green area) Tir Y Berth, Lansbury Terrace, South Bank.Gantref Way,Badminton Grove, the alley connecting to the back of Lillian Grove, Verge along pathway leading up to Newchurch Road Shakespear avenue green off bryn deri ebbw vale, lane between Panteg and Fitzroy Willoughtown Old Willoughtown School, Top of Brynheulog Street and Moor View, and Glanffrwd Terrace Letchworth Road Willow Close, Gwaun Helyg Hill Elizabeth Way

Hilltop- Pentwyn, Tredegar Avenue, Hilltop Shopping Centre Flats,Greenways, Gwaun Helyg Road Brynteg Terrace, St Davids Close, Hilltop, Ebbw Vale Green by Blaen Wern, Ebbw Vale

Tredegar

Georgetown-Whitworth Terrace Walter Street and back lane ,Vale Terrace, Brompton Place, Parkville, James Street, Southend, Rhyd Terrace, Hill View, Elmwood Steps Oakfield Road, Troedrhiwgwair, Park Place, Transport Road, Bowens Terrace, by the subway and in between the links to the houses, Back Alley Arthur Street Walter Street, St James Way, Victoria Terrace St James Park, Rhyd Terrace Vale Terrace Poplar Road

Peacehaven- Hill View, Alexandra Terrace, Woodfield Court Glyn Terrace, Kimberly Ter St James Reservoir Bedwellty Pits Tredegar Central Arthur Street Charles Street, Georges Court, Church Street, Church Square, Western Crescent, Queen Victoria Street, Park View, Cefn Parc, Glandovey Terrace, The Granary Stable lane by bus stops at Comp School Gwent Way

Central -Castle Street, Market Street , Morgan Street Prospect Place York Terrace Hill leading up to Georgetown School Gladstone Place

Dukestown- Lindsay Gardens, Twyn Star, Picton Road, Nine Arches, Glanhowy Street, Meadow Crescent, Cwrt Pen-Y-Twyn, Carmel Street Scwrfa Road

Sirhowy- Beaufort Road, Harford Street, Bryn Pica, Alexandra Place, Ysguborwen, Rhoslan, Shepards Cloise, Greenmeadow Glanhowy School before 8:30am (Coach Bach) Glanhowy Street rear alley Nursery Terrace, Sirhowy United Way

Cefn Golau- Attlee Way, Cripps Ave, Gainsborough Road, Walter Conway Avenue

Nantybwlich- Pen Y Bont, Waundeg Estate, Arches Close Golwg Y Mynydd, Tynewydd,

Ashvale- Ashvale, Greenwood Avenue, The Crescent, Fairview

Abertillery Valley

Abertillery- Cwm Farm Rd, Cwm Cottage Road Valley View, Tillery St, Powell St, Gray St, (rear lanes) Rhiw Park Rd ,Hill Crest View Back Lane at Bishop St, Rose Heyworth Estate, Darren Rd, Oak St and rear lane of Oak Street , Vivian St Ty Bryn Hill, Pantypwdyn Road, Tillery Road, Coed Cae Du Oxford St Mitre Street Market Street Somerset Street Carmel Street High Street Church Street Division Street Lower Gwastod Terrace, Woodland Terrace, Road above Westbank Lawrence Av, Cross Street East Side Row.Preston St Clydach Cottages Lower Brynhyfred Terrace, Glandwr St Upper Royal Lane, Spring Bank, Crown St, Morgan St, Gaen St, Alma St, Norman St,Grosvenor Road, Earl St, Cross St ,Victoria St Grosvenor Rd, Ashfield Rd, Portland St-rr lane, Cromwell St-rear lane Morley Road Florence Close, rear lane of Duke St, Chapel Street, Bournville Road, Glandwr Street, Gladstone Street, Queen Street, Oak Street Vivian Street (rear lanes) Ty Dan y Wal Road (by gates to forest walk) Powell Street Duffryn Road Valley View rear alley Adam Street Glandwr Street, Carlyle St, George Dagger Av,George Baker Av, Roberts Houses, Adam St, Gelli Grug Rd, Blaenau Gwent Rows,

Princess St, Montague St, Walkway from Blyth St to James St, Cwm Cottage Rd, Cycle path Abertillery to Aberbeeg, Lower Gwastod Terrace Somerset St, Smith Rd, Queen St, Hill St Areal View Estate, Chapel Street, Gladstone Street Rose Heyworth Estate Vivian St, George Barker Av Gwern Berthi Rd, Tilleri Gardens, Woodland Terrace Clydach Cottages

Six Bells- Windsor Road Richmond Road (rear lane) & School Front and Rear Marlborough Road. (Full Length) Bryngwyn Road (Front & Rear) Llwynon Road, High Street rear lane, Back Lane Arrail Street ,Griffin St , Victoria Road Lancaster Street Glyn Ebbw cycle path near Six Bells pumping station Coronation Road

Llanhilleth - Pleasant View, Victoria Rd, Partridge Road, Meadow St, Caefelin St, Railway Street and rear lane, High St, Commercial Road shops area, Upper Court Terrace Glandwr Ind Est,Walk bridge onto Meadow street, Blaencuffin Road Brooklyn Ter Woodside Ter Hillside Ter King Street, Footpath from Pen y Graig Ter to Montague Terrace, Llanhilleth Park Bridge to Railway Station

Brynithel- Bryn Terrace, Brynithel Ter, ,Brynhyfred Ter, Penrhiw Estate, Mount Pleasant Estate, Bryn Crescent, Hafodarthen Estate, Bryn Gaer Ter, By the Post Office Belmont Terrace Bryn Heulog Terrace

Swffryd - Lewis Street Keir Hardy Terrace (Rear Lane) Hector Avenue Swffryd Road Ballie Smith Av Bronawelon. Rectory Road, Lloyd Avenue Walters Avenue (outside NISA and Community Centre), Gordon Av Hector Av Bronawelon Terrace

Cwmtillery- Montague Street Victor Road Cwmtillery Lakes, King St Car Park Clarence St, Roch St, Gelli Grug, Oak St, Granville St Duke St Alma St Princess St

Aberbeeg -Woodland Terrace, Glandwr St Railway Terrace, Victoria Road, Cycle path between Cwrt Bracty and Six Bells Hotel, by Telephone box on Square, Manchester House

Blaina- Back lane between Part St and Maeshafod, East Pentwyn Estate Glanystruth, Cwmcelyn Pond Cwmcelyn Road and Surrounding area, Cwm Celyn Neuadd, Tanglewood and Southlands, Surgery Road Playing field behind surgery rd known as Fan Tips , Stones Houses early morning, Lancaster Street,rear Lane Bournville Rd Bennett Street Southlands Estate Rear Lane Part Street, Abertillery Road (from queens upwards) Steps between Yew Tree Public House and Railway Terrace leading to Chapel Road, Victoria Street outside Ystruth Primary School, East Pentwyn, Blaina Mount Pleasant

Nantyglo- Winchestown ,Brynawelon, Milfreak Av, Gwent Terrace,School Av, Ffosmaen Rd King St Parc nant y waun- path from winchestown to beaufort , Verwy Rd, Beacon ViewRound house Close, Dale view, Beaumont Close, Pant View, Limestone Road, Limestone Road East Gwent Terrace, Waen Ebbw Road, Attlee Road, Waunheulog, Glas y Gors Lower Coadcae On the grassed area Cae Glas Nantyglo Rear of queen street, car park next to Beaumont closeclose Coalbrook Vale Terrace

Brynmawr- Bronhafod St, Somerset St, Alma St, Fitzroy St, Birch Grove, Greenland Rd, Bryn Farm (Heol Onen Heol Derw Heol Ganol), Bailey St,Lower Baily Street Worcester St, Beaufort St, Windsor Road Intermediate Road Dumfries Place Glamorgan Street Gurnos Estate, Car Park Behind Market Hall, Osborne Road Rear of Market Square, King Street, Garages behind Cozy Place Flats

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Agenda Item 17

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **South East Wales Resilient Uplands – Wales Rural Development Programme Sustainable Management Scheme**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J. Wilkins, Executive Member Environment**

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
11/11/20	19.11.12	17.12.20			7/12/2020	13.01.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the ongoing regional South East Wales Resilient Uplands (SEWRU) project and provide an update on how the Council is supporting the delivery of the 3-year (2018-2021) project
- 1.2 The South East Wales Resilient Uplands (SEWRU) is a collaborative project arrangement, involving Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen Councils, Natural Resources Wales, Police, Fire and Rescue Services, Gwent Wildlife Trust and the Brecon Beacons National Park. Torfaen County Borough Council are the project Lead for the collaboration.
- 1.3 SEWRU's focus is delivering priority actions from the Landscape Institute award winning Natural Resource Management Plan for South-east Wales Uplands (NRMP) which was produced in 2015.

The original NRMP can be found via this link:

<http://www.visitblaenavon.co.uk/en/WorldHeritageSite/LookingAfterBlaenavon/ForgottenLandscapes/Upland-Heath-and-Wildlife.aspx>

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The SEWRU project covers an area of some 200sq km, on land which is over 200m in altitude within Torfaen, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent (as per the attached Appendix 1). This £399,000 capital and revenue project is funded over 3 years by the Welsh Government's Rural Communities–Rural Development Programme and the European Union's European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

- 2.2 Within the context of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the NRMP identifies a range of ecosystem service opportunities that support upland farm enterprises, citizens and visitors, creating more resilient communities and habitats, and priorities within RDP Local Development Strategies.
- 2.3 The NRMP also identifies solutions to many challenges that our uplands face, such as declining farm incomes, loss of habitat and key species, and landscape crime such as illegal use of off-road vehicles, fly-tipping and arson.
- 2.4 The SEWRU project aims to:
- Deliver land management to improve soils, water quality and regulation, grazing, biodiversity, and carbon storage
 - Strengthen relationships between stakeholders and commoners to support upland communities
 - Build capacity through volunteering, training and community engagement
 - Increase farm competitiveness and viability through diversification and development of innovative business opportunities
 - Tackle the underlying causes of upland degradation caused by poor land management and anti-social problems such as fly-tipping, arson and illegal off-roading
 - Provide opportunities for quiet recreation and enhance the area's tourism offer

3. **Summary of Progress to Date**

- 3.1 Delivery is being coordinated by a full time project manager with the support of a part time finance officer, both of whom are employed by Torfaen Council.
- 3.2 The Detailed delivery plans are attached in appendix 2. under the following headings:
- a) Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) Update
 - b) Landscape Crime
 - c) Regional Development of Sustainable Tourism
 - d) Heather Management
 - e) Peat Creation and Restoration
 - f) Scrapes and Pools
 - g) Boundary Repairs
 - h) Volunteer Development and Training
 - i) Regional Wildfire Plan

j) Hill Farming Training Scheme

3.3 To date the project has identified and completed several peatland restoration projects, produced common land management plans (including a detailed management plan for Mynydd Llanhilleth), restored many kilometres of commons boundary stock fencing, installed physical barriers to reduce landscape crime on commons and managed important upland heathland to reduce fire risk and facilitate conservation grazing. SEWRU is currently working with Gwent Police and other partners to update the NRMP and produce upland-focussed landscape crime management plans for each common within the project.

Performance Indicator	Summary of SEWRU activities Outcomes	Impacts within Blaenau Gwent
Cooperation operations supported	All Wales SEWRU / RDP / European Forum for Nature Conservation project: http://www.efncp.org/download/Walesprojectofficera dvert.pdf	Support ongoing activities within Blaenau Gwent Upland areas.
	Tread lightly / SEWRU all Wales illegal off-roading leaflet under development	Helping to reduce illegal off-roading within all upland areas of Blaenau Gwent
Pilot activities / training	Hill Farming Training Scheme development including SEWRU / GWT habitat management leaflets (completed)	Developing skills within the farming community across Blaenau Gwent uplands for better management of land and animal husbandry.
	SEWRU / GWT Blaenau Gwent-based Recreation and Training Project (see: https://www.gwentwildlife.org/South-East-Wales-Resilient-Uplands-Project)	Gwent Wildlife Trust based at The Environmental Resource Centre, Waun Lwyd, Ebbw Vale.
	Mynydd Maen Commons Innovation Plan implementation	
	Update of the NRMP including regional wildfire plans, landscape crime: management plans, landscape crime communication strategy and new landscape crime	Supporting protection against upland crime across Blaenau Gwent's Upland areas.

	app development. Police body / vehicle cams, remote camera traps and signage loaned to vulnerable commoners	Commoners in Cwmcelyn have been provided with body cams
	Mynydd Llanhilleth management plan	Area strategy that will lead to Improved management of Mynydd Llanhilleth common. This has significant benefits for the Communities of Blaenau Gwent in the lower Ebbw Fach.
Area of peatland rewetted	2 sites rewetted on Mynydd Maen – 6ha total	Activity in this area will increase climate change resilience reducing runoff rates into the Ebbw Fach.
	Waunafon Bog study (completed, practical measures not yet implemented)	Activity in this area will increase climate change resilience reducing runoff rates into the Ebbw Fach.
	New site identification (all areas): underway as part of NRMP update	
	Mynydd Garnlochdy peat bog study (completed, practical measures not yet implemented)	Activity in this area will increase climate change resilience reducing runoff rates into the Ebbw Fach.
Action to utilise natural resources for health benefit / feasibility studies	Commons boundary restoration including c.3 kilometres in Blaenau Gwent	The renewal of 3km fencing within the ward of Cwmtillery and Roseheyworth has helped to reduce incidents of animals straying from the common onto the public highway. Land owners have also installed new fencing at Cwmcelyn
	Heather management (all areas) including firebreaks (ongoing, area to be calculated)	Heather cutting has taken place across the upland heath from Cefn Coch to Mynydd Coity providing natural fire breaks and enhancing habitats for ground nesting birds such as Red Grouse.
	Bracken management (all areas, ongoing)	Localise rolling and cutting to reduce tinder that increase potential for wildfires and enhance biodiversity potential.

	Mynydd Maen pond creation / restoration and feral tree removal	
	Practical measures to reduce landscape crime including new gates, barriers, boulders and bunds (ongoing, all areas)	Specific local actions have taken place at Silent Valley Garden City and Cwmcelyn

4. Options Appraisal

- 4.1
- **Option 1: Preferred option:** Members to Note the activity taking place within the South East Wales Resilient Uplands Project and continue to support the collaborative working approach as programmed.
- 4.2
- **Option 2:** Members to consider the report and make suggestions or modifications with regard to future delivery of the South East Wales Resilient Uplands project.

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

5.1 Corporate Plan Priority:

The project has benefits for our upland landscape areas and successful outcomes will make positive contributions to the following step of the Councils Corporate Plan:

Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities

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

5.3 Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

The project makes a positive contribution to the Council's Wellbeing Plan under the following themes;

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

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

The NRMP identifies a range of ecosystem service opportunities that support upland farm enterprises, citizens and visitors, creating more resilient communities and habitats, and priorities within RDP Local Development Strategies.

- 5.5 **Forward Environment Plan, Biodiversity**
The NRMP directly helps to improve the resilience of our upland heath habitats and biodiversity value through project delivery and improved management techniques
- 5.6 **Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP)**
The NRMP contributes to the aims of the FRMP through enhancing natural flood defence mechanisms. The creation of ponds and rewetting upland areas increases water retention capacity and increases the lag phase of water run-off. This has the dual benefit of water retention at times of drought and helping to protect against wild fires.
- 5.7 **Carbon reduction Strategy**
Our Upland Heath and Bogs are an excellent Carbon Sink. Enhancing these habitats will improve their performance in terms of carbon sequestration, making a positive contribution to the carbon reduction strategy.
6. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 6.1 ***Impact on Budget***
The collaborative project arrangements demonstrate the value of working at a landscape scale and has delivered positive environmental and economic actions and outcomes across the upland region of South East Wales via securing external RDP funding. Continuing to support the project has a positive financial impact for the Authority. Modifying the agreed approach to the project may have cost implications that go beyond the existing current budget limitations.
- 6.2 ***Risk***
Changing the scope of the project may build in delays that have a negative impact on the existing programme.
- 6.3 ***Legal***
The projects help not only to support the Authorities statutory duties under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Water Framework Directive but also uphold land owner's liability in regard to straying animals etc, changes to the existing programme may have negative legal implications.
- 6.4 ***Human Resources***
The current arrangement draws on limited resources across the region, alterations to the agreed plan may result in failure to achieve the identified outcomes.
7. **Supporting Evidence**
- 7.1 ***Performance Information and Data***
Welsh Government-agreed Performance Indicators (PIs) for this project are:

Cooperation operations supported (target: 2)
Number of pilot activities undertaken / supported (target: 7)
Area of peatland rewetted (target: 10ha)
Number of action to utilise natural resources for health benefit (target: 5)
Number of feasibility studies (target: 5)
Number of training days (target: 40)
Number of new networks (target: 2)

Formal reporting against PIs is to Welsh Government in the form of a report with quarterly claims, and informally to the SWERU Partnership. (The complete schedule is attached as appendix 3).

7.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

The uplands are a valuable asset in terms of Biodiversity and Flood Management helping to underpin the health and resilience of all of our ecosystems and decrease water runoff rates at times of exceptional rainfall. This means that taking positive action through the SEWRU will enhance the natural resources the public utilise such as clean water, air and food production including pollination services.

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

The project is currently being reviewed and extensive consultation is being undertaken with partners, land owners and managers, public and third sector organisations and the general public.

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

The Plan covers the 2018-21 due to current funding availability, but ensuring the sustainable management of the uplands has much longer terms benefits particularly in regard to Climate change impacts

7.5 ***Preventative focus***

Contributing to the maintenance and enhancement of our uplands and improving ecosystem resilience will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change and provide positive opportunities to maintain and build mental and physical health and well-being.

7.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The project is a collaborative arrangement due to the scale and diverse nature of the subject matter.

7.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Access to a healthy natural environment has many benefits to all service areas. Integration will be driven by.

8. **Monitoring Arrangements**

8.1 The identified delivery mechanisms will continue to be monitored quarterly by the Governance and Natural Environment teams in the 2020/21 Financial Year.

- 8.2 A report will be submitted to the Community Services Scrutiny committee in the first quarter of the 2021/22 Financial Year summarising progress of progress made, action planned for 2021/22 and any updates on the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan 2019-2022.
- 8.3 The Forward Plan should be revised and approved by March 2022 for the next agreed period.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Uplands Location Plan

Appendix 2 – Core Delivery Plans

Appendix 3 – Performance Information Monitoring SEWRU

<http://www.visitblaenavon.co.uk/en/WorldHeritageSite/LookingAfterBlaenavon/ForgottenLandscapes/Upland-Heath-and-Wildlife.aspx>

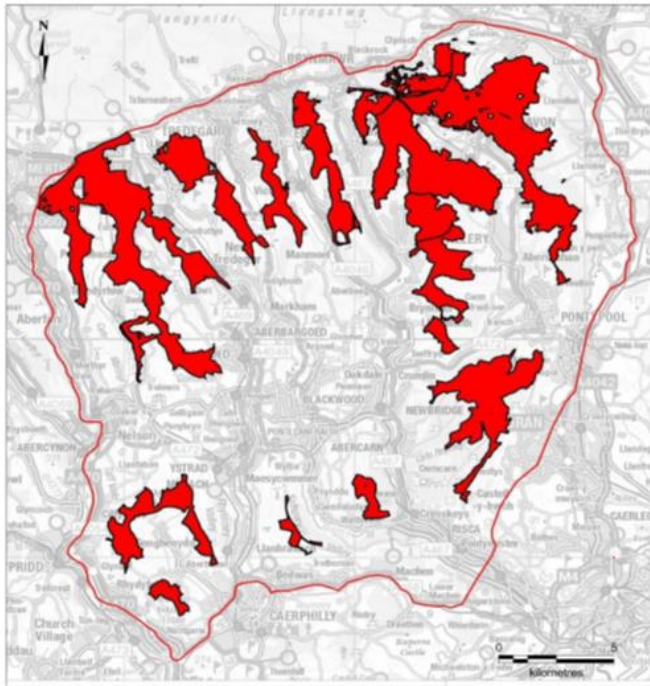
Glossary

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

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

Ecosystem Resilience - is the ability of an ecosystem to maintain its normal patterns of nutrient cycling and biomass production after being subjected to damage caused by an ecological disturbance, for example extreme weather events caused by climate change, outbreak of disease or human exploitation.

Appendix 1



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South East Wales Resilient Uplands: Core Delivery Plans

Delivery Plan Title: a) NRMP Update	
Location	Throughout the Project Area.
Why the project is necessary	A delivery partner will be appointed at the outset of the project to work with us to refine and update NRMP practical proposals and develop a robust monitoring and evaluation methodology based upon the principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources.
What we propose to do	Working closely with NRW, refine and update practical proposals for specific actions based on the NRMP derived Delivery Plans within and beyond the current scheme in partnership with stakeholders, including an audit of Glastir arrangements on Partnership commons. Specific emphasis will be placed on carbon sequestration and landscape crime.
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consult with SE Wales Resilient Uplands Steering Group to develop brief and recruit specialist consultant (s). ➤ Develop robust monitoring and evaluation methodology based upon the principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, taking into consideration the environmental, social and economic aspects of the project along with other benefits such as improved health outcomes. ➤ Refine and update practical proposals for specific actions based on the NRMP.
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivery Plans are up to date ➤ Project activities are appropriate ➤ The Partnership is adaptive ➤ The Project delivers
Delivery Plan Title:b) Landscape Crime	
Timescale	Ongoing throughout 10 year plan
Location	Throughout the whole study area.
Why the project is necessary	<p>A complete section of the NRMP was devoted to tackling landscape crime. This is because one of the biggest barriers to the delivery of sustainable natural resource management is the prevalence of landscape crime and antisocial behaviour. These crimes, often carried out by a very small section of the local communities, include arson, fly-tipping and illegal off-roading.</p> <p>The recognition of the problem resulted in a workshop being held in March 2016 where agreement was reached on the need for a multi-agency response to the problem. A number of priority actions were</p>

	<p>identified and these will begin to be delivered over the coming months by the Partners who include: NRW, Gwent Police, SWF&RS, commons associations, TCBC, BGCBC, CCBC, Fly-tipping Action Wales, National Farmers Union Cymru, Farmers Union Wales, Treadlightly! UK.</p> <p>On-the-whole, upland landscape crime is not location specific and therefore, tackling it effectively in one area simply forces perpetrators into neighbouring areas or beyond. A regional approach is therefore required with a particular focus on prevention through awareness raising and education. This approach will be more sustainable by harbouring a sense of pride in the local area and social responsibility amongst potential perpetrators.</p> <p>Throughout 2016/17 members of the Partnership have continued to meet with local politicians and hill farmers to take the NRMP Landscape Crime Toolkit forward. Opinions vary as to the type of measures that are effective, and it is clear that most evidence is anecdotal.</p>
<p>What we propose to do</p>	<p>The Partnership has prioritised the following actions from the Toolkit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation of a Communication Strategy <p><i>Commission a study that:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develops a communication strategy including a publicity campaign clarifying the law and consequences for perpetrators of landscape crime. ii. Maximises the use of social media, volunteers and Police resources to communicate messages about landscape crime, including a proposed SE Wales 'Commons Watch' Scheme with Car Park Watch-style monitoring if appropriate. iii. Identifies ways in which the Wales Hill Farming Training Scheme can be used as an education tool to combat landscape crime. iv. Examines options for sharing information on crime apps. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Development of a Commons Watch Scheme <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Using two badly affected common land areas as pilots, develop innovative but practical multi-agency Landscape Crime Management Plans for each common. ii. Provide three training sessions for farmers / volunteers in the use of social media and crime apps. iii. Foster links with other national initiatives. iv. Design a Commons Watch logo. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Commons Watch Launch

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Launch and publicise Commons Watch. ii. Work with police to facilitate a minimum of three high profile multi-agency operations a year. iii. Facilitate two Wales Hill Farming Training Scheme landscape crime courses for identified participants. iv. Engage in wider Partner-led education and community outreach activities.
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To deliver a measurable reduction in landscape crime. ➤ Develop best practice in relation to reducing landscape ➤ Facilitate a cross boundary, joined up approach. ➤ Emphasise prevention and education.
Specific management objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1 Communication Strategy ➤ To be the first in the UK to design Landscape Crime Management Plans: at least 2 pilot plans for the worst affected commons. ➤ Launch and publicise a Commons Watch scheme. ➤ At least 1 high profile multi-agency operation a year during project. ➤ Adapt Hill Farming Training Scheme to address landscape crime (see separate plan).
Priority Areas	To be identified in Year 1 of the project.
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A measureable reduction in landscape crime ➤ Restore community pride in the local area and engender social responsibility amongst potential perpetrators ➤ A reduction in frequency and impacts of landscape crime in the uplands as well as increased levels of outreach into local communities to make people aware of the consequences of landscape crime ➤ The SE Wales uplands will be a safer and more pleasant place to work, live in and enjoy. ➤ There will be an increase in both direct and indirect income to deprived communities ➤ The scheme will also highlight diversionary activities so that perpetrators are attracted to a legitimate – but fun – activity, and there will be changed perceptions of the uplands amongst local communities ➤ The project will add value to existing Police capacity to deal with anti-social behaviour in remote upland areas ➤ Better channels of communication, improving access to information and by signposting victims to sources of support. ➤ Increased knowledge of how to tackle the problem ➤ Commoners encouraged to stay on the hill

Delivery Plan Title: c) Regional Development of Sustainable Tourism and Recreation	
Timescale	Years 1-10
Location	Throughout the Project Area
Why the project is necessary	<p>Recreational activities common in the uplands of South-east Wales include hiking, dog-walking, hang gliding and the use of off-road vehicles such as scrambler bikes and quad bikes in designated sites (use of the latter elsewhere is largely illegal).</p> <p>However, the use of the commons by members of the public can sometimes conflict with the main purpose of the commons: the grazing of livestock. The greatest source of conflict in terms of recreational activities is the illegal use of off-road vehicles, which churn up the ground and cause disturbance to livestock and wildlife. Dog-walking can also cause conflict, as dogs off the leash in the uplands may worry sheep.</p> <p>Tourism is already highly concentrated on the World Heritage Site, which is nationally promoted. The Forgotten Landscapes Partnership did some work to develop and advertise walking routes in the surrounding uplands; this can be built upon and extended to cover wider areas.</p> <p>The opportunities for tourism have to be seen in the regional geographical context of the competing Brecon Beacons National Park, The Wye Valley AONB, the Glamorgan coast and the South Wales cities.</p>
What we propose to do	<p>With the exception of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site, many people may not be aware of the value of the uplands of South-east Wales for tourism and recreation. Designated sites such as the Brecon Beacons National Park, Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Glamorgan coast and the South Wales cities receive many visitors each year – these areas could be targeted for advertising the South-east Wales uplands. Further work should also be carried out to develop walking routes and advertise recreational opportunities.</p> <p>The purpose of this delivery plan is to enhance the value of the uplands to the local community and visitors to the area, and to promote the sustainable use of the uplands in a manner that does not conflict with the use of the uplands for grazing. It is proposed to raise awareness of the commons locally and nationally as a valuable resource for outdoor recreation. Increased outdoor recreation in the uplands will have the added benefits of improving health and generating income for the local economy.</p> <p>Holding events such as farmer-led walks, foraging for wild food, biodiversity blitzes, bird watching events, fungal forays, etc. can also promote local and wider interest. Some of these will be delivered by Partnership staff. Opportunities to develop adventure activities will also be explored. In particular, the Partnership will work with existing providers to develop a package of activities around the theme of 'active heritage' which aims to increase</p>

	<p>understanding of both natural and built heritage through adventure activities.</p> <p>We will also deliver a South-east Wales uplands photography competition, with outputs showcased on social media made available to activity providers.</p> <p>As part of this activity, the Partnership will undertake an assessment of new or under exploited opportunities and consultants will assess the recreational carrying capacity of each common (CS 2).</p> <p>We will also adapt the Blaenavon World Heritage Site 'Common Sense' leaflet to the SE Wales region. See: http://www.visitblaenavon.co.uk/en/Publications/WorldHeritageSite/ForgottenLandscapes/CommonSense.pdf</p>
Aims	<p>The main aim of this plan is to encourage recreation and tourism in the area and use of the uplands by the local community to benefit the local economy and to promote healthy lifestyles. This must be balanced with managing disturbance to wildlife and agriculture. This will be achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring local and more general South Wales population are informed about potential for recreation including walking, mountain bike trails and other outdoor activities. ➤ Informing local populations of the value of commons through winter evening lectures and guided walks. ➤ Developing volunteering opportunities. ➤ Educating school children about importance of commons, their history, wildlife and risks from fire. ➤ Advertising key features of interest through Visit Wales and local authority websites.
Specific management objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify target audiences for tourism and recreation. These will include those with interest in mining heritage, wildlife and outdoor activities such a walking and mountain biking. ➤ Identify sustainable transport networks and routes and enhance/gap-fill if needed ➤ Obtain high quality photographs of the commons and their specific interest for use in publicity ➤ Creation of walks & activity programmes for each common ➤ Adapt Common Sense leaflet to the wider SE Wales region
Priority Areas	Whole study area.
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased appropriate use of uplands by local community ➤ Improved health of local population through physical activity ➤ Greater appreciation of natural environment and wildlife by local population ➤ Greater sense of pride of place, which would hopefully lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour such as off-roading and fly-tipping ➤ Increased local income from recreation and tourism
Delivery Plan Title: d) Heather Management	

Timescale	Years 1-10
Location	Heathland occurs throughout study area so there are opportunities to enhance or restore it at all locations. Opportunities for improving the connectivity of heathland throughout the study area are shown in Figures 57-61 of the NRMP.
Why the project is necessary	<p>Upland heathland has more than 25% cover of dwarf shrub species such as heather, bilberry or heath species and may occur in wet or dry soils. It is reasonably widespread on the upland commons, especially in the north and east of the study area, with 2600 ha of dry heath and 340 ha of wet heath, with another 1315 ha mapped as acid grassland/heathland mosaic.</p> <p>It is generally ungrazed or lightly grazed, usually by sheep. Heavy grazing by sheep, especially in winter and spring, tends to result in loss of heathland to acid grassland. Repeated burning and air pollution through increased nitrogen have also resulted in changes to grassland. Bracken, gorse or birch scrub encroachment have also resulted in loss of heathland.</p> <p>The uplands of South-east Wales contain large tracts of heathland of various forms, including dry dwarf shrub heath, wet heath, and mosaic habitats of heath/acid grassland. However, many of these areas are now in poor condition. Biological surveys of Common Land conducted in 1993 (Crowther & Aitchison, 1994) (Heppingstall, et al., 1991) noted a high intensity of sheep grazing which had led to deterioration in heathland habitat quality, with signs of selective grazing of heather by sheep.</p> <p>However, the reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), specifically the introduction of quotas and the decoupling of farm payments from stock numbers, have brought about changes in stocking densities. Whilst over-grazing is still certainly a problem in many areas, it has been found that in some cases, under-grazing has become an issue (Cumulus Consultants Ltd, 2012).</p>
What we propose to do	<p><u>Restoration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A range of heathland restoration techniques are available to cover the range of situations (British Gas 1988; Natural England 1992, 2001). ➤ A key factor in heathland restoration is reducing or removing grazing pressure. If heather plants occur at more than 4 plants per square metre, a dramatic increase in heather cover can occur within five years when grazing is substantially reduced or removed. The approach also works at lower dwarf shrub frequencies but takes longer to achieve. ➤ Optimum starting vegetation for restoration is where dwarf shrubs still occur (but form less than 25% of the canopy), and acid grassland/heathland mosaics. ➤ For sites which may have recently been heathland, soil disturbance to expose the seed bank may work provided grazing is minimised for the initial recovery. ➤ For areas with no dwarf shrub seed bank, spreading seed or heather cuttings in early autumn may be required. Machinery may need to be leased to collect seed from heathland.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In the event that suitable material becomes available from development, it may be possible to spread topsoil and its seedbank from heathland sites. ➤ Some areas of marshy grassland now dominated by purple moor-grass were previously mixed heathland; these should be restored using cattle grazing. ➤ For sites with bracken cover and an understory of dwarf shrubs, control of the bracken may be required (see linked Delivery Plan). ➤ For areas of wet heathland which have been drained, the drains can be blocked. Where the wet heathland occurs over shallow peat, blocking drains will have benefits for soil carbon storage (see also linked Bog Restoration Delivery Plan / Scrapes and Pools Delivery Plan). ➤ Red grouse prefer a mosaic of different ages of heather; the mosaics will be produced through a range of methods such as cutting, grazing and possibly controlled burning. <p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Over mature heathland with tall leggy heather and little or no regeneration can be managed by cutting or burning. Areas inaccessible to machinery may be managed by burning (provided these are not Silurian moth heaths) following the Heather and Grass Burning Regulations between 1st November and mid-February. Repeat over periods of 10-15 years depending on vegetation response. ➤ Gorse scrub can be mown with a flail cutter (in preference to burning) with grazing follow-up. ➤ To manage fire risks, firebreaks will be cut in consultation with SWF&RS and commoners to enable stock management. <p>Training and equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To enable longer term management, training will be given in management and restoration to enable commoners to undertake contract work.
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Restore 50 ha of heathland from acid grassland, bracken and/or purple moor-grass grassland. ➤ Manage 200 ha of existing heather ➤ Provide enhanced habitat for red grouse and lapwing. ➤ Maintain habitat for Silurian moth. ➤ Provide enhanced habitat for pollinators.
Specific management objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify areas of grassland, bracken and purple moor-grass where connectivity mapping shows maximum benefit of restoration in increasing habitat patch size. 2. Identify graziers with rights over areas and consult. 3. Review most appropriate techniques for heathland restoration for local vegetation, soils and management. 4. Identify over-mature heather areas and cut in patchwork mosaic of blocks c. 100 m x 30 m. 5. Block drains on wet heath.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Review Glastir and other agricultural grants to provide a premium for suitable management of heathland. 7. Provide training in heathland recreation and management. 8. Cut 10km of firebreaks.
Priority Areas	<p>Acid grassland/heathland mosaics. Vegetation where dwarf shrubs are less than 25% of the canopy. Existing heath in poor condition.</p>
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better management of existing heathland. ➤ An increase on upland heathland of 600 ha over 10 years. ➤ An increase in red grouse and lapwing benefiting from improved habitat.

Delivery Plan Title: e) Peat Creation / Restoration	
Why the project is necessary	<p>Bogs are sphagnum moss-rich vegetation developed over peat more than 0.5 m deep whose water supply comes from rain rather than ground water. They may form a blanket over convex and concave surfaces on level to moderately sloping ground, or a raised dome peat where it has accumulated on level surfaces. Peat bogs grow by about 1 mm per year. The vegetation has been modified by management such as burning, grazing and drainage and years of air pollution.</p> <p>Within the study area, bog is restricted to the study area to the Bloreng, Mynydd Garnclochdy, Mynydd Maen and Penpedairheol. There are 19 ha of Sphagnum bog, 2 ha of wet modified bog and 42 ha of dry modified bog; the condition of the vegetation on these is currently unknown. The quality is low due to years of burning, grazing and air pollution/acid rain. Although classified as sphagnum bog in the habitat survey, in most bogs in the study area sphagnum forms only a small component of the vegetation.</p> <p>Re-wetting and restoration of peat bogs through blocking of drainage channels has been shown to work (e.g. Anderson 2010, Shepherd <i>et al.</i> 2013). Many studies over 20 years show that blocking bog drains raises water tables (e.g. studies on Exmoor show up to 30% more water is retained after blocking ditches) and increases abundance and diversity of invertebrates and wetland plants over short timescales. However, the topography or vegetation properties of the catchment also affect water flow properties and dissolved organic carbon export, suggesting that some results are site specific and may take longer to occur. Some areas of plateau bog appear to have dried out with no apparent reason (e.g. parts of Mynydd Maen); this may be related to subsidence from mining resulting in new drainage in the soil which may not be apparent at the surface due to vegetation coverage.</p>
What we propose to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To re-wet and restore the bogs, drainage channels within the bogs will be blocked which will raise the water tables in the

	<p>peat. This will also contribute to retention of water in the uplands (see separate Delivery Plan).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There are several methods used to blocking drainage channels depending on their size (http://issuu.com/peat123/docs/conserving_bogs). On Exmoor, wooden boards are used to block the drains and then sealed with tamped-down peat and turf. RSPB and others have used post and plastic sheeting dams to form barriers to water flow on smaller ditches. ➤ In badly degraded bog with cracked, shrunken peat, the process may first involve blocking the main channels and then second, as the bog becomes wetter with time and the shrunken peat re-wets, blocking the smaller channels. ➤ Where natural drainage patterns occur into sink holes (for example in the Bloreng SSSI), these will be maintained. ➤ Areas of bog which have not been drained may not be suitable for recovery by rewetting, but consideration can be given to blocking the natural drainage channels. ➤ To enable recovery of sphagnum moss, the peat will be assessed for acidity and suitability of liming and/or fertilising the peat to kick-start recolonization. Restoration methods using tissue culture of sphagnum and spreading in gel beads on degraded peat are being trialled in the Peak District and may be applicable to parts of the study area. ➤ Drain blocking technique has been widely shown to work elsewhere, so the need to install piezometers to measure the changes in water table needs to be assessed for cost-effectiveness; an indirect measure such as increase in percentage cover of sphagnum may be sufficient. ➤ Review Glastir and other agri-environment grants to provide a premium for suitable management of bogs. ➤ Develop an education project about the value of bogs for wildlife and ecosystem services.
<p>Aims</p>	<p>Re-wetting and restoration of peat bogs has the following aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enhance the biodiversity value of bogs as a habitat in their own right and for priority species such as red grouse and lapwing, and others such as skylark and golden plover. ➤ Climate change regulation through carbon accumulation and storage. ➤ Reverse the oxidization and release of carbon from dry degrading peat. ➤ Flood regulation through slowing of runoff and storage of rainfall. ➤ Enhance quality of water draining from bogs to reduce chemical treatment required for human consumption. ➤ May provide summer water for stock. ➤ Fire resilience increased through maintaining wet peat. ➤ Climate change resilience increased through greater water storage during dry summers to maintain habitat and storage of water for summer water supplies

Specific management objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Block all drainage channels cut into bogs. 2. If appropriate, block other drainage channels. 3. Lime highly acidic peat to kick-start recolonization.
Priority Areas	Initially it is proposed to concentrate on the dry modified bog.
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Restore 10 ha of bog.
Delivery Plan Title: f) Scrapes and Pools	
Location	Commons throughout study area; Figure 13 of NRMP
Why the project is necessary	<p>Ponds have significant benefits for wildlife through increasing diversity and providing additional habitats and watering sources whilst also enhancing ecosystem services in terms of water retention in the uplands. Ponds are defined as a body of water between 1 m² and 2 ha which holds water for four months of the year or more. Provided the geology and soils are suitable, a simple approach is to create many small shallow scrapes and temporary ponds rather than a few large deep ponds.</p> <p>Construction of ponds on common land may require consent and there are potential public health and safety considerations with large water bodies.</p> <p>There are a small number of ponds and scrapes (temporary summer ponds) in the study area, some natural, some associated with old mine workings and other man-made. These can support a range of aquatic plant and animal life and as they are in areas with relatively low intensity land use. Availability of water in the uplands is important for red grouse during the summer.</p> <p>As ponds slowly fill with sediment and plant material with time (c. 1 cm/yr), with time they can infill and no longer function as ponds, and when completely shaded by willows can lose much of their diversity. Some ponds are already being created on the commons under Glastir (e.g. Mynydd Maen and Mynydd Llwyd Common). There are also links to the Nature Fund Pond Connections project being run by the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust where ponds are being created on land just outside the commons.</p> <p>Reservoirs managed for water supply are excluded from this plan.</p>
What we propose to do	<p>There are two main elements to this plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Restore in-filled or overgrown scrapes / ponds; the best practice method is to scrape out the sediment from most of the pond leaving some as a reservoir for wildlife, and place the silt carefully so as not to runoff into the pond or water courses or affect adjacent important habitat. Scrub needs to be cleared to leave as much of the pond open and unshaded as possible. ➤ Creation of new small ponds and scrapes in suitable places to enhance wildlife diversity.
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Restore all existing ponds which are overgrown or in-filled (unless with great crested newts).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Aim to create at least new ponds/scrapes on each common (20 minimum).
Specific management objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey quality of ponds in study area to assess which need restoration and which can be left. 2. Where appropriate survey for Great crested newts using eDNA (rare above 300m altitude). 3. Assess restoration needs, where silt can be placed and access for machinery. 4. Creation of small ponds and scrapes/temporary ponds on commons to benefit wildlife and provide some summer water, subject to topography and soils.
Priority Areas	Throughout study area
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Restoration / creation of 20 ponds / scrapes.
Delivery Plan Title: g) Boundary Repairs	
Why the project is necessary	<p>Maintenance of boundary fences and walls of commons is the responsibility of adjacent land owners (not the commoners who graze the commons). In some areas the adjacent land owners do not maintain the boundaries, which can cause problems for stock control on common grazing.</p> <p>All commons boundaries were once demarcated by stone walls, but recently many of these have fallen into disrepair and are no longer stock-proof. The lack of stock-proof boundaries makes the reintroduction of grazing animals difficult. Therefore, boundary features are of major importance in terms of the other aims of the NRMP, such as control of bracken and livestock diversification. Little information is currently available on the current condition of boundary fences and stone walls in the commons. Interviews with Commons Associations revealed some concerns regarding the current condition of field boundaries, but as yet problem areas have not been mapped.</p> <p>Weaknesses in boundary features also encourages the illegal use of off-roading vehicles, a major problem in the uplands of South-east Wales. Additionally, there is widespread concern about the condition of fencing between common land and forestry land, and whether the Forestry Commission would continue to maintain these fences.</p> <p>Taking a pragmatic view, boundary repair and restoration as part of this project independent of the adjacent land owners will enable enhanced management by grazing, and thus is considered important for wider commons management.</p>
What we propose to do	The main purpose of this plan is to restore boundary features and make them stock-proof. This would have the added benefit of 'access hardening' for illegal off-roading; while such boundary features will not completely prevent access for such vehicles (as these may be vandalised), it may discourage all but the most

	<p>stubborn culprits. Another, less tangible but important benefit is that stone walls are closely associated with this type of landscape, and their restoration therefore enhances the intrinsic value of the uplands.</p> <p>Eventually, it would be ideal to restore stone walls at all of the traditional commons boundaries, and this should be an aim of the 10 year plan. However, as returning stock (particularly cattle) to the landscape is a priority plan for the NRMP, post and wire fencing will be carried out as a temporary measure in order to control livestock. The approach to be taken is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey the study area to assess the condition of boundary features. This may be carried out by commoners themselves with reports supplied to the Project Manager. 2. Prioritise areas for repair/restoration based on the results of surveys, targeting key areas for conserving or restoring heathland, controlling bracken and discouraging the use of off-roading vehicles. 3. Train commoners and volunteers in dry stone walling technique (see TR2). 4. Where stone walls are in reasonable condition or most of the stone is still in situ, these should be restored as part of a training exercise for commoners and volunteers who want to learn this traditional skill. 5. Where boundary walls are in very poor repair or very few stones remain, boundaries should be made temporarily secure using post and wire fencing. 6. Where boundaries are hedges, these should be assessed for condition and management. Train commoners and volunteers in hedge laying and maintenance. 7. Consider innovative fencing / access hardening options including double fencing, the use of tree branches and new upland hedges such as those created on Mynydd Maen.
<p>Aims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To restore commons boundaries and make them stock-proof, which will in turn enable the return of livestock to the commons ➤ To enhance heathland through controlled grazing ➤ To control the spread of bracken through targeted grazing ➤ To train volunteers in dry stone wall skills ➤ To train volunteers in hedge laying/maintenance skills ➤ To discourage antisocial behaviour such as the use of off-roading vehicles ➤ To enhance the intrinsic value of the landscape by restoring traditional boundary features
<p>Specific management objectives</p>	<p>To make 50% of boundaries secure through the use of post and wire fencing during SMS project – at least 10 km of stock fencing and 500m of dry stone walls repaired.</p> <p>To restore at least 50% of dry stone walls along commons boundaries within 10 years.</p>

	Where appropriate (depending on site surveys), to restore hedges along some commons boundaries.
Priority Areas	To be identified in Year 1 of the project.
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased diversification of stock, including sheep, cattle and ponies ➤ Restoring boundaries will improve the general condition of the commons and make it more viable ➤ More young commoners taking up grazing ➤ Facilitating targeted grazing to control the spread of bracken and enhance heathland
Delivery Plan Title: h) Delivery Plan Title: Volunteer Development and Training (TR1)	
Why the project is necessary	<p>The continuing urbanisation of society has resulted in communities becoming disconnected from the uplands and their traditional uses. While many enjoy open access to the commons for quite recreation a significant number of people are now using the commons irresponsibly and through activities such as off road vehicle use, fly tipping and arson. They are causing serious problems for all legitimate land use stakeholders and affecting the resilience of upland ecosystems.</p> <p>It is well recognised that engaging local people in relevant volunteering activities can reconnect them with their landscape area and its heritage value. The more people engaged, the greater the impact on local communities in terms of altering perceptions. The study area has a strong history of volunteering and community engagement, and at present a range of projects are underway which are engaging local communities to encourage people to donate their time to conservation work.</p>

<p>What we propose to do</p>	<p>Volunteers will carry out land management and conservation work such as boundary repair (fencing and dry stone walling), control of invasive and unwanted species, habitat type and condition surveys, species monitoring surveys, and installation of way marks, styles and other infrastructure for visitors.</p> <p>As much of the work mentioned above requires specialist skills, it will be necessary to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify individuals with the appropriate skills to carry out the work. 2. Provide interested volunteers with the skills necessary to carry out the work under the supervision of an experienced person. <p>Therefore, an essential component of this plan will be to develop a suitable training programme with Gwent Wildlife Trust to identify people with the appropriate skills who are willing to share their knowledge with others.</p> <p>SE Wales Resilient Uplands Partnership staff will work with existing volunteer groups and the Probation Service to provide skills training so that they are able to support aforementioned mentioned activities.</p>
<p>Aims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To identify motivated people willing to donate their time to volunteering for conservation in the study area, and to provide such people with the training required to carry out important work in the area. ➤ To develop and promote volunteering opportunities which will benefit people and nature. ➤ To instil a sense of pride of place in the local community by engaging members of the general public in land management. ➤ To ensure the continued practice of traditional skills such as dry stone walling
<p>Specific management objectives</p>	<p>Specific outputs of the Volunteer Development and Training should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An assessment of the volunteer resource / how these can be better co-ordinated ➤ Publicity materials to aid in volunteer recruitment, including a website or Facebook Page, posters and leaflets ➤ Deliver at least 5 training courses ➤ Provide volunteering opportunities through the SE Wales Resilient Uplands project
<p>Priority Areas</p>	<p>This plan should aim to develop and better co-ordinate existing volunteers / groups.</p>
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Low-cost delivery of the land management and nature conservation objectives of the NRMP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Up-skilling of volunteers, which may enhance their employability ➤ Better health outcomes ➤ Sense of pride of place in the local area ➤ Traditional skills such as dry stone-walling will be passed on to the next generation ➤ Greater appreciation of the uplands and traditional land management practices amongst the general public
Delivery Plan Title: i) Regional Wildfire Plan	
Why the project is necessary	<p>In 2014, FLP staff liaised with SWF&RS to produce a Wildfire Plan for the Blaenavon World Heritage Site / FLP area: http://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/English/home/Documents/580%20Fire%20Plan%202014_for%20web.pdf</p> <p>This globally important landscape area includes the Bloreng SSSI – a notorious site for arson attacks. To reduce the impact of arson and wildfires a series of firebreaks were cut on the Bloreng.</p> <p>These have been mapped on a GIS system as have access points for SWF&RS vehicles and sources of water where appliances can replenish their reserves.</p>
What we propose to do	<p>The SE Wales Resilient Uplands Partnership and SWF&RS have agreed that this approach should be rolled out over the Project area and the activity monitored for efficacy.</p> <p>Linked to this activity are heather management and firebreaks and the delivery of the Landscape Crime Toolkit which includes SWF&RS schools activity programmes, community engagement and use of social media.</p>
Aims	Create a useful tool so that the fire service can effectively tackle wildfires.
Specific management objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather baseline data on wildfires 2. Work with SWF&RS to produce a wildfire plan to include access points, water resources, firebreaks and other information. 4. Monitor efficacy.
Priority Areas	Heather throughout project area
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reduction in frequency and severity of wildfires ➤ Better co-ordination of resources ➤ Better communication
Delivery Plan Title: j) Hill Farming Training Scheme	
Why the project is necessary	The Hill Farming Training Scheme (HFTS) is an initiative developed by the Foundation for Common Land. It has benefitted from the Prince's Trust and RDP LEADER support and has been well

	<p>received in its pilot areas in Cumbria and Dartmoor. Its aim is to host in service professionals on upland farms with commons rights so that attendees obtain a commoner's eye view of what it is like to manage the uplands and to consider the opportunities and constraints. The Scheme in England is now self-funding having raised sufficient interest for organisations to pay for their staff to attend.</p> <p>In 2014, the Foundation for Common Land entered into partnership with Torfaen Council to pilot the HFTS in South-east Wales. This was successfully delivered as part of the Nature Fund Project in 2015. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority staff and volunteers booked three 'Introduction to Hill Farming' courses and officers and CPOs from Gwent Police have also attended. Feedback has been extremely positive.</p>
What we propose to do	<p>There is now a need to effectively promote the HFTS and tailor it to the needs of the South-east Wales Uplands. To achieve this, courses will be developed around emerging priorities for in-service professionals, community groups, the hospitality and tourism sector and the voluntary sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape crime • Managing common land • Conservation land management / working in partnership with hill farmers • Practical farm skills such as dry stone walling, hedge laying and stock fencing <p>Linking with CS2, the Partnership will seek to recruit young farmers into the scheme.</p> <p>Using capital funds from the SMS, The Torfaen RDP Land Management Officer will continue to deliver the HFTS and develop it to self-sufficiency by the end of Year 3.</p>
Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adapt existing course materials. ➤ Explore accreditation options ➤ Deliver at least 3 courses during project, trialling landscape crime, managing common land and practical skills training. ➤ Achieve self-sufficiency by the end of Year 3. ➤ Recruit 2 new trainers.
Priority Areas	Throughout the study area
Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Self-sufficient Hill Framing Training Scheme focussed on regional issues. ➤ More young farmers.

	<u>SMS Resilient Economy Performance Indicators</u>									
	Indicator Name	Indicator Type (Programme or Case Level Indicator)	Key Indicator (Programme)	Final Target Amount	INDICATORS					
					Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	
1	Number of cooperation operations supported	Programme	Y	1						
2	Number of pilot activities undertaken / supported	Case	N	7						
3	Number of actions to utilise natural resources for health benefit	Case	N	5						
4	Area of peatland habitat re-wetted	Case	N	10ha						
5	Number of feasibility studies	Case	N	5						
6	Number of training days	Case	N	40						
7	Number of New Networks	Case	N	2						

INDICATORS														
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Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20
	1						2						2	
			1							1				
							3							
		5							10					5
					1									

INDICATORS

Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20
				1				
	1						1	
				5ha				
					10			

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Agenda Item 18

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2019/20 and Welsh Medium Grant Proposal Progress Report**

Portfolio Holder: **Education and Learning Portfolio – Cllr. Joanne Collins**

Report Submitted by: **Lynn Phillips, Corporate Director of Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
25.11.20	25.11.20	17.12.20			15.12.20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members of the Executive Committee, with an update on progress made in line with delivery the Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-2020.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Section 84 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, requires each Council to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).
- 2.2 The purpose of the WESP is to set out the Council's strategic approach and direction in the development and delivery of Welsh-medium provision and Welsh education. The plan was approved by the Executive Committee and signed by the Corporate Director in 2016. The WESP is underpinned and informed by Welsh Government's current Welsh-medium Education Strategy (April 2010), along with the policy statement for 2015-16.
- 2.3 The Welsh Government vision is to secure one million Welsh speakers by 2050. To achieve this, they believe that the following key areas require address:
- more children in Welsh-medium education;
 - better planning in relation to how people learn the language;
 - easier-to-access opportunities for people to use the language;
 - a stronger infrastructure and a revolution to improve digital provision in Welsh; and,
 - a change in the way we speak about the language.

- 2.4 According to the most recent census (2011), there are approximately 562,000 Welsh speakers in Wales. The aim of the national strategy is to almost double the number of Welsh speakers by the middle of the century.
- 2.5 The Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-20 (please refer to **Appendix 1** for more information), is directly aligned to both the Welsh Government's and the Council's Welsh Language frameworks and strategies. The strategic priorities highlighted within the BG WESP document can be summarised as follows:
- Raise the profile and levels of participation for Welsh-medium education across the County Borough by 2020, to contribute to the vision for one million speakers by 2050.
 - Increase the early year's provision offer to stimulate parental demand to enable growth across the County Borough.
 - Increase transition rates from Welsh-medium nursery provision to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg by 50% in 2020.
 - Work regionally with South East Wales Local Authorities to secure places for Blaenau Gwent learners in Welsh-medium secondary provision between 2017-2020 and beyond.
 - Improving Welsh medium learner outcomes by 2020 so that learners raise aspirations and improve their life chances.
- 2.6 The Blaenau Gwent WESP was formally approved by Welsh Government in March 2018. Blaenau Gwent was the first and only Council within the SEWC region at the time to have the plan approved with no further amendments.
- 2.7 Alongside a review of the WESP, the Blaenau Gwent Welsh Education Forum (WEF) structure, membership and associated documentation are reviewed and strengthened annually. (please refer to **Appendix 2** – WEF Terms of Reference for more information).
- 2.8 Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, 3 out of 4 WEF meetings took place throughout the course of the academic year 2019/20 with membership, attendance and engagement sustained to a high standard throughout. Partners have commented on the effectiveness of the Forum, which has in turn had a positive impact upon membership, attendance and outcomes.
- 2.9 In addition, the Education Transformation Manager is the chair of the Regional Planning of School Places and Demand Sub-group of the WEF Strategic Forum. The group met twice out of a possible 4 meetings throughout the course of the 2019/20 academic year. The focus of the group is as follows:
- Co-ordination of Welsh-medium demand survey arrangements
 - Consultation outcome and analysis
 - Promotion and communication
 - Regional review of secondary provision, Welsh medium grant and Band B proposals
 - Consultation and promotion strategy/plan

- 2.10 The Council has worked with neighbouring authorities via the aforementioned forum, to develop a booklet promoting the benefits of being bilingual. The document is reviewed annually and shared with the families of prospective pupils. The booklet is also linked to the admissions process and is shared via health professionals, early year's settings, schools and other relevant partners/professionals, in order to promote Welsh language opportunities and education locally. A copy of the booklet is also available via the Council's website.
- 2.11 It has been a difficult year to sustain the strong progress made in relation to the delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan throughout 2018/19. However, the LA and its partners have remained committed to the delivery of the WESP, whilst also supporting the development of resources and engagement throughout the LA during the emergency response period and subsequent reopening of schools.
- 2.12 Blaenau Gwent 2019/20 self-assessment is based upon key progress in line with each priority area. The self-assessment has been sustained at an Amber, with the rate of completion against the 2019/20 action plan as follows:
- 84% (or 49 actions) are complete;
 - 7% (or 4 actions) ongoing; and,
 - 9% (5 actions) actions in development.
- 2.13 Please refer to the attached Annual Report for a more detailed appraisal of the outcomes (**Appendix 3**).
- 2.14 **Blaenau Gwent 10 Year Plan**
In 2017, Welsh Government carried out a rapid review of the proposed local authority Plans. The review acknowledged the need for change, not only in terms of individual plans' ambitions, but also in terms of the legislative framework set out by Welsh Government. The review highlighted a need to change the regulations and guidelines, along with a significant change in the Welsh Government and local authority approach to planning. Consequently, Welsh Government reviewed the legislative framework associated with the WESP, with the key focus being the creation of a framework which enables local authorities to develop long-term strategic plans.
- 2.15 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Welsh Government required Local Authorities to submit their first draft 10-year plan to the Welsh Ministers by 31 January 2021; however, in light of the pandemic and associated emergency response requirements, the submission timeline has been updated. Following the drafting and subsequent consultation period, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 (please refer to **Appendix 4** for more information), along with the draft guidance were laid on 5 December 2019 and came into effect on 1st January 2020, with revised guidance now expected in January 2021. Local Authorities must submit their first draft 10-year Plan to the Welsh Ministers on 31st January 2022, with the plan operational from September 2022. The current BG WESP will remain in force until that date.

- 2.16 The Welsh Government expects local authority plans to encompass the following:
- A clear and concise vision based on the target agreed
 - Local education profile (numbers of school age learners, the number of each school under each category, and the number of learners within each school category)
 - Key data for each outcome (current baseline and projections)
 - Any high level plans or factors which impact education in the county
 - Clear aims and objectives under the 7 outcomes
 - A clear link between how each aspect of the plan contributes to the vision and the overarching target
 - A clear link between the plan and other Local Authorities strategies and relevant policy areas.
- 2.17 Education has already begun working with the BG WEF in order to establish a draft 10-year plan for consultation and approval by 31st January 2022. Following ministerial approval, the plan will come into effect on 1 September 2022. A workshop has been programmed with relevant services and partners in December 2020, to begin working on the priorities and associated consultation process.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
- 3.1 **Option 1:** The Executive Committee considers and accepts the report and associated course of action.
- 3.2 **Option 2:** The Executive Committee provides comments relating to improvements that can be made, in line with implementation of the existing WESP and development of the BG 10-year WESP.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
- 4.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to produce a WESP document in line with Section 84 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. Education is a priority in the Council's Corporate Plan, of which the planning of school places and access to Welsh-medium education in line with parental preference are essential components.
- 4.2 The WESP is instrumental in securing continued access to and development of the Welsh language in line with Welsh Government's aim of one million Welsh speakers by 2050. Education is also a major contributor to the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan in that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which requires public bodies to work towards seven well-being goals, one of which is 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'. The Council has a duty to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh and work towards the well-being goals. The process for planning Welsh-medium education also has a statutory basis under Section 84 of the 2013 Act.

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)

There are no direct budgetary implications associated with this report; however, there are revenue implications associated with the Welsh medium grant proposal. These implications will be outlined in a separate report and within the consultation document.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

The following implications are relevant to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-20:

- Failure to achieve the outcomes and targets established within the plan – this is mitigated by the extensive monitoring arrangements that are in place. The ET team review progress on a monthly basis, which is then reported to the WEF on a termly basis, taken via the Council's political processes and reported to Welsh Government annually.
- Compliance with statutory duty and legislative obligations - this is managed in line with policy and guidance review and development; along with renewal of the WESP and annual reporting.
- Sustainability issues within the school estate in relation to Welsh-medium education – this is managed and mitigated against by annual promotion drives, demand-based assessments, school capacity and projection calculations. The proposed seedling model also provides the opportunity to address latent demand, whilst eliciting further growth.

5.3 Legal

The Council are legally required to prepare, implement and update the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

5.4 Human Resources

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017/20 has been developed by the Education Transformation team, who oversee implementation and reviews of the plan within Blaenau Gwent.

The Corporate Director, supported by Wider Corporate Leadership Team, has a key role in ensuring the key staff-related actions are effectively delivered.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data

The ET team have recently undertaken a review of the associated action plan (please refer to **Appendix 3** for more information), which serves the purpose of monitoring progress against outcomes.

6.2 Expected outcome for the public

The WESP aims to secure, facilitate, develop and improve Welsh medium education, along with access to associated provision locally.

- 6.3 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**
Stakeholder and end user needs and engagement are of paramount importance, and a key focus of the WESP, its implementation and monitoring. The Plan is subject to consultation during the production phase, and reviewed on an annual basis. In addition, public and partner consultation processes are used to inform development, progression and learning relating to delivery of the plan.
- 6.4 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
The WESP is aligned to the Corporate Plan and presently covers the period 2017 to 2022, with a further review programmed during 2021/22, followed by implementation and publication of a new 10-year Plan in 2022. The WESP serves to provide a strategic approach and underpins the direction and delivery of Welsh-medium provision and education in Blaenau Gwent.
- 6.5 Preventative focus**
The WESP aims to establish clear targets, shape, inform and improve the delivery of Welsh-medium provision and education. The plan also serves to address issues and gaps that exist, improving delivery, engagement and cohesion.
- 6.6 Collaboration / partnership working**
The BG Welsh in Education Strategic Plan requires a collaborative approach in terms development, implementation, monitoring and progression. This is carried out via the Welsh in Education Forum, which has wide ranging representation from partner organisations and stakeholder groups; and is assured via the Council's political processes and reporting to Welsh Government.
- 6.7 Integration(across service areas)**
The Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is aligned to early year's childcare, education and play; pupil place planning, school organisation, 21st Century Schools, the work of Social Services and the Environment and Regeneration Directorates. Service integration is essential to ensure effective implementation, whilst also securing appropriate access to Welsh medium education and associated provision. The plan is monitored by the Welsh in Education Forum, whilst also feeding into other key forums i.e. School Admissions, 21st Century Schools Programme Board etc.
- 6.8 EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)**
An Equality Impact Screening Assessment (EQIA) has been completed in line with the WESP, which determined that there is no negative impact upon the protected characteristics, with a positive impact upon Welsh language. The policy promotes equality of opportunity for all, with regards to accessing Welsh medium education and associated provision.
- 7. Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1** The Welsh Government expects an annual update on the progress made against the WESP. Consequently, the ET team review and monitor the WESP monthly; providing termly reports to the WEF and annual reports to

Welsh Government. In addition, WEF development and progress reports are taken via the Council's political processes annually. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is also a key focus of the 21st Century Schools Programme Board and Admissions Forum.

- **Appendix 1 – Blaenau Gwent Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-20**
<https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/council/policies-plans-strategies/blaenau-gwent-welsh-in-education-strategic-plan-20172020/>
- **Appendix 2 – WEF Terms of Reference**
- **Appendix 3 – WESP Annual Report 2019**
- **Appendix 4 –Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019**
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2019/1489/made>

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Blaenau Gwent Welsh Education Forum

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Forum will contribute to, strategically plan, monitor and evaluate Blaenau Gwent Councils Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), in support of the Welsh Government's targets within the 'Welsh-medium Education Strategy(2010)' (WMES).

Remit

The Forum shall provide a formal channel of communication between Blaenau Gwent Council, its maintained Welsh Medium schools and other partner organisations; that are able to work collectively towards localised and strategic priorities.

The Forum shall:

- act as a consultative group, contributing towards the development, monitoring and implementation of the WESP;
- develop and monitor a localised action plan;
- monitor Welsh medium demand;
- monitor the provision of Welsh-medium education and determine as a group work towards future developments; and,
- provide an annual report to the Welsh Government describing progress in terms of implementing the WESP's targets against the approved timetable.

Membership

Membership of the Forum shall be the following 'core' members appointed by Blaenau Gwent Education Directorate Officers:

- Head of Education Transformation and Performance
- Education Transformation Team Leader
- 21st Century Schools Officer
- Organisational Development
- Inclusion Manager
- Transport Manager
- Equalities Officer
- Participation Officer
- Early Years Childcare and Play Manager
- Youth Service Manager

School representation:

- 1 Welsh-medium primary school Headteacher representative
- 1 Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw secondary representative
- 1 English medium school representative

Partner organisations:

- Mudiad Meithrin
- RhAG
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- Menter Iaith Blaenau Gwent
- Education Achievement Service – Systems Leader for Welsh
- Coleg Gwent
- Health

Removal of Members

Forum members shall cease to be members when they cease to hold the office by virtue of which they became eligible for appointment. In which instance an alternative representative shall be sought.

Meetings of the Forum

The Forum will meet at least three times each year, once each academic term. Additional meetings may be called in consultation with the Chair. At least seven working days' notice of a Forum meeting will be given in writing to members, except in the case of an emergency.

The Education Transformation team will provide a supportive function to the forum, in developing, collating and circulating relevant documentation to members at least seven days prior to each meeting in electronic format, with paper copies available upon request.

Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

The chairperson shall preside over meetings of the Forum. The chair person and vice chairperson will be elected at the first meeting held at the start of each academic year. Pre-planning meetings will be held with the chairperson prior to each WEF.

Sub-Committees

The Forum may establish sub-committees where necessary to consider particular issues via a task and finish approach. The Forum shall consider the work of such sub-committees and make recommendations as appropriate.

Confidentiality

On occasions, information of a confidential nature may be shared with members of the Forum to assist their understanding of the matter under discussion. Members of the Forum must observe the confidentiality of such information.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS/HIGHLIGHTS

You should highlight no more than 5 of your main achievements/highlights in this section.

1. Blaenau Gwent has successfully gained 21st Century Schools WG funding approval for the Band B remodelling works at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. Education are taking a report via the Council's political processes which seeks to progress statutory consultation processes in line with the proposal to create a 210 place WM primary school in Tredegar/Sirhowy valley.
2. Numbers of pupils on roll, along with those applying for a place at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg continues to increase, with a positive trend noted over the last 3 years in relation to both nursery and reception. In addition, transition rates between primary and secondary for 2019/20 were 100%.
3. Blaenau Gwent Council has developed a strong marketing and communication plan, targeting and promoting the benefits of being bilingual, whilst also establishing appropriate methods of engagement and consultation with stakeholders, in order to inform key strategic priorities.
4. Representation, attendance and frequency continue to be strong in BG WEF meetings, with partners firmly committed to and recognising the effectiveness of the Blaenau Gwent Forum. Partners have hailed the work of BG WEF as an example of good practice. Also the WESP POSP subgroup continues to meet regularly to support proposals for growth and development on a regional basis and again, to inform strategic planning.
5. Sabatical Welsh in a year figures are increasing year on year, in 2019/20 there were 8 signed up and in 2020/21 there are 13. The EAS have 14 places available to each region annually (Welsh in a Year) and they received more expressions of interest. School, governors and individual involved need to be committed to the course prior to interview and acceptance. There is a distance and blended approach to the delivery of training this year.

OVERALL PLAN SUMMARY

Green/Amber/Red. You should note your current target, your achievement this year and a self -assessment of red, amber or green.

Blaenau Gwent 2019/20 self-assessment = **Amber**, with the rate of completion against the 2019/20 action plan at 84% (or 49 actions) with 7% (4) actions in progress and 9% (5) not started. This is lower this year due to the restrictions of Covid 19, which was out of our control.

KEY ANNUAL DATA

Sept 2020, 28 Year 2 pupils (cohort 785) representing 3.56% of the cohort.
Sept 2020, 27 Year 3 pupils (cohort 743) 3.63% of the cohort. There were 44 enrolled for Nursery in September 2020 and 37 Reception with another 11 due to start in January 2021. Early Years -Gwdihw Brynithel transfer rate to WM primary 1 out of 25 (4.76%) and Helyg Bychan transfer rate to WM primary 13 out of 20 (68.9%).

ALIGNMENT WITH KEY POLICY AREAS

E.g.; Childcare Sufficiency Assessments, 21st Century Schools and Colleges programme. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment data and subsequent updates are used to inform the WESP and associated actions on both a strategic and operational level. The Blaenau Gwent 21st Century Schools Programme seeks to enhance and develop Welsh-medium education provision locally, with the first proposed Band B project in development, being a remodelling project to enhance the teaching and learning environment at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. The Child Care Offer and Childcare Grant within BG are also closely aligned to the WESP and aim to enhance and develop Welsh-medium early years and childcare provision, options and opportunities.

You should outline specific LA level risks which are or could in future effect your objective achievement.

1. There is a risk in relation to implementation of the BG Welsh Medium Grant proposal, which will be subject to the statutory consultation process.
2. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there is a risk associated with transition between early years and foundation phase, meaning that numbers could decline.
3. There is a risk that the LA fails to engage partners within the development of the 10 year plan, due to COVID-19.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

You should outline your mechanisms and internal processes for monitoring progress, as well as the monitoring work through the Welsh Education Forum.

The WEF meets on a termly basis with outcome leads for each area identified. The outcome leads support the Education Transformation team to track, monitor and collate data relating to their respective outcome areas and monitor progression against the associated targets.

The Council has an action planning process in place, in order to monitor and collate progression data and information relating to achievements against the WESP each year. Termly updates are sought, with the autumn-term updates and WEF meeting then focusing in on annual progression against the associated outcomes and targets.

A reported is collated in the autumn-term each year and taken via the Council’s political processes and is both the Scrutiny and Executive Committee forward work programmes as part of the annual cycle, to inform learning and plans for the preceding year.

A Task and Finish group has been established for the new 10-year plan, they are due to meet in December 2020 to formalise a co-ordinated approach.

ASSURANCE / MITIGATION ACTION

1. Education are scheduled to take a report via the Council’s political processes to initiate statutory consultation in December 2020.
2. Alternative engagement methods and plans are in place between the school and providers. The BG WEF and associated Communications Sub-group are closely monitoring this.
3. A detailed plan and timeline are in development and partners have committed to the first planning workshop in December 2020.

FORWARD LOOK MILESTONES

You should highlight any significant developments/milestones planned for the next year.

- Delivery of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg Remodelling Project under the Council’s 21st Century Schools Band B Programme.
- Education aim to initiate the statutory consultation process in line with the proposal to develop a 210 place WM primary school in Tredegar/Sirhowy valley.
- The Council aims to undertake consultation/market testing in early 2021, to inform the development of the Councils marketing and promotion strategy including: web-based developments and resources.
- The Council aims to develop a plan via the SEWC POSP and Demand Sub-group, to secure a regional solution to Welsh Medium secondary provision by 2027.
- A new Cylch Meithrin at Tredegar is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales. Staff recruit processes are underway for opening in 2021.
- A pilot is being established through Mudiad Meithrin’s SAS (Setup and Succeed) with Buds to Blossom in Beaufort, to provide cylch meithrin sessions for children in their care.
- Cylch Meithrin Gwdihw (Brynithel) are extending their services to provide full-day sessions 9am -3pm becoming an Education provider, this has the potential to increase the uptake in Bro Helyg from (Brynithel) upon entry to reception.
- The Council aims to develop and consult upon the draft 10 year WESP Plan.

You should include a short summary of your progress under each objective.

Outcome 1: Good progress has been made against this outcome; however, due to the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, progress associated with face to face engagement has been stunted. The benefits of being bi-lingual booklets and the use of social media outlets to promote WM childcare and Education, along with virtual engagement, have been reviewed and further developed throughout this period. The team continues to monitor the delivery of this outcome and explore alternative engagement and promotion methods. Demand, marketing and promotion are being driven by the local WEF Communications Sub-group, along with key developments undertaken by the Regional WEF POSP and Demand Group. Further web-based and marketing plans are in development for implementation throughout 2021. Promotion has been carried out virtually, with individuals signposted to the being bilingual booklet online. Pupil numbers within the primary school continue to increase.

Outcome 2: Good progress has been made overall; however, transition and promotional engagement has been restricted on a face to face basis, with alternative communication and engagement methods being established. Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg continue to have positive working relations with childcare, early years and secondary sectors. Uptake of Welsh-medium nursery and reception places continues to increase (in line with live birth data). Secondary transition continues to be strong with 100% of primary pupils from Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg transferring to Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw. Discussions are taking place regionally with regards to securing long-term secondary provision for Blaenau Gwent learners, along with those in neighbouring authorities, in line with Torfaen CBC proposal to extend the age range of Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw. In addition, one of the key aims of the Band B Remodelling Project will be to enhance and develop the teaching and learning environment at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg to strengthen and enhance provision and transition – both at early years and secondary. Cylch Meithrin Gwdihw (Brynithel) are in the process of extending their services to full-day sessions 9am -3pm, and going through the process to become an Education provider, this has the potential to increase the uptake in Bro Helyg from (Brynithel) upon entry to reception.

Outcome 3 and 4: Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, youth club and other associated wider engagement opportunities and provision have been put on hold, with detached/online engagement being established as an alternative. The situation has also been exacerbated by staff from both services being placed on furlough. The Youth Service and the Urdd are exploring the development of an online welsh-medium provision for young people. Progress against the 2019/20 the target to increase use Welsh in/out of the classroom by 15% (as in the previous 2 years) has been stunted; however, opportunities have been made available remotely since September 2020. There will be an increased focus in this area in 2021.

Outcome 5: Good progress has been made, however, the pandemic has had a negative impact upon progress, due to the need to establish new and alternative resources and tools to promote Welsh language skill development. Distance and blended learning resources have been created in support of the teaching of Welsh and Welsh Second Language.

Outcome 6: Good progress has been made both locally and regionally informing both policy and practice. Welsh-medium resource development is underway and has strengthened over the last year. Work in this area is ongoing in line with emergent policy and legislative developments.

Outcome 7: Excellent progress has been made in this outcome area, with a number BG schools actively engaging in Welsh-medium CPD initiatives and development opportunities. During the 2019/20 academic session 8 staff signed up to the Welsh in a year sabbatical, with a further 13 signed up during the 2020/21 academic session.

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Pwyllgor: **Pwyllgor Gweithredol**

Dyddiad y Cyfarfod: **13.01.2021**

Pwnc yr Adroddiad: **Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg 2019/20
 Blaenau Gwent ac Adroddiad Cynnydd ar y Cynnig
 Grant Cyfrwng Cymraeg**

Deiliad y Portffolio: **Portffolio Addysg a Dysgu – Cyng. Joanne Collins**

Cyflwynir yr Adroddiad gan: **Lynn Phillips, Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Addysg**

Llwybr Adrodd								
Tîm Rheoli Cyfarwyddiaeth	Tîm Arweinyddiaeth Gorfforaethol	Deiliad Portffolio/ Cadeirydd	Pwyllgor Archwilio	Pwyllgor Gwasanaethau Democrataidd	Pwyllgor Craffu	Pwyllgor Gweithredol	Cyngor	Arall (nodwch)
25.11.20	25.11.20	17.12.20			15.12.20	15.12.20		

1. Diben yr Adroddiad

1.1 Diben yr adroddiad yw rhoi cyfle i'r Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu edrych yn fanwl ar gynnydd ar Gynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg (WESP) 2017-2020 Blaenau Gwent a'r cynnig grant cyfrwng Cymraeg cysylltiedig.

2. Cwmpas a Chefndir

- 2.1 Mae Adran 84 Deddf Safonau a Threfniadaeth Ysgolion (Cymru) 2013 yn ei gwneud yn ofynnol i bob Cyngor baratoi Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg (WESP).
- 2.2 Diben y WESP yw cyflwyno dull gweithredu a chyfeiriad strategol y Cyngor wrth ddatblygu a chyflenwi darpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg ac addysg Gymraeg. Cafodd y cynllun ei gymeradwyo gan y Pwyllgor Gweithredol a'i lofnodi gan y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol yn 2016. Mae'r WESP wedi'i seilio a'i lywio gan Strategaeth Addysg Cyfrwng Cymraeg gyfredol Llywodraeth Cymru (Ebrill 2010) ynghyd â datganiad polisi ar gyfer 2015-16.
- 2.3 Gweledigaeth Llywodraeth Cymru yw gweld un filiwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg erbyn 2050. I gyflawni hynny mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn credu fod angen cyfarch y meysydd allweddol dilynol:
- mwy o blant mewn addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg;
 - gwell cynllunio yng nghyswllt sut mae pobl yn dysgu'r iaith;
 - cyfleoedd mwy hygyrch i bobl ddefnyddio'r iaith;
 - seilwaith cryfach a chwyldro i wella darpariaeth ddigidol yn y Gymraeg; a
 - newid yn y ffordd y siaradwn am yr iaith.
- 2.4 Yn ôl y cyfrifiad diweddaraf (2011), roedd 562,000 o siaradwyr Cymraeg yng Nghymru. Nod y strategaeth genedlaethol yw bron ddyblu nifer y siaradwyr Cymraeg erbyn canol y ganrif.

- 2.5 Mae Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg 2017-20 Blaenau Gwent (gweler **Atodiad 1** am fwy o wybodaeth) yn alinio'n uniongyrchol gyda fframweithiau strategol Llywodraeth Cymru a hefyd y Cyngor ar y Gymraeg. Gellir crynhoi'r blaenoriaethau strategol a amlygwyd yn y ddrafft ddogfen WESP ar gyfer y tair blynedd nesaf fel sy'n dilyn:
- Codi proffil a lefelau cyfranogiad ar gyfer addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg ar draws y Fwrdeistref Sirol erbyn 2020, i gyfrannu at y weledigaeth o filiwn o siaradwyr erbyn 2050.
 - Cynyddu'r cynnig darpariaeth blynnyddoedd cynnar i ysgogi galw gan rieni i alluogi twf ar draws y Fwrdeistref Sirol.
 - Cynyddu cyfraddau pontio o ddarpariaeth feithrin cyfrwng Cymraeg i Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg gan 50% yn 2020.
 - Gweithio'n rhanbarthol gydag awdurdodau lleol De Ddwyrain Cymru i sicrhau lleoedd ar gyfer disgyblion Blaenau Gwent mewn darpariaeth uwchradd cyfrwng Cymraeg rhwng 2017-2020 a thu hwnt.
 - Gwella deilliannau disgyblion cyfrwng Cymraeg erbyn 2020 fel bod disgyblion yn codi eu huchelgais ac yn gwella eu cyfleoedd bywyd.
- 2.6 Cafodd cynllun WESP ei gymeradwyo'n ffurfiol gan Lywodraeth Cymru ym mis Mawrth 2018. Blaenau Gwent oedd y Cyngor cyntaf a'r unig Gyngor o fewn rhanbarth Consortiwm De Ddwyrain Cymru ar y pryd i gael cymeradwyaeth i'r cynllun heb unrhyw ddiwygiadau pellach.
- 2.7 Ynghyd ag adolygiad o'r WESP, caiff strwythur, aelodaeth a dogfennau cysylltiedig Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg Blaenau Gwent eu hadolygu a'u cryfhau'n flynyddol (gweler **Atodiad 2** – Cylch Gorchwyl y Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg i gael mwy o wybodaeth).
- 2.8 Oherwydd pandemig COVID-19, 3 o bedwar cyfarfod y Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg a gynhaliwyd yn ystod blwyddyn academaidd 2019/20 gydag aelodaeth, presenoldeb ac ymgysylltu ar lefel uchel drwy'r cyfan. Mae partneriaid wedi sôn am effeithlonrwydd y Fforwm, sydd yn ei dro wedi cael argraff gadarnhaol ar aelodau, presenoldeb a deilliannau.
- 2.9 Yn ogystal, mae'r Rheolwr Trawsnewid Addysg yn gadeirydd Is-grŵp Cynllunio Rhanbarthol ar Leoedd a'r Galw am Ysgolion y Fforwm . Cyfarfu'r grŵp ddwywaith allan o 4 cyfarfod yn ystod blwyddyn academaidd 2019/20. Mae ffocws y grŵp fel sy'n dilyn:
- Cydlynu trefniadau arolwg ar y galw am addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg
 - Canlyniad a dadansoddiad yr ymgynghoriad
 - Hyrwyddo a chyfathrebu
 - Adolygiad rhanbarthol o ddarpariaeth uwchradd, grant cyfrwng Cymraeg a chynigion Band B
 - Ymgynghori a strategaeth/cynllun hyrwyddo.
- 2.10 Mae'r Cyngor wedi gweithio gydag awdurdodau cyfagos drwy'r Fforwm i ddatblygu llyfryn yn hyrwyddo manteision bod yn ddwyieithog. Caiff y ddogfen ei hadolygu'n flynyddol a'i rhannu gyda theuluoedd darpar ddisgyblion. Caiff

hefyd ei gysylltu gyda'r broses dderbyn a'i rhannu gyda gweithwyr iechyd proffesiynol, gosodiadau blynyddoedd cynnar, ysgolion a phartneriaid/gweithwyr proffesiynol eraill. Mae copi o'r llyfryn hefyd ar gael ar wefan y Cyngor.

- 2.11 Bu'n flwyddyn anodd i gynnal y cynnydd cryf a wnaed yn gysylltiedig â chyflenwi'r Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg drwy gydol 2018/19. Fodd bynnag, mae'r awdurdod lleol a'i bartneriaid wedi parhau'n ymroddedig i gyflenwi WESP, gan hefyd gefnogi datblygu adnoddau ac ymgysylltu ledled yr awdurdod lleol yn ystod y cyfnod ymateb argyfwng ac ail-agor ysgolion yn ddilynol.
- 2.12 Mae hunanasesiad 2019/20 Blaenau Gwent yn seiliedig ar gynnydd allweddol yn unol â phob maes blaenoriaeth. Cafodd yr hunan-asesiad ei gynnal ar Oren, gyda chyfradd cwblhau o gymharu â chynllun gweithredu 2019/20 fel sy'n dilyn:
- 84% (neu 49 cam gweithredu) wedi eu cwblhau;
 - 7% (neu 4 cam gweithredu) yn mynd rhagddynt; a
 - 9% (5 cam gweithredu) yn cael eu datblygu.

Gweler yr Adroddiad Blynyddol a atodir i gael gwerthusiad mwy manwl o'r deilliannau (**Atodiad 3**).

Cynllun 10 Mlynedd Blaenau Gwent

- 2.13 Yn 2017 cynhaliodd Llywodraeth Cymru adolygiad cyflym o'r Cynlluniau a gynigiwyd gan awdurdodau lleol. Mae'r adolygiad yn cydnabod yr angen am newid, nid yn unig yn nhermau uchelgeisiau cynlluniau unigol, ond hefyd o ran y fframwaith deddfwriaethol a nodwyd gan Lywodraeth Cymru. Dangosodd yr adolygiad angen i newid y rheoliadau a'r canllawiau, ynghyd â newid sylweddol yn null cynllunio Llywodraeth Cymru ac awdurdodau lleol. Yn ddilynol, adolygodd Llywodraeth Cymru y fframwaith deddfwriaethol yn gysylltiedig gyda'r WESP, gyda'r ffocws allweddol ar greu fframwaith sy'n galluogi awdurdodau lleol i ddatblygu cynlluniau strategol hirdymor.
- 2.14 Cyn pandemig COVID-19, fe wnaeth Llywodraeth Cymru hi'n ofynnol i awdurdodau lleol gyflwyno eu drafft gynllun 10-mlynedd cyntaf i Weinidogion Cymru erbyn 31 Ionawr 2021; fodd bynnag, oherwydd y pandemig a gofynion ymateb argyfwng cysylltiedig, cafodd yr amserlen ar gyfer cyflwyno ei diweddarau. Yn dilyn y cyfnod drafftio ac ymgynghori dilynol, cafodd Rheoliadau Cynlluniau Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg (Cymru) 2019 (gweler **Atodiad 4** i gael mwy o wybodaeth), ynghyd â'r canllawiau drafft eu gosod ar 5 Rhagfyr 2019 a daethant i rym ar 1 Ionawr 2020 gyda disgwyl canllawiau diwygiedig ym mis Ionawr 2021. Mae'n rhaid i awdurdodau lleol gyflwyno eu drafft gynllun 1-mlynedd cyntaf i Weinidogion Cymru ar 31 Ionawr 2022, gyda'r cynllun yn dod i rym o fis Medi 2022. Bydd WESP presennol Blaenau Gwent yn parhau'n weithredol tan y dyddiad hwnnw.
- 2.15 Mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn disgwyl i gynlluniau awdurdodau lleol gynnwys y dilynol:
- Gweledigaeth glir a chryno yn seiliedig ar y targed a gytunwyd

- Proffil addysg lleol (nifer dysgwyr oedran ysgol, nifer pob ysgol dan bob categori, a'r nifer dysgwyr o fewn pob categori ysgol)
- Data allweddol ar gyfer pob deiliant (sylfaen uchel ac amcanestyniadau)
- Unrhyw gynlluniau lefel uchel neu ffactorau sy'n effeithio ar addysg yn y sir
- Nodau ac amcanion clir dan y 7 deiliant
- Cysylltiad clir rhwng sut mae pob agwedd o'r cynllun yn cyfrannu at y weledigaeth a'r targed cynhwysfawr
- Cysylltiad clir rhwng y cynllun a strategaethau eraill a meysydd polisi perthnasol awdurdodau lleol.

2.16 Mae Addysg eisoes wedi dechrau gweithio gyda Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg Blaenau Gwent i sefydlu drafft gynllun 10 mlynedd ar gyfer ymgynghori a chymeradwyaeth erbyn 31 Ionawr 2022. Daw'r cynllun i rym ar 1 Medi 2022 ar ôl derbyn cymeradwyaeth y Gweinidog. Trefnwyd gweithdy gyda gwasanaethau a phartneriaid perthnasol ym mis Rhagfyr 2020 i ddechrau gweithio ar y blaenoriaethau a'r broses ymgynghori gysylltiedig.

3. Opsiynau ar gyfer Argymhelliad

3.1 **Opsiwn 1:** Y Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu yn ystyried ac yn derbyn yr adroddiad a'r llwybr gweithredu cysylltiedig.

3.2 **Opsiwn 2:** Y Pwyllgor Craffu Addysg a Dysgu yn rhoi sylwadau'n gysylltiedig â gwelliannau y gellir eu gwneud, yn unol â gweithredu'r WESP presennol a datblygu WESP 10-mlynedd Blaenau Gwent.

4. Tystiolaeth o sut mae'r pwnc hwn yn cefnogi cyflawni'r Cynllun Corfforaethol / Cyfrifoldebau Statudol / Cynllun Llesiant Blaenau Gwent

4.1 Mae'n ofyniad statudol ar y Cyngor i baratoi dogfen WESP yn unol ag Adran 84 Deddf Safonau a Threfniadaeth Ysgolion (Cymru) 2014. Mae addysg yn flaenoriaeth yng Nghynllun Corfforaethol y Cyngor, gyda chynllunio lleoedd ysgol a mynediad i addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg yn unol â dewisiadau rhieni yn elfennau hanfodol yn hynny.

4.2 Mae'r WESP yn ganolog wrth sicrhau mynediad parhaus i a datblygu'r Gymraeg yn unol â nod Llywodraeth Cymru o filiwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg erbyn 2050. Mae addysg hefyd yn cyfrannu'n sylweddol at Gynllun Llesiant Blaenau Gwent yn Neddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru), sy'n ei gwneud yn ofynnol i gyrff cyhoeddus weithio tuag at saith nod llesiant, un ohonynt yn 'Cymru â diwylliant bywiog lle mae'r Gymraeg yn ffynnu'. Mae gan y Cyngor ddyletswydd i hyrwyddo a hwyluso'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg a gweithio at y nodau llesiant. Mae gan y broses ar gyfer cynllunio addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg hefyd sail statudol dan Adran 48 Deddf 2013.

5. Goblygiadau pob Opsiwn

5.1 Effaith ar y Gyllideb (effaith tymor byr a hirdymor)

Nid oes unrhyw oblygiadau cyllidebol yn gysylltiedig gyda'r adroddiad hwn; fodd bynnag mae goblygiadau refeniw yn gysylltiedig gyda'r cynnig grant cyfrwng Cymraeg. Caiff y goblygiadau hyn eu hamlinellu mewn adroddiad ar wahân ac o fewn y ddogfen ymgynghori.

5.2 **Risg yn cynnwys Camau Lliniaru**

Mae'r goblygiadau dilynol yn berthnasol i Gynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg 2017-20:

- Methiant i gyflawni'r deilliannau a'r targedau a sefydlwyd o fewn y cynllun - caiff hyn ei liniaru gan y trefniadau monitro helaeth sydd yn eu lle. Mae'r tîm Trawsnewid Addysg yn adolygu cynnydd yn fisol, ac wedyn rhoddir adroddiad bob tymor i'r Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg, eir ag ef drwy brosesau gwleidyddol y Cyngor a rhoddir adroddiad i Lywodraeth Cymru bob blwyddyn.
- Cydymffurfiaeth gyda dyletswydd statudol a gofynion deddfwriaethol – caiff hyn ei reoli yn unol ag adolygu a datblygu polisi a chanllawiau, ynghyd ag adnewyddu WESP ac adroddiadau blynyddol.
- Materion cynaliadwyedd o fewn y stad ysgol yn gysylltiedig ag addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg – caiff hyn ei reoli a'i liniaru gan ymgyrchoedd hyrwyddo blynyddol, asesiadau seiliedig ar alw, capasiti ysgolion ac amcanestyniadau. Mae'r model egin a gynigiwyd hefyd yn rhoi cyfle i gyfarch galw cudd, tra'n annog twf pellach.

5.3 **Cyfreithiol**

Mae'n ofyniad cyfreithiol ar y Cyngor i baratoi, gweithredu a diweddarau'r Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg

5.4 **Adnoddau Dynol**

Datblygwyd y Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg 2017/20 gan y tîm Trawsnewid Addysg, sy'n goruchwyllo gweithredu ac adolygu'r cynllun o fewn Blaenau Gwent. Mae gan y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol, gyda chefnogaeth y Tîm Arweinyddiaeth Gorfforaethol ehangach, rôl allweddol wrth sicrhau y caiff camau gweithredu allweddol cysylltiedig â staff eu cyflenwi'n effeithlon.

6. **Tystiolaeth Gefnogi**

6.1 **Gwybodaeth Perfformiad a Data**

Mae'r tîm Trawsnewid Addysg wedi cynnal adolygiad o'r cynllun gweithredu cysylltiedig yn ddiweddar (mae mwy o wybodaeth yn **Atodiad 3**), sy'n cyflawni'r diben o fonitro cynnydd o gymharu â deilliannau.

6.2 **Deilliant disgwylidig i'r cyhoedd**

Mae'r WESP yn anelu i sicrhau, hwyluso, datblygu a gwella addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg, ynghyd â mynediad i ddarpariaeth gysylltiedig yn lleol.

6.3 **Ymgyfraniad (ymgyngoriad, ymgysylltiad, cyfranogiad)**

Mae anghenion ac ymgysylltiad rhanddeiliaid a defnyddwyr yn hollbwysig ac yn ffocws allweddol o WESP, ei weithrediad a'i fonitro. Cynhelir ymgyngoriad ar y Cynllun yn ystod y cyfnod cynhyrchu a chaiff ei adolygu'n flynyddol. Yn ychwanegol, caiff prosesau ymgyngori â'r cyhoedd a phartneriaid eu defnyddio i lywio datblygu, cynnydd a dysgu yn gysylltiedig â chyflenwi'r cynllun.

6.4 **Meddwl am yr Hirdymor (blaengynllunio)**

Mae'r WESP yn gydnaws â'r Cynllun Corfforaethol ac ar hyn o bryd yn cwmpasu'r cyfnod 2017 i 2022, gydag adolygiad pellach ar y gweill yn ystod 2021/22, a ddilynir gan gweithredu a chyhoeddi Cynllun 10-mllynedd newydd

yn 2022. Mae'r WESP yn rhoi dull gweithredu strategol ac mae'n sylfaen i gyfeiriad a chyflenwi darpariaeth ac addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg ym Mlaenau Gwent.

6.5 **Ffocws ataliol**

Mae'r WESP yn anelu i sefydlu targedau clir, siapio, llywio a gwella cyflenwi darpariaeth ac addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg. Mae'r cynllun hefyd yn ceisio mynd i'r afael â phroblemau a bylchau sy'n bodoli, gan wella cyflenwi, ymgysylltu a chydlyniaeth.

6.6 **Cydweithio/gweithio partneriaeth**

Mae Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg Blaenau Gwent angen dull cydweithio yn nhermau datblygiad, gweithredu, monitro a dilyniant. Caiff hyn ei gynnal drwy'r Fforwm Cymraeg mewn Addysg, sydd â chynrychiolaeth eang o blith sefydliadau partner a grwpiau rhanddeiliaid; ac a gafodd ei sicrhau drwy brosesau gwleidyddol y Cyngor ac adroddiadau i Lywodraeth Cymru.

6.7 **Integreiddio (ar draws meysydd gwasanaeth)**

Mae Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg Blaenau Gwent wedi'i alinio gyda gofal plant, addysg a chwarae blynyddoedd cynnar; cynllunio lleoedd disgyblion, trefniadaeth ysgolion, Ysgolion 21ain Ganrif a gwaith y Cyfarwyddiaeth Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol ac Amgylchedd ac Adfywio. Mae'n hanfodol integreiddio gwasanaethau i sicrhau gweithredu effeithlon, tra hefyd yn sicrhau mynediad addas i addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg a darpariaeth gysylltiedig. Caiff y cynllun ei fonitro gan y Fforwm Cymraeg mewn Addysg, ac mae hefyd yn bwydo i fforymau allweddol arall h.y. Derbyn i Ysgolion, Bwrdd Rhaglen Ysgolion y 21ain Ganrif ac yn y blaen.

5.8 **Asesiad Sgrinio Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb a dynodi os oes angen asesiad effaith llawn**

Cafodd Asesiad llawn ei gwblhau yn unol â'r WESP, a benderfynodd nad oes unrhyw effaith negyddol ar y nodweddion gwarchoddedig, gydag effaith gadarnhaol ar y Gymraeg. Mae'r polisi yn hyrwyddo cyfle cyfartal i bawb, yng nghyswllt cael mynediad i addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg a darpariaeth gysylltiedig.

7. **Trefniadau Monitro**

7.1 Mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn disgwyl diweddariad blynyddol ar y cynnydd a wnaed ar y WESP. Fel canlyniad, mae'r tîm Trawsnewid Addysg yn adolygu ac yn monitro'r WESP yn fisol, gan roi adroddiadau bob tymor i'r Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg ac adroddiadau blynyddol i Lywodraeth Cymru. Yn ychwanegol, eir ag adroddiadau datblygu a chynnydd y Fforwm drwy brosesau gwleidyddol y Cyngor yn flynyddol. Mae'r Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg hefyd yn ffocws allweddol ar gyfer Bwrdd Rhaglen Ysgolion 21ain Ganrif a'r Fforwm Derbyn.

- **Atodiad 1 – Cynllun Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg 2017-20 Blaenau Gwent**

<https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/council/policies-plans-strategies/blaenau-gwent-welsh-in-education-strategic-plan-20172020/>

- **Atodiad 2 – Cylch Gorchwyl y Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg**
- **Atodiad 3 – Adroddiad Blynyddol WESP 2019**
- **Atodiad 4 – Rheoliadau Cynlluniau Strategol Cymraeg mewn Addysg (Cymru) 2019**
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2019/1489/made>

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Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg Blaenau Gwent

Cylch Gorchwyl

Diben

Bydd y Fforwm yn cyfrannu at, yn cynllunio'n strategol, yn monitro ac yn gwerthuso Cynllun Cymraeg mewn Addysg (WESP) Cyngor Blaenau Gwent, i gefnogi targedau Llywodraeth Cymru o fewn Strategaeth Addysg Cyfrwng Cymraeg (2010) Llywodraeth Cymru.

Cylch Gwaith

Bydd y Fforwm yn rhoi sianel ffurfiol ar gyfer cyfathrebu rhwng Cyngor Blaenau Gwent, yr ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg a gynhelir a sefydliadau partner eraill a all gydweithio tuag at flaenoriaethau lleol a strategol.

Bydd y Fforwm yn:

- gweithredu fel grŵp ymgynghori, gan gyfrannu at ddatblygu, monitro a gweithredu'r WESP;
- datblygu a monitro cynllun gweithredu lleol;
- monitro'r galw am addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg;
- monitro darpariaeth addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg a phenderfynu fel grŵp ar waith tuag at ddatblygiadau yn y dyfodol; a
- darparu adroddiad blynyddol i Lywodraeth Cymru yn disgrifio cynnydd o ran gweithredu targedau WESP o gymharu â'r amserlen a gymeradwywyd.

Aelodaeth

Aelodau'r Fforwm fydd yr aelodau 'craidd' dilynol a benodir gan Swyddogion Cyfarwyddiaeth Addysg Blaenau Gwent:

- Pennaeth Trawsnewid Addysg a Pherfformiad
- Arweinydd Tîm Trawsnewid Addysg
- Swyddog Ysgolion 21ain Ganrif
- Datblygu Sefydliadol
- Rheolwr Cynhwysiant
- Rheolwr Trafnidiaeth
- Swyddog Cydraddoldeb
- Swyddog Cyfranogiad
- Rheolwr Gofal Plant a Chwarae Blynyddoedd Cynnar
- Rheolwr Gwasanaeth Ieuenctid

Cynrychiolwyr ysgolion:

- 1 cynrychiolydd Pennaeth ysgol gynradd Gymraeg
- 1 cynrychiolydd Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw
- 1 cynrychiolydd ysgol cyfrwng Saesneg

Sefydliadau partner:

- Mudiad Meithrin
- RhAG
- Urdd Gobaith Cymru
- Menter Iaith Blaenau Gwent
- Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg – Arweinydd Systemau ar gyfer y Gymraeg
- Coleg Gwent
- Iechyd

Symud Aelodau

Bydd aelodau'r Fforwm yn peidio bod yn aelodau pan maent yn peidio dal y swydd y daethant yn gymwys drwyddi ar gyfer eu penodi. Ceisir cynrychiolydd arall mewn achosion o'r fath.

Cyfarfodydd o'r Fforwm

Bydd y Fforwm yn cwrdd o leiaf deirgwaith bob blwyddyn, unwaith bob tymor academaidd. Gellir galw cyfarfodydd ychwanegol mewn ymgynghoriad gyda'r Cadeirydd. Rhoddir o leiaf saith diwrnod gwaith o rybudd ysgrifenedig i aelodau o gyfarfodydd o'r Fforwm, heblaw os bydd argyfwng.

Bydd y tîm Trawsnewid Addysg yn darparu swyddogaeth gefnogi i'r Fforwm gan ddatblygu, casglu a chylchredeg dogfennau perthnasol i aelodau o leiaf saith diwrnod cyn pob cyfarfod ar ffurf electronig, gyda chopïau papur ar gael ar gais.

Cadeirydd ac Is-gadeirydd

Bydd y cadeirydd yn llywyddu dros gyfarfodydd y Fforwm. Caiff y cadeirydd a'r is-gadeirydd eu hethol yn y cyfarfod cyntaf a gynhaliwyd ar ddechrau'r flwyddyn academaidd. Cynhelir cyfarfodydd cyn-cynllunio gyda'r cadeirydd cyn pob cyfarfod o'r Fforwm.

Is-bwyllgorau

Gall y Fforwm sefydlu is-bwyllgorau lle mae angen i ystyried materion neilltuol drwy ddull gweithredu gorchwyl a gorffen. Bydd y Fforwm yn ystyried gwaith is-bwyllgorau o'r fath a byddwn yn gwneud argymhellion fel sy'n briodol.

Cyfrinachedd

Ar achlysuron, gellir rhannu gwybodaeth o natur gyfrinachol gydag aelodau'r Fforwm i gynorthwyo dealltwriaeth o'r mater dan drafodaeth. Mae'n rhaid i Aelodau'r Fforwm arsylwi cyfrinachedd gwybodaeth o'r fath.

<p>Cyf Rheoli Fersiwn: 1.0</p>	<p>ADRODDIAD ADOLYGIAD BLYNYDDOL CYNLLUN STRATEGOL Y GYMRAEG MEWN ADDYSG (WESP) RHAGFYR 2019</p>	<p>Awdur: Claire Gardner Cymeradwywyd: Lynn Phillips</p>
<p>CYFLAWNIADAU ALLWEDDOL/UCHAFBWYNTIAU</p>		<p>CRYNODEB O'R CYNLLUN YN GYFFREDINOL</p>
<p>Nodwch ddim mwy na 5 o'ch prif gyflawniadau/uchafbwyntiau yn yr adran yma.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bu Blaenau Gwent yn llwyddiannus wrth sicrhau cymeradwyaeth cyllid Ysgolion 21ain Ganrif gan Lywodraeth Cymru ar gyfer gwaith ailfodelu Band B yn Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. Mae Addysg yn mynd ag adroddiad drwy brosesau gwleidyddol y Cyngor sy'n anelu i fynd â phrosesau ymgynghori statudol ymlaen yn unol â'r cynnig i greu ysgol gynradd cyfrwng Cymraeg gyda 210 lle yn ardal Tredegar/ Cwm Sirhywi. 2. Mae nifer y disgyblion ar y gofrestr, ynghyd â'r rhai sy'n gwneud cais am le yn Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, yn parhau i gynyddu gyda thueddiad cadarnhaol i'w weld dros y 3 blynedd ddiwethaf yng nghyswllt y dosbarthiadau meithrin a derbyn. Yn ychwanegol, roedd y cyfraddau trosglwyddo rhwng cynradd ac uwchradd yn parhau yn 100% ar gyfer 2019/20. 3. Mae Cyngor Blaenau Gwent wedi datblygu cynllun marchnata a chyfathrebu cryf, sy'n targedu a hyrwyddo manteision bod yn ddwyieithog, tra hefyd yn sefydlu dulliau priodol ar gyfer ymgysylltu ac ymgynghori gyda rhanddeiliaid, er mwyn llywio blaenoriaethau strategol allweddol. 4. Mae cynrychiolaeth, presenoldeb ac amllder cyfarfodydd y Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg yn parhau'n gryf, gyda phartneriaid wedi ymrwymo'n gadarn i ac yn cydnabod effeithlonrwydd Fforwm Blaenau Gwent. Canmolodd partneriaid waith y Fforwm fel enghraifft o arfer da. Hefyd mae is-grŵp POSP y Fforwm yn parhau i gwrrdd yn rheolaidd i gefnogi cynigion ar gyfer twf a datblygu ar sail ranbarthol ac eto, i lywio cynllunio strategol. 5. Mae ffigurau Sabothol Cymraeg mewn Blwyddyn yn cynyddu flwyddyn ar flwyddyn, roedd 8 wedi cofrestru yn 2019/20 ac mae 13 yn 2020/21. Mae gan EAS 14 lle ar gael i bob ardal yn flynyddol ac yn derbyn mwy o ddatganiadau diddordeb. Mae angen i ysgolion, llywodraethwyr ac unigolion sy'n cymryd rhan fod ag ymroddiad i'r cwrs cyn iddynt gael cyfweiliad a chael eu derbyn. Caiff yr hyfforddiant ei gyflenwi o bell a drwy ddulliau cyfunol eleni. 		<p>Gwyrdd/Oren/Coch. Nodwch eich targed cyfredol, eich cyflawniad eleni a hunan-asesiad o goch, oren neu wyrdd. Hunanasesiad Blaenau Gwent 2018/19 = Oren, gyda chyfradd cwblhau cynllun gweithredu 2019/20 yn 84% (neu 49 cam gweithredu) gyda 7% (4) cam gweithredu yn mynd rhagddynt a 9% (5) heb ddechrau. Mae hyn yn is eleni oherwydd cyfyngiadau Covid 19, oedd tu allan i'n rheolaeth.</p> <p>DATA BLYNYDDOL ALLWEDDOL</p> <p>Medi 2020, 28 disgybl Bl. 2 (cohort 785) yn cynrychioli 3.56% o'r cohort. Medi 2020, 27 disgybl Bl. 3 (cohort 743), 3.63% o'r cohort. Roedd 44 wedi ymrestru ar gyfer Meithrin ym mis Medi 2020 a 37 Dosbarth Derbyn gyda 11 arall i ddechrau ym mis Ionawr 2021. Blynnyddoedd Cynnar – cyfradd trosglwyddo Gwdihw Brynithel i ysgol gynradd cyfrwng Cymraeg 1 allan o 25 (4.76%) a Helyg Bychan i ysgol gynradd cyfrwng Cymraeg 13 allan o 20 (68.9%).</p> <p>ALLIAD CYDA'R MEYSYDD BOLS ALLWEDDOL</p> <p>E.e.; Asesiadau Digonolrwydd Gofal Plant, Rhaglen Ysgolion a Cholegau y 21ain Ganrif. Defnyddir data Asesiad Digonolrwydd Gofal Plant a diweddariadau dilynol i lywio'r Cynllun a chatau gweithredu cysylltiedig ar lefel strategol a gweithredol. Aiff Rhaglen Ysgolion y 21ain Ganrif Blaenau Gwent ati i wella a datblygu darpariaeth addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg yn lleol, gyda'r prosiect Band B arfaethedig cyntaf yn cael ei ddatblygu, sef prosiect ailfodelu i wella'r amgylchedd addysgu a dysgu yn Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg. Mae'r Cynnig Gofal Plant a'r Grant Gofal Plant o fewn Blaenau Gwent hefyd wedi alinio'n agos gyda'r WESP ac yn anelu i wella a datblygu darpariaeth blynnyddoedd cynnar a gofal plant yn y Gymraeg, opsiynau a chyfleoedd.</p>

<p>Dylech amlinellu risgiau penodol ar lefel yr Awdurdod Lleol sydd neu a fedrai yn y dyfodol effeithio ar gyflawni eich amcan.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mae risg yng nghyswllt gweithredu cynnig Grant Cyfrwng Cymraeg Blaenau Gwent y cynhelir broses ymgynghori statudol arno . 2. Yn sgil pandemig COVID-1 mae risg gyda throsglwyddo rhwng y blynyddoedd cynnar a'r cyfnod sylfaen, gan olygu y gallai niferoedd ostwng. 3. Mae risg y bydd yr awdurdod lleol yn methu ymrwmo partneriaid yn natblygiad y cynllun 10 mlynedd, oherwydd COVID-19. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bydd Addysg yn mynd ag adroddiad drwy brosesau gwleidyddol y Cyngor i ddechrau ymgynghoriad statudol ym mis Rhagfyr 2020. 2. Mae dulliau ymgysylltu a chynlluniau eraill yn eu lle rhwng yr ysgol a darparwyr. Mae'r Fforwm Addysg Gymru a'r Is-grŵp Cyfathrebu cysylltiedig yn monitro'n agos ar hyn. 3. Mae cynllun manwl ac amserlen yn cael eu datblygu ac mae partneriaid wedi ymrwmo i'r gweithdy cynllunio cyntaf ym mis Rhagfyr 2020.
<p style="text-align: center;">GWEITHREDU A MONITRO</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CERRIG MILLTIR EDRYCH I'R DYFODOL</p>
<p>Nodwch eich dulliau a phrosesau mewnol ar gyfer monitro cynnydd, yn ogystal â'r gwaith monitro drwy'r Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg.</p> <p>Mae'r Fforwm yn cwrdd bob tymor gan ddynodi arweinwyr deilliannau ar gyfer pob maes. Mae'r arweinwyr deilliannau'n cefnogi'r tîm Trawsnewid Addysg i olrhain, monitro a chasglu data yn gysylltiedig â'u meysydd deilliannau eu hunain a monitro cynnydd ar y targedau cysylltiedig.</p> <p>Mae gan y Cyngor broses yn ei lle ar gyfer cynllunio camau gweithredu, er mwyn monitro a chasglu data ar gynnydd a gwybodaeth am yr hyn a gyflawnir o gymharu â'r WESP bob blwyddyn. Ceisir diweddaru hyn bob tymor gyda diweddariad yn nhymor yr hydref a chyfarfod y Fforwm wedyn yn canolbwyntio ar gynnydd blynyddol o gymharu â'r deilliannau a thargedau cysylltiedig.</p> <p>Caiff adroddiad ei lunio yn nhymor yr hydref bob blwyddyn ac eir ag ef drwy brosesau gwleidyddol y Cyngor ac mae ym mlaenraglenni gwaith y Pwyllgor Craffu a hefyd y Pwyllgor Gweithredol fel rhan o'r cylch blynyddol er mwyn llywio dysgu a chynlluniau ar gyfer y flwyddyn olynol.</p> <p>Sefydlwyd grŵp Gorchwyl a Gorffen ar gyfer y cynllun 10-mlynedd newydd fydd yn cwrdd yn Rhagfyr 2020 i gytuno ar ddull gweithredu cydlynus.</p>	<p>Nodwch unrhyw ddatblygiadau/cerrig milltir sylweddol sydd ar y gweill ar gyfer y flwyddyn nesaf.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyflawni Prosiect Ailfodelu Blaenau Gwent dan Raglen Band B Ysgolion 21ain Ganrif y Cyngor. • Bydd Addysg yn anelu i ddechrau'r broses ymgynghori statudol yn unol â'r cynnig i greu ysgol gynradd cyfrwng Cymraeg 210 lle yn ardal Tredegar/cwm Sirhywi. • Mae'r Cyngor yn anelu cynnal ymgynghoriad/profion marchnad ddechrau 2012 i fod yn sail i ddatblygiad strategaeth farchnata a hyrwyddo y Cyngor yn cynnwys: datblygiadau ac adnoddau seiliedig ar y we. • Mae'r Cyngor yn anelu i ddatblygu cynllun drwy Is-grŵp POSP a Galw Consortiwm De Ddwyrain Cymru i sicrhau datrysiad rhanbarthol i ddarpariaeth uwchradd cyfrwng Cymraeg erbyn 2027. • Mae Cylch Meithrin newydd yn Nhredgar wedi cofrestru gydag Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru. Bydd y prosesau recriwtio staff yn agor yn 2021. • Caiff cynllun peilot ei sefydlu drwy Sefydlu a Llwyddo Mudiad Meithrin gyda Buds to Blossom yn Beaufort i ddarparu sesiynau cylch meithrin ar gyfer y plant yn eu gofal. • Mae Cylch Meithrin Gwdihw (Brynithel) yn ymestyn eu gwasanaethau i ddarparu sesiynau diwrnod llawn 9am-3pm gan ddod yn ddarparwydd Addysg. Gallai hyn gynyddu'r galw am leoedd yn y dosbarth derbyn ym Mro Helyg o Frynithel. • Mae'r Cyngor yn anelu i ddatblygu ac ymgynghori ar ddrafft Gynllun WESP 10-mlynedd.

Dylech gynnwys crynodeb byr o'ch cynnydd dan bob amcan.

Deiliant 1: Sicrhawyd cynnydd cryf o fewn y maes deiliant hwn, fodd bynnag oherwydd y cyfyngiadau yn gysylltiedig gyda phandemig COVID-19, cafodd cynnydd yn ymwneud ag ymgysylltu wyneb yn wyneb ei atal. Adolygwyd llyfrynnau manteision bod yn ddwyieithog a defnyddio cyfryngau cymdeithasol i hyrwyddo gofal plant ac addysg Gymraeg ynghyd ag ymgysylltu rhithiol a'u datblygu ymhellach ystod y cyfnod hwn. Mae'r tîm yn parhau i fonitro cyflenwi'r deiliant hwn ac yn ymchwilio dulliau eraill o ymgysylltu a hyrwyddo. Caiff y galw, marchnata a hyrwyddo eu gyrru gan is-grŵp Cyfathrebu y Fforwm Addysg Gymraeg lleol, ynghyd â datblygiadau allweddol gan Grŵp POSP a Galw am Leoedd rhanbarthol. Mae cynlluniau pellach ar gyfer y we a marchnata yn cael eu datblygu i'w gweithredu drwy gydol 2021. Gwnaed hyrwyddo yn rhithiol gydag unigolion yn cael eu cyfeirio ar-lein at y llyfryn dwyieithog. Mae nifer disgyblion yn yr ysgol gynradd yn parhau i gynyddu.

Deiliant 2: Gwnaed cynnydd da yn gyffredinol, fodd bynnag cafodd trosglwyddo a hyrwyddo eu cyfyngu ar sail wyneb i wyneb, gan sefydlu dulliau eraill o gyfathrebu ac ymgysylltu. Mae Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg yn parhau i fod â pherthynas waith gadarnhaol gyda'r sectorau gofal plant, blynyddoedd cynnar ac uwchradd. Mae'r galw am leoedd meithrin a dosbarth derbyn Cymraeg yn parhau i gynyddu (yn unol â data genedigaethau byw). Mae trosglwyddo uwchradd yn parhau i fod yn gryf gyda 100% o ddisgyblion cynradd Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg yn trosglwyddo i Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw. Mae trafodaethau'n cael eu cynnal yn rhanbarthol gyda sicrhau darpariaeth uwchradd hirdymor i ddysgwyr Blaenau Gwent, ynghyd â rhai mewn awdurdodau cyfagos, yn unol â chynnig CBS Torfaen i ymestyn ystod oedran Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw. Yn ychwanegol, un o nodau allweddol Prosiect Ailfodelu Band B fydd gwella a datblygu amgylchedd addysgu a dysgu Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg i gryfhau a gwella darpariaeth a throsglwyddo – yn y blynyddoedd cynnar a hefyd uwchradd. Mae Cylch Meithrin Gwdihw (Brynithel) yn y broses o ymestyn eu gwasanaethau i sesiynau diwrnod llawn 9am - 3pm ac yn mynd drwy'r broses o ddod yn ddarparwydd Addysg, gallai hyn gynyddu'r galw yn nosbarth derbyn Bro Helyg o Frynithel.

Deiliant 3 a 4: Oherwydd effaith pandemig COVID-19, cafodd clybiau ieuencid a chyfleoedd a darpariaeth ymgysylltu helaethach cysylltiedig eu hoedi, gydag ymgysylltu o bell/ar-lein yn cael ei sefydlu yn lle. Cafodd y sefyllfa ei gwaethygu oherwydd i staff o'r ddau wasanaeth gael eu rhoi ar ffyrlo. Mae'r Gwasanaeth Ieuencid a'r Urdd yn ymchwilio datblygu darpariaeth Gymraeg ar-lein ar gyfer pobl ifanc. Cafodd cynnydd ar darged 2019/20 i godi defnydd y Gymraeg tu mewn/allan yr ystafell ddosbarth gan 15% (fel yn y 2 flynedd flaenorol) ei atal, fodd bynnag bu cyfleoedd ar gael ar-lein ers mis Medi 2020. Bydd ffocws cynyddol yn y maes hwn yn 2021.

Deiliant 5: Gwnaed cynnydd da, fodd bynnag cafodd y pandemig effaith negyddol ar gynnydd oherwydd yr angen i sefydlu angen ac adnoddau a dulliau eraill i hyrwyddo datblygu sgiliau yn y Gymraeg ac adnoddau dysgu cyfunol i gefnogi addysgu'r Gymraeg a'r Gymraeg fel Ail Iaith.

Deiliant 6: Gwnaed cynnydd da yn lleol a rhanbarthol wrth lywio polisi ac ymarfer. Mae'r gwaith o ddatblygu adnoddau Cymraeg yn mynd rhagddo ac wedi cryfhau dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf. Mae gwaith yn y maes hwn yn mynd rhagddo yn unol â'r datblygiadau polisi a deddfwriaethol diweddaraf.

Deiliant 7: Gwnaed cynnydd da yn y maes deiliant hwn, gyda nifer o ysgolion ym Mlaenau Gwent eisoes yn cymryd rhan yng nghynlluniau a chyfleoedd datblygu proffesiynol parhaus cyfrwng Cymraeg. Yn ystod sesiwn academaidd 2019/20 ymrestrodd 8 o staff ar gyfer cyfle sabothol Cymraeg mewn blwyddyn gyda 13 arall wedi ymrestru yn ystod sesiwn academaidd 2020/21.

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Agenda Item 19

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**
Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**
Report Subject: **Improving Schools Programme 2020**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr J Collins, Executive Member for Education**
Report Submitted by: **Lynn Philips, Corporate Director of Education**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
26.11.20	26.11.20	17.12.20			15.12.20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Executive Committee with an overview of those schools over the last 3 years that have presented as a cause for concern, their progress and the work delivered or currently underway to continue to support improvement.

NB. Members will be aware that the presentation of this report has been delayed as a result of the suspension of business as usual activities, but is now presented to ensure that members are made aware of the improvement journey of some schools.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report covers all schools and settings within the County Borough identified by the Education Directorate, supported by the EAS and/or Estyn as needing to improve.
- 2.2 The Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme operates within the regional arrangements for supporting schools across South East Wales and aligns with the regional policies and processes for school monitoring, evaluation, support and intervention. The regional arrangements build on the national frameworks and guidance and in particular the National Framework for Categorising Schools and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The background to categorisation is explained further in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme focuses particularly on those schools which need to secure improvement in schools categorised as Amber and Red.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1

Members are asked to consider the information detailed within the report.

3.2 **Option 2**
Accept the report as provided.

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

4.1 **Corporate Plan**

Outcome Statement 2020/22	Corporate Plan activity
Support a fairer sustainable economy and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support all learners to achieve improved outcomes• To improve pupil outcomes, progress and wellbeing

4.2 **Statutory Responsibility**

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 consolidates, clarifies and reforms the law in relation to intervention in schools causing concern. The Welsh Government’s statutory guidance for schools causing concern (February 2014) details the local authority powers of intervention in schools causing concern, the grounds on which those powers can be invoked and the procedures governing the intervention process. A further explanation of this is explained further in Appendix 1, which includes the LA powers of intervention.

4.3 **Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan Objectives**

This report is in line with the following objectives as set out in the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan:

- Blaenau Gwent wants everyone to have the best start in life.
- Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

There are no direct financial implications for this report. However, the Council allocates approximately £42.8m to schools via the Individual Schools Budget (ISB) to provide high quality education and to improve pupil outcomes.

Blaenau Gwent continues to make a financial contribution to the regional EAS arrangements of approximately £364,000 from the core Education Directorate revenue budget. The EAS is the Council’s commissioned school improvement service who work directly with schools to provide professional challenge and support to improve. The Education Directorate holds the EAS to account for the impact and effectiveness of their work in schools in Blaenau Gwent.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

The strategic risk is associated with underperformance and ineffective processes to improve performance and progress in identified schools. Failure to raise standards is identified as a key risk to the Council, both in terms of reputation and pupil life chances. This is reflected in the Corporate Risk Register, Education Directorate and EAS risk registers.

Mitigating actions include the routine monitoring of quantitative and qualitative information, regular quality assurance meetings between the Council and the EAS, regular quality assurance meetings within the Education Directorate and across teams, school inspection findings and school categorisation results.

The progress schools make in their School Development Plans is monitored on a half-termly basis. School attendance and exclusion figures are monitored on a fortnightly basis. School's safeguarding processes are also closely monitored.

Holistic support packages are devised via regular internal Council services meetings between OD, finance, health and safety, education and school governor support services. Through ongoing robust self-evaluation processes school level performance data is regularly analysed and evaluated to identify emerging trends or possible underperformance.

The quality of provision i.e. the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms is monitored and supported via the EAS. The quality of school leadership is also supported extensively by the EAS via a range of programmes and school-to-school networks.

5.3 Legal

The improving schools programme operates within the legal framework of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

5.4 Human Resources

There are no direct staffing or workforce implications arising from this report.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data

6.1.1 School Categorisation

All schools are categorised on an annual basis in accordance with the National Model for Categorisation. The process has taken place at a regional level and for the last 3 years' national moderation has confirmed that the regional process is robust. Appendix 1 shows the significant reduction in the level of support that Blaenau Gwent schools require between the period 2017 to 2019. Members will be aware that there is no national categorisation process planned for the end of this year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.1.2

Schools in the Red and Amber Categories that have made positive progress (2018 to 2020)

Appendix 1 details the progress of the following schools:

- Ebbw Fawr Learning Community (Red to Yellow)
- St Joseph's RC Primary (Amber to Yellow)
- St Mary's RC Primary (Yellow (in year) to Amber to Yellow)
- Rhos-y-Fedwen (Yellow to Amber (in year) to Yellow)
- Brynbach Primary School (Yellow to Amber to Yellow)
- Glyncoed Primary School (Yellow to Amber (in year))

6.1.3

Schools Causing Concern

6.1.4

Schools - Support 2019 to 2020

Appendix 1 details the additional support that is now provided to Sofrydd Primary School (Yellow to Amber). It is pleasing to report, however, that Glyncoed Primary School has been removed from the schools causing concern protocols in 2020.

6.1.5

Schools in Receipt of a Statutory Warning Notice (Red)

Appendix 1 details the arrangement and progress for the two schools, Abertillery Learning Community and Brynmawr Foundation School that are in receipt of a Statutory Warning Notice.

6.2 Expected outcome for the public

6.2.1 Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)

The regional policy for monitoring, evaluation and intervention in schools through the categorisation process is derived from the National Categorisation Framework, but has been evolved through the engagement of a variety of stakeholders including schools and members of governing bodies.

A range of Council departments and external partners are involved in delivering programmes to support schools requiring improvement. Monitoring progress towards targets enables effective targeting of support.

6.2.2 Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)

Analysis of aggregate school performance data is a key element in ensuring that schools are known well by the Council so that appropriate support and intervention can be directed towards areas of greatest need.

Robust monitoring of school performance facilitates support for schools to ensure that schools maintain high quality outcomes in the longer term.

6.2.3 **Preventative focus**

Through effective monitoring and evaluation of school performance, early identification of emerging areas for improvement can be achieved with consequent early intervention to secure improvement.

The effectiveness of the Council's monitoring, evaluation and intervention programmes ensure that preventative action is taken early in order to minimise the escalation of concerns.

6.2.4 **Collaboration / partnership working**

The Council collaborates with neighbouring local authorities through the South East Wales Consortium for the provision of school improvement services through the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

The Council also secures a range of pupil support services such as Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Speech and Language and Ethnic Minority support services through regional collaboration.

Within the Council, the school improvement, transformation and inclusion leadership teams ensure that there is a coordinated approach to supporting schools in the Education Directorate and across the Council as a whole.

6.2.5 **Integration(across service areas)**

The Council commissions its school improvement function on regional basis.

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

There is no requirement for EQIA assessment since this is not a change of policy or practice. However, implementation of the council's monitoring, evaluation and intervention practice in schools has a positive impact on children and young people and on staff within a particular school. By improving the quality of education, standards are improved for all children and young people. Through the Council's school improvement strategy, particular focus is given to vulnerable learners and those who are at risk of underachievement.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Monitoring of school improvement is an important mechanism for ensuring that members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee and the Executive are sufficiently informed to enable them to hold the Education Directorate and EAS to account effectively for the quality of education provision and most importantly pupil outcomes.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Improving Schools

Appendix 1a – Operational appendix

Appendix 1

Improving Schools Programme

1.0 School Categorisation

The national framework for the categorisation of schools is based on a staged process. For the 2020 academic year, this process has been suspended and further guidance from Welsh Government is awaited. In the interim the regional identification support level is now classified as high, medium, low and self-improving. However, in terms of the judgements shown in this report on the overall category of support are based on a four-colour model, green, yellow, amber, and red, with 'green' denoting the category where least support is needed.

The Blaenau Gwent Improving Schools Programme focuses particularly on those schools which need to secure improvement in schools categorised as Amber and Red.

In the case of schools categorised as Amber, the school's Challenge Adviser works with the school to create a single plan i.e. the school development /improvement plan, which defines the support available through the Local Authority and the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

In the case of schools categorised as Red, the school's Challenge Adviser works with the school to create a single plan i.e. the school development plan, which defines the support available through the Local Authority and the Education Achievement Service (EAS). Unlike with schools categorised as Amber, this could include interventions made under the Local Authority's formal powers as detailed in School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. In cases where such schools have been placed, by Estyn in the categories of either requiring significant improvement or special measures then the School Development Plan will form a part of the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and are categorised as Red. The Local Authority will draft a plan of support for the school, in partnership with the EAS, and this is known as the Local Authority Statement of Action. This LA plan supports the school to realise its PIAP.

In the schools requiring such improvement regular half-termly Schools Causing Concern meetings (SCC) are held, which in the case of Blaenau Gwent Schools are chaired by the Executive Member for Education and are attended by the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Director of Education, Strategic Education Improvement Manager, Principal Challenge Adviser and EAS representatives. During these meetings the school presents and evidences the progress it has made against its agreed action points, and the panel also considers the appropriateness and impact of the support and intervention provided. The panel considers and evaluates the extent of progress the school is making against the action points set out in the School Development Plan or Post Inspection Action Plan, (if the school is in an Estyn Category). Following each meeting, the Schools Causing Concern Panel evaluates the progress that the school has made and determines the

next steps which should be taken in relation to supporting the school. This can include the invocation of formal powers of intervention should that be considered appropriate.

2.0 Statutory Responsibility

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 consolidates, clarifies and reforms the law in relation to intervention in schools causing concern. The Welsh Government's statutory guidance for schools causing concern (February 2014) details the local authority powers of intervention in schools causing concern, the grounds on which those powers can be invoked and the procedures governing the intervention process. The guidance also summarises the powers of Welsh Minister to intervene in schools where the local authority has failed to do so or has done so inadequately. This includes the Welsh Ministers' powers to direct the local authority to close a school.

The statutory guidance defines a "school causing concern" as one which is:

- Subject to a Warning Notice issued under the 2013 Act.
- Not subject to Warning Notice but meets one or more of the six grounds for intervention and there is a related risk to the health and safety on any person that calls for urgent intervention
- Deemed by Estyn to require significant improvement.
- Deemed by Estyn to require special measures.

Under the terms of the Act, a school will be "eligible for intervention" where one of the following six grounds for intervention exist:

- Ground 1: The standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low.
- Ground 2: There has been a breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed.
- Ground 3: The behaviour of pupils at the school or any action taken by those pupils or their parents is severely prejudicing, or is likely to severely prejudice, the education of any pupils at the school.
- Ground 4: The safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).
- Ground 5: The governing body or head teacher has failed, or is likely to fail, to comply with a duty under the Education Acts.
- Ground 6: The governing body or head teacher has acted, or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise of any of its or his or her functions under the Education Acts.

Should the LA determine that grounds for intervention exist, the LA must issue a warning notice to the school governing body setting out:

- the grounds for intervention,
- the reasons why the LA is satisfied that the grounds for intervention exist,
- the action which the governing body is required to take
- the period in which the action is to be taken by the governing body

- the action the LA is minded to take should the governing body not take the required action or make sufficient progress.

In the case of a foundation, voluntary aided or voluntary controlled school the LA will work in partnership with the relevant bodies.

A school is also eligible for intervention where:

- the school has been deemed by Estyn to require significant improvement or special measures. (In both these cases there is no requirement to issue a warning notice prior to intervention.)

and/or,

- one or more of the grounds 1- 6 exist and/or there is a related risk to the health or safety of any person that calls for urgent intervention.

Local Authority powers of intervention

Under Section 5 of the Act, the LA is able to intervene in schools causing concern in the following ways:

1. Direct the governing body to secure advice or collaborate with another school
2. Appoint additional governors and nominating a new Chair
3. Appoint an Interim Executive Board
4. Suspend the delegated authority for the governing body to manage the school's budget
5. Direct the governing body to take certain action or to desist from taking certain action.

A school remains eligible for intervention by the LA until one of the following events takes place:

- the authority gives notice that it is satisfied that the grounds for interventions that have been dealt with or that using its powers of intervention would not be appropriate for any other reason; and/or,
- the Welsh Ministers determine that the power to intervene is no longer in effect and give notice in writing to the local authority and the governing body of their determination.

3.0 Performance Information and Data

All schools are categorised on an annual basis in accordance with the National Model for Categorisation. The process takes place at a regional level and for the last 3 years' national moderation has confirmed that the regional process is robust.

3.1 School Categorisation January 2018

Overall, in January 2018 the National School Categorisation performance indicated an improvement when compared with the previous year in terms of the number of green schools:

- The number of Red schools remained the same. One school remains categorised as Red (Abertillery Learning Community), one school (Ebbw Fawr Learning Community) moved to Amber, but one school (Brynmawr Foundation) moved from Yellow to Red.
- 4 schools were categorised as Amber (The River Centre, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary and St Illtyd's Primary)
- 11 schools were categorised as yellow
- 8 schools were categorised as green (All Saints RC Primary, Beaufort Hill Primary, Deighton Primary, Georgetown Primary, Glanhowy Primary, Pen-y-Cwm Special, St Mary's CiW Primary and Tredegar Comprehensive School). This is again an improvement on the previous year.

3.2 School Categorisation January 2019

Overall, in January 2019 the National School Categorisation performance indicated further continued improvement when compared with the previous year in terms of the number of green and yellow schools:

- The number of Red schools remains the same **(2)**. Two schools remained categorised as Red (Abertillery Learning Community and Brynmawr Foundation School).
- **2** schools were categorised as Amber (One school Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary remained as Amber with Brynbach Primary School being categorised from yellow to amber due to the need to provide additional support. Overall, this represented a reduction of 2 schools compared to the previous year.
- **10** schools were categorised as yellow (Coed- y Garn Primary, Glyncoed Primary, St Joseph's Primary, St Mary's RC Primary, Sofrydd Primary Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg, Ystruth Primary with a further 3 schools moving from Amber to Yellow, including the River Centre, EFLC and St Illtyd's Primary)
- **11** schools were categorised as Green (All Saints RC Primary, Beaufort Hill Primary, Deighton Primary, Georgetown Primary, Glanhowy Primary, Pen-y-Cwm Special, St Mary's CiW Primary and Tredegar Comprehensive School with a further 3 schools moving from Yellow to Green, including Blaen-y Cwm Primary, Cwm Primary and Willowtown Primary). This is again an improvement on the previous year and over a three-year period represents a significant improvement in the percentage of schools categorised as either Yellow or Green and demonstrates the improved capacity and leadership within our schools.

3.3 School Categorisation January 2020

Overall, in January 2020 National School Categorisation performance indicated further sustained improvement over the period.

- The number of Red schools remained the same **(2)**. Two schools remain categorised as Red (Abertillery Learning Community and Brynmawr Foundation School), as both schools are in an Estyn category.
- **2** schools were categorised as Amber (Glyncoed Primary School and Sofrydd Primary School.)
- **10** schools were categorised as Yellow (Coed-y Garn Primary, Ebbw Fawr Learning Community, St Illtyd's Primary, St Joseph's Primary, St Marys RC Primary , Ysgol Gymraeg Brohelyg, River Centre with a further 2 schools moving from Amber to Yellow (Brynbach Primary and Rhos-y-Fedwen Primary) and one Deighton Primary School moving from Green to yellow)
- **11** schools were categorised as Green (All Saints RC Primary, Blaen-y-Cwm Primary, Beaufort Hill Primary, Cwm Primary, Georgetown Primary, Glanhowy Primary, Pen-y-Cwm Special, St Mary's CiW Primary, Willowtown Primary, Ystruth Primary and Tredegar Comprehensive School. This is again an improvement over a three-year period represents a significant improvement in the percentage of schools categorised as either Yellow or Green and demonstrates the improved capacity and leadership within our schools.

3.4 Schools in the Red and Amber Categories - Positive Progress (2018 to 2020)

Ebbw Fawr Learning Community (Red to Yellow)

In September 2015, the school was issued with a pre-warning notice on the grounds of insufficient improvement in standards and concerns regarding the quality of teacher assessment. Following the Estyn inspection in February 2016, and the school being placed in the statutory category of significant improvement, the Local Authority issued the school with a warning notice to improve. In April 2016, the Local Authority invoked its powers of intervention by appointing additional Governors to the Governing Body and securing a new Chair of Governors. A new Headteacher was appointed to the school in the summer term 2016 and took up his appointment in September 2016. A Local Authority Intervention Panel was established to monitor progress. An Estyn monitoring visit in Spring 2017 recognised the positive progress that had been made, particularly in relation to pupil well-being. The Warning Notice was removed in July 2018 prior to the notification of a revisit from Estyn. The school was revisited by Estyn in July 2018 and removed from the statutory category of requiring significant improvement due to the sustained and strong progress secured by the school. The school continues to be categorised as yellow in recognition of the level of support that they require.

St Joseph's RC Primary (Amber to Yellow)

In 2014 St Joseph's primary school was categorised as an Amber school, with particular concerns about the capacity for leadership and quality of governance. In the Autumn 2015, the school categorisation remained as Amber. The school had an acting Headteacher, having failed to secure the appointment of a substantive Headteacher on a number of occasions. Under the national categorisation process 2016-17, the school remained in the Amber support category, reflecting the continuing temporary leadership arrangements. The acting Headteacher was appointed to the substantive post in September 2017 and a new Chair of Governors also established. The school was categorised as Yellow in the 2017-18 national categorisation process. The school was inspected by Estyn in January 2018 and was judged to be good in all 5 inspection areas.

St Mary's RC Primary Yellow (in year) to Amber to Yellow)

In 2015 and 2016, St Mary's RC Primary school was categorised as a Yellow school. The school was inspected by Estyn in June 2016 and was placed into Estyn monitoring because of the need to improve standards in skills and in teacher assessment and tracking. Due to the adequate judgements performance and prospects for improvement, the school was re-classified in year to Amber. Following very strong progress against the recommendations the school was categorised as Yellow in the 2017-18 national categorisation process. The school was revisited by Estyn in December 2017 and removed from Estyn monitoring.

Rhos-y-Fedwen (Yellow Amber (in year) to Amber to Yellow)

The school was placed in Estyn Review in March 2017, and was subsequently re-categorised in year as Amber. Formal acting Headteacher arrangements were put in place shortly before the inspection. There are effective working relationships across the senior leadership team. The governing body has recently been strengthened although the recruitment of governors remains a key challenge for the school. The main issues during inspection were inaccuracy of teacher assessment at end of KS2 in reading and writing which have since been addressed. This had an impact on the quality of self-evaluation judgement. A new Headteacher was appointed and the then regional Education Improvement Board processes reported that good progress was being made against all recommendations. The school was revisited by Estyn in June 2018 and was removed from Estyn monitoring.

3.5 Schools who are in receipt of additional support. 2018 to 2019

Brynbach Primary School (Yellow to Amber to Yellow)

In January 2019, the school was categorised as Amber in recognition of the additional support required by the recently appointed Headteacher.

Throughout the year EIB processes have reported that there has been good progress against the school development plan priorities.

4.0 Schools Causing Concern - Update

The regional approach to School Causing Concern was amended in preparation for the 2019/20 academic year and the protocol is embedded at the end of this document. As such, these meetings form part of a wider drive by LAs and the EAS to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people. The LA and EAS roles will be principally:

- To review and evaluate pace and progress in relation to identified School Development Plan priorities.
- To challenge the Headteacher and Governing Body on the rates of progress in their school.
- To recommend and monitor actions aimed at accelerating improvement.
- To consider the extent to which the school has been successful in achieving required improvement. This will determine future actions by the LA and EAS.

4.1 Schools Causing Concern Progress - Judgements:

1. The school has made strong progress and will not be required to attend Schools Causing Concern meetings. *The support level of the school will be reduced.
2. The school has made *satisfactory/ *strong progress but will need to continue to attend Schools Causing Concern meetings to enable the impact of improvements to become consistent and embedded.
3. The school demonstrates limited progress. *It is advised that the local authority determine appropriate next steps of action agreed with the agreed Schools Causing Concern policy.

Scrutiny Members should note that during Wave 1 (March – August 20) of the pandemic the routine SCC meetings were suspended and replaced with check in and catch-up meetings with the formal SCC meetings restarting at the commencement of the autumn term 2020. To date, in line with the protocol there has been 1 meeting for each school held with a further meeting at which the impact of evidence presented will be quality assured by the EAS through their attendance at schools during the latter part of the autumn term. These meetings are due to take place in early December.

At the commencement of the 2019/20 academic year there were 4 schools identified as a cause for concern and below is a summary of their progress made to date:-

4.1.1 Glyncoed Primary School (Yellow to Amber)

Glyncoed Primary School was classified as Amber in January 2020 as a result of concerns in relation to leadership capacity at the school due to a number of leadership changes over a period of time. Progress was evaluated and assessed as strong and during the current autumn term the school was removed from this process, noting the evident progress that had taken place at pace.

4.1.2 Sofrydd Primary School (Yellow to Amber)

Sofrydd Primary School was categorised as Amber in January 2020 as the school development plan was identified as unsatisfactory and became part of the regional schools causing concern arrangements. During early 2020, a Leadership and Management review was commissioned which reported to the governing body of the school just prior to the initial wave of the pandemic.

The purpose of the review was to evaluate and review the current leadership standards in the school, the quality of provision and standards achieved by pupils to provide an evidence base, to support the school to identify its key priorities for improvement and enable the local authority and the EAS to provide the appropriate level of support.

The review identified 12 key recommendations for securing improvement and now informs the work programme that is being progressed. Key to this improvement agenda has been the need to improve governance arrangements, which are being strengthened through the successful recruitment of a new Chair of Governors who is working actively alongside the Acting Executive Headteacher, which in turn has begun to secure satisfactory progress against the recommendations.

4.1.3 Schools in Receipt of a Statutory Warning Notice

4.1.3.1 Abertillery Learning Community (Red)

Standards of performance in Key Stage 4 have been sustained from 2018 performance, but are still in need to improvement. Whilst at primary level performance has declined. The school is currently subject to a LA warning notice to improve and a programme of intervention. However, it is important to note that for 2019 as a result of the pandemic there are no comparative performance measurements that can be relied upon.

A school leadership review was undertaken in the Autumn term of 2017, which resulted in LA intervention and when the school was inspected in February 2018 it was then placed in the statutory category of requiring significant improvement. A follow up visit was held in July 2019 and Inspectors noted the progress that had been made in respect of many of the recommendations for action from the inspection, although noted that many of the improvements are at an early stage of development and as such confirmed that the school will remain within an Estyn category. Following a

successful period of leadership by two established Headteachers the Governing Body have successfully recruited a suitably experienced Headteacher to the permanent position of Headteacher and earlier the Governing Body has appointed a new Chair of Governors. Additional LA governors remain in place to provide additional capacity to the governing body for progressing key personnel matters.

Schools Causing Concern meetings were halted during the initial wave of the pandemic but have recommenced at the start of this academic year. Progress against the school improvement priorities as identified in the Statutory Warning Notice was confirmed as satisfactory, however, during the second half of the autumn term there is a need for the commissioned school improvement service to validate the first hand evidence presented by the school's leadership team. At the time of writing this report an Estyn Improvement Conference is in the process of being arranged and this is likely to be held during the second half of the autumn term and the LA is finalising the LA statement of action, which identifies the bespoke support that is being provided to the school.

4.1.3.2 Brynmawr Foundation (Amber to Yellow, to Red)

In December 2013, Brynmawr Foundation School was inspected by Estyn and placed in Estyn monitoring; with an adequate judgement for its performance and prospects for improvement. Recommendations included improving the school's performance and improving quality in teaching and learning. The school was categorised as Amber in 2014 and 2015. The school was issued with a statutory Warning Notice in 2015 to improve standards, particularly in Maths. Support was put in place and Key Stage 4 outcomes improved significantly in 2016. The Warning Notice was subsequently lifted.

Due to the improvement secured, in 2016 the school was classified as Yellow, having made strong progress against Estyn's recommendations and with improved performance at the end of KS4.

However, following an unexpected decline in KS4 performance in 2017, particularly in Maths and the outcome of an EAS review of the effectiveness of leadership and management at the school, the school was categorised as Red in the 2017-18 in the national school's categorisation process and invoked the LA powers of intervention. Today, the school continues to be subject to a LA statutory warning notice to improve and after a period of support, intervention is now in place. Governance has significantly improved and the additional Governors that had been appointed have been removed evidencing the cultural growth that is now demonstrable within the Governing Body. The Governing Body have appointed both a new Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and now two Assistant Headteachers, who will continue to set the direction of leadership and management across all areas of the school. Performance in Key Stage 3 improved, which bodes well for future performance. Performance at Key Stage 4 in the Capped 9 in 2019 also improved, but not in line with predictions. Although again, it should be noted

that there are no comparative performance measures that can be relied upon.

In the autumn term 2019, the school was inspected by Estyn and was placed in a category of Special Measures and Members will already be aware from a previous report to this committee that the inspectors awarded a judgement against all four inspection areas of “unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement” and against the inspection area of care support and guidance a judgement of “adequate and needs improvement” were recorded

Estyn made four recommendations for improvement and these are summarised below:

- R1 Improve pupils’ standards across the school, including their literacy and numeracy skills
- R2 Improve pupils’ behaviour and their attitudes to learning
- R3 Improve the effectiveness of teaching to motivate, engage and challenge pupils to make good progress in lessons
- R4 Strengthen leadership at all levels to improve leaders’ ability to identify areas for development and to plan effectively for improvement

The report recognises that “Since 2018, the Headteacher has worked positively with staff and pupils to create stability following a period of uncertainty and change. He has instigated a programme of change across the school that focuses appropriately on strengthening leadership at all levels and developing teaching. Staff are engaging enthusiastically in professional learning. However, these changes have not had a sufficient impact on important areas of the school’s work such as teaching and pupils’ standards. Although pupils make strong progress in a few lessons, in a majority of lessons, many pupils do not make enough progress.

The school has a supportive and inclusive ethos. Many pupils are confident in their social interactions. However, many pupils are not suitably resilient or motivated in their lessons, and this hinders their learning. “

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Estyn were of the opinion that, that special measures were required in relation to this school. Subsequently, the school has drawn up a Post Inspection Action plan that details how it is going to address the recommendations and the Local Authority and EAS has drafted a statement of Action as to how it will support the school. In line with agreed procedures for schools in an Estyn Category a meeting took place on 27th February 2020 at which the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) was reviewed and feedback provided by Estyn as to how the action plan may be furthered strengthened. Moving forward, Estyn will monitor the school’s progress on a termly basis. However, given the present pandemic the approach to a return to business as usual activities is planned to recommence at the start of the spring term and as such this will be the first monitoring visit that the school will have received, which will be in excess of a year since being placed in Special Measures, although routine Estyn contact with the school are being made.

Progress against the school improvement priorities as identified in the Statutory Warning Notice was confirmed as satisfactory, however, during the second half of the autumn term, (Covid restrictions allowing), there is a need for the commissioned school improvement service to validate the first hand evidence presented by the school's leadership team.

Appendix 1a - Operational Appendix for Meetings for Schools Causing Concern

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EAS

Education Achievement Service
for South East Wales
Gwasanaeth Cyflawni Addysg
i Dde Ddwyrain Cymru

Schools Causing Concern

Operational appendix for meetings of
Schools Causing Concern

September 2019

Schools Causing Concern Meetings:

A Schools Causing Concern meeting can be requested by the local authority when a school is considered to be a 'school which causes concern' or is at risk of 'becoming a school which causes concern'. A School Causing Concern meeting will be arranged when a school:

- Is placed in a red or amber category;
- Has received a local authority warning notice;
- Is placed in an Estyn statutory category of requiring Significant Improvement or Special Measures;
- Evidences that enhanced support and challenge is required linked to grounds 1-6 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 for Schools Causing Concern.

Meetings may be arranged when a school;

- Is placed in a yellow or green category but its capacity to improve is not secure and / or the pace of improvement is too slow.
- Is in an Estyn review category.
- Is identified as a risk in relation to a review or audit, which has been conducted by the LA or EAS. This may include for example; Finance, Health & Safety and Safeguarding Audits or Leadership and ALN Reviews.
- Demonstrates evidences that enhanced support and challenge is required linked to grounds 1-6 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Within the Welsh Government guidance on Schools Causing Concern, the six grounds for intervention are:

Ground 1	The standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low.
Ground 2	There has been a breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed.
Ground 3	The behaviour of pupils at the school or any action taken by those pupils or their parents is severely prejudicing, or is likely to severely prejudice, the education of any pupils at the school.
Ground 4	The safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).
Ground 5	The governing body or head teacher has failed, or is likely to fail, to comply with a duty under the Education Acts.
Ground 6	The governing body or head teacher has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably in the exercise of any of its, his, or her functions under the Education Acts.

Terms of Reference

Membership of a Schools Causing Concern Meeting

A Schools Causing Concern meeting is a collaborative meeting between a school, the local authority and the EAS. Key individuals are essential to the meeting. Essential members are listed below:

Director of Education / Chief Education Officer (or representative of)
Head of School Standards (LA)
Head Teacher
Chair of Governing Body or Vice Chair (in exceptional circumstances)
EAS Representative

The following members will attend at the request of the Executive Member / Cabinet Member for Education, Chief Education Officer or Managing Director of the EAS:

Executive / Cabinet Member for Education
Managing Director / Director / Assistant Director EAS

On occasions, additional school, LA or EAS staff will be required to attend. Additional members may include:

Additional Senior Leaders or Heads of Department from schools
Additional EAS Representatives
Additional Senior Leaders, HR, Finance or Health and Safety Offices from the local authority.

Aims of a Schools Causing Concern Meeting

School Causing Concern meetings form part of a wider drive by SEWC LAs and EAS to improve educational outcomes for all children and young people. The local authority and EAS roles will be principally:

- To review and evaluate pace and progress in relation to identified School Development Plan priorities.
- To challenge the Headteacher and Governing Body on the rates of progress in their school.
- To recommend and monitor actions aimed at accelerating improvement.
- To consider the extent to which the school has been successful in achieving required improvement. This will determine future actions by the LA and EAS. This may encompass:

Schools Causing Concern Progress Judgements:

1. The school has made strong progress and will not be required to attend Schools Causing Concern meetings. *The support level of the school will be reduced.
2. The school has made *satisfactory/ *strong progress but will need to continue to attend Schools Causing Concern meetings to enable the impact of improvements to become consistent and embedded.
3. The school demonstrates limited progress. *It is advised that the local authority determine appropriate next steps of action agreed with the agreed Schools Causing Concern policy.

*delete as appropriate

Process

- The local authority will determine the venue for meetings. Generally, meetings will be held in local authority offices unless there is a specific reason for holding the meeting at the school.
- The Director of Education or Cabinet Member / Executive Member for Education will chair the meeting.
- The local authority will facilitate the meetings. The local authority or EAS will take minutes of the meeting.
- The agenda will be agreed at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. The local authority should ensure that further notice is given whenever possible, enabling the school to fully prepare for the meeting. Ideally, the next agenda should be discussed at the end of a Schools Causing Concern meeting. This discussion will include details of specific areas the local authority and EAS wish to focus upon and those persons required to attend.
- Schools will be requested to present evidence to demonstrate progress linked to their School Development Plan / PIAP. Therefore, all reports presented at Schools Causing Concern meetings must practically align to the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. Local authorities reserve the right to request first hand evidence linked to specific reports. This may include pupil data, pupil books, minutes of departmental meetings, SLT meetings and reports to Governing Bodies. (This list is not intended to be exhaustive).
- Schools will prepare and submit progress reports or updates of their School Development Plan to the local authority 5 working days prior to the meetings. All documents to be distributed to all attendees at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting.
- School may use the meetings to discuss brokered support, their on-going challenges / barriers to improvement and any additional support requirements.
- The school will be expected to discuss its progress, obstacles to improvement, and any further planned actions.
- The LA and EAS will provide a view on a range of aspects relating to the school's key successes and barriers. These aspects may include the school's level of engagement, its pace and progress, its capacity to improve and required future support from the LA and EAS.
- Where a school is requested to attend a Schools Causing Concern meeting, the local authority may choose to discuss and focus on a range of issues, which can contribute to successful school performance and pupil outcomes. This should include a focus on pupil exclusions, attendance, wellbeing, vulnerable group data, performance management arrangement, parent engagement etc. (This list is not intended to be exhaustive).
- Confidential items will not be recorded within minutes. The nature of confidential discussion will be agreed between the school, local authority and the EAS. The local authority reserves the right to see either the Headteacher or Chair of Governors individually by request.
- The LA will provide a view of the schools' improvement and its need for further support using Schools Causing Progress Judgements 1-4 (indicated on page 3).
- Local authority and EAS staff will participate in a pre-briefing and debriefing session before and after a Schools Causing Concern meeting.

Schedule /Timings of Meetings

For schools requiring the highest levels of support, monthly meetings will be established. All Schools Causing Concern will be requested to attend a meeting every half term.

It is expected that a School Causing Concern meeting will last no longer than 1.5 hours.

The local authority will aim to agree and issue meeting dates at least 6 weeks in advance. The local authority will invite EAS representatives, the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. The Head Teacher will invite any additional staff or Senior Leaders whose attendance has been requested.

The local authority and EAS will establish which organisation will record and circulate minutes of meetings. All minutes should be circulated to the school, LA and EAS within 10 working days.

Agenda

The standing agenda for all Schools Causing Concern meetings is:

1. Welcome and apologies.
2. Specific actions or matters arising from the previous meeting.
3. Head teacher led discussion based around the school's progress against the School Development Plan priorities (agreed prior to the meeting), including any reports verifying evidence of progress. Other Senior Leaders or Heads of Department may lead specific / appropriate reports by request.
4. School led discussion linked to the progress of all learners, including vulnerable groups.
5. EAS overview of support provided and commentary of progress made by the school.
6. Conclusions / next steps.
7. A.O.B / Future agenda items.
8. Confidential matters to be discussed in the presence of the local authority, EAS, the Head and/ or the Chair of Governors.
9. Meeting close.

A 15-minute LA and EAS pre-brief / debrief will take place before and after each meeting. The school will not be invited to participate.

Improvement Conferences:

It is recognised that a Schools Causing Concern meeting is time limited which can restrict the length of the agenda. On occasions an extended meeting will be required to consider:

- The pace of progress linked to School Development Plan priorities and the identified support required.
- Why a school is not improving and has become 'stuck'.
- The level and range of support a school has received and its impact.
- The use of local authority statutory powers.

An improvement Conference will act as an extended and focussed meeting. This could be considered as an escalation of concern. The meeting will be scheduled over at least half a day and will be chaired and by either:

- The Executive/ Cabinet Member for Education
- The Chief Education Officer
- A Chief Education Officer from within the region but not from within the LA
- The Managing Director / Director of the EAS

At this stage the local authority will determine the agenda in conjunction with the school with at least 3 weeks' notice. Minutes will be kept as a record of the meeting and shared with all in attendance.

Persons Present:
 Apologies:
 Date of meeting:

School Development Priorities
•
Local Targets
•

Actions completed since last Schools Causing Concern Meeting (School / LA / EAS)
•
Main issues arising from Meeting
•
Schools Causing Concern Progress Judgement (1-3):

Actions for the school (to include timescales):

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

Actions for the LA (to include timescales):

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

Actions for the EAS (to include timescales):

Actions		Timescales
1.		
2.		

Next Meeting: (Date)

Next Agenda Items: (Draft)

Agenda Item 20

Executive and Council Only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Management of Pupil Places and the School Estate
2019/2020**

Portfolio Holder: **Education and Learning Portfolio – Cllr. Joanne
Collins**

Report Submitted by: **Education Transformation Manager – Claire Gardner**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
26.11.20	26.11.20	17.12.20			15.12.20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report, is to provide the Leader and Members of the Executive Committee with the opportunity to consider the management of pupil places and the school estate, throughout the 2019/2020 academic session. The report serves to provide a detailed overview of both the processes and outcomes associated with pupil place and facilities management.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Councils have a duty to manage, monitor, review and plan pupil places on an annual basis, in line with the following Welsh Government Guidance and Legislation.

2.2 Capacity calculations were determined for each of the schools in November 2019, which informed the final admission numbers published within the Blaenau Gwent School Admissions Policy 2021/2022.

2.3 The Education Transformation team review pupil projections including surplus and sufficiency issues throughout the school estate twice per/annum. Projections are undertaken for primary schools for a 5-year period and a 7-year period for secondary schools.

2.4 Pupil projection accuracy remains consistently high with 99% of secondary and 97% of primary projections in January 2020, confirmed to be accurate in September 2020.

2.5 Surplus places within the primary sector has increased to 13% in January 2020, when compared to 11% in Jan 2019, however, we remain within our target, which is 15%. The increase is attributable to more pupils leaving primary school (Year 6) at the end of the 18/19 academic year than pupils starting primary school (R) in 19/20. This is consistent with pupil progressions expected in line with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board live birth data.

2.6 There was however, an increase in year 6 transition to secondary, which has resulted in a decrease in surplus places across the secondary sector with the % going from 19% in Jan 2019 to 16% in Jan 2020 (i.e. more pupils

started in Year 7 than pupils leaving in Year 11). The table/graph in **Appendix 1**, demonstrates a positive position throughout the school estate, which for secondary is the lowest it has been throughout the last 9 years, and primary still within target. It is important to maintain a level of surplus to accommodate potential growth and reconfiguration of the learning environment in line with strategic and education developments such as the new curriculum.

- 2.7 Surplus places in both the primary and secondary sector are projected to decrease further over the next 2 years, taking the primary percentage to 9% and secondary to 12%, by the 2023/24 academic year – with the overall combined projected status falling from 14% in Jan 2020 to 10% in 2024.
- 2.8 The School Organisation Policy (2017) sets a target of reducing surplus places to 15% across the County Borough; by the primary sector is projected to remain under 15% over the next 5 years and the secondary sector is set to reduce to under 15% over the 5 years. For 2019/20 the Education Transformation team targeted the following schools whereby the percentage was 15% or over, in line with the delivery of surplus place reduction action plans during the 2018/19 academic session:
- Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg – Admission number reduced from 258 to 241 resulting in the surplus % reducing from 17% in 18/19 to 13% in 19/20.
 - Ebbw Fawr Learning Community Primary Phase – school capacity reduced from 360 to 324 for 2019/20, however, this did not improve the surplus place %, which is presently at 25%, as pupil numbers have fallen due to the decrease in live births within the school's catchment area. The decrease was as follows from 81 births in 2014/15 to 59 births 2016/17, which would equate to a loss of 22 pupils, affecting the number and size of the classes within the school.
- 2.9 The Education Transformation team's strategy for the 2020/21 academic session is to work on the development of surplus places reduction action plans with the following schools who are projected (as at January 2019) to have over 15% surplus between 2020/21 and 2023:
- Coed y Garn Primary School reduced admission number from 246, (which equates to 21% surplus places) to 210 (7% surplus places)
 - Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Helyg reduced from 241 (13% surplus places) to 215 (-3% insufficient places)
 - Ebbw Fawr Primary Campus reduced from 324 (25% surplus places) to 284 (12% surplus places)
- 2.10 Live birth rates have fluctuated over the last ten years, with a downward trend noted between 2012 and 2019 (Please refer to **Appendix 2** for more information). 2017/2018 academic session was the start of an upward trend, with Births increasing from 688 in 2016/17, to 714 in 2017/18, rising further to 730 in 2018/19. However, 2019/20 data demonstrates a decrease to 689. Migration into Blaenau Gwent between September 2019 and August 2020 increases with approximately 200 pupils – approx. 150 of which were

2.11 primary pupils and approx.50 secondary pupils, moving into Blaenau Gwent between September 2019 and August 2020.

There are a relatively small number of schools which are projected to have sufficiency issues between 2021 and 2025 as follows:

- Glyncoed Primary School
- Coed y Garn Primary School
- Abertillery Learning Community Secondary Campus

2.12

All of which can and will be addressed via the annual capacity assessment.

2.13

All Wales Position

The latest dataset available is the January 2018/19 surplus place overview for Wales (please refer to **Appendix 3** for more information). Blaenau Gwent's position was as follows:

- 13th (out of 22 Local Authorities) for primary;
- 10th (out of 22) for secondary; and,
- 11th (out of 22 Local Authorities) in terms of the combined primary and secondary position.

2.14

The Council are presently awaiting the Family of Local Authority and All Wales comparative data sets for the 2019/20 academic sessions, which are scheduled for release in early 2021

2.15

Management of the School Estate Maintenance, Repair and Planned Works

The Division of Responsibilities Guidance and associated procedure (Please refer to **Appendix 4**), were successfully implemented during the 2019/20 academic sessions. 465 TE100's were received between September 2019 and August 2020, 100% of which were acknowledged and received a response within 48 hours of receipt. 311 (67%) have been reported as being completed to date

2.16

All unresolved works are programmed for delivery and will be resolved by the end of the spring-term 2021. Delays in resolving this issues are attributable to the following:

- School closures and contractor availability throughout the emergency response period.
- Access to school buildings in line with the schools individual COVID Secure Risk Assessments.
- Programming and time constraints due to the size/scale of works and in order to minimise the potential for disruption.
- Budgetary constraints faced by schools.
- Securing contractors to undertake the required work.
- The capacity of Technical Services to assess the extent of repair/ maintenance work and associated costs during the emergency response.

- 2.17 Each school has a facilities review action plan in place, which is monitored on a monthly basis.
- 2.18 **Health and Safety and Fire Risk Assessment**
In line with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005; the Council has a duty to monitor compliance and manage health and safety and fire risk assessment related matters in school's/ education buildings.
- 2.19 The data below details Health & Safety and Fire Risk Assessment developments and actions undertaken throughout the 2019/20 academic session the following inspections were carried out:
- 3 Health & Safety Inspections were carried out during the Autumn Term, 29 actions were identified, 13 (45%) of which have now yet been completed
 - 5 Health & Safety Inspections were carried out during the Spring Term, 44 actions were identified, 22 (50%) of which have not yet been completed
 - 6 Fire Risk Assessment Inspections were carried out during the Autumn Term, 117 actions were identified, 59 (50%) of which have now yet been completed
 - 4 Fire Risk Assessment Inspections were carried out during the Spring Term, 54 actions were identified, 34 (67%) of which have not yet been completed
- 2.20 Those outstanding actions from the 2019/20 academic session are being prioritised and programmed for resolution by the end of the summer-term 2021. All schools have been supported throughout the pandemic with reopening/operational plans, risk assessment development and review, and urgent/priority facilities works aligned to health and safety.
- 2.21 **Condition and Suitability**
The 2019/20 position for school building condition and suitability continues to improve, in line with:
- The TE100 process
 - Health and Safety and FRA action monitoring and implementation
 - Planned Works and Structural Maintenance Programmes
 - The Minor Works Programme
 - 21st Century Schools Programme Delivery (along with wider education projects i.e. the ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity Project)
- 2.22 Condition and suitability assessment criteria range from A (good) - D (bad). Blaenau Gwent has only 1 school categorised as 'D' for condition. **Appendix 5** highlights the latest position in respect of the Blaenau Gwent school estate. The condition and suitability programme for the 2019/20 academic session, was planned for implementation from January 2020; however, this was not able to be taken forward due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and has been reprogrammed for completion by the end of the Spring-term 2021. There is only one school building categorised as a 'D'

(Glyncoed Primary School) within the school estate, which is being address and replaced with a new building under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** Members considers and accepts the report.

Option 2: Members considers the report and provides comments relating to improvements that can be made to the current monitoring processes.

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

4.1 Education is a priority in the Council's Corporate Plan of which the planning of school places and management of the school estate are essential components. In addition, facilities management contributes to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The Council has a statutory duty and responsibilities in line with the planning of school places and the management school Estate in line with:

- Welsh Government's Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales Guidance (2011)
- Welsh Government School Admission and Admission Appeals Code's (2013)
- Welsh Government School Organisation Code (2013)
- The School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- The Local Authority Financial Scheme Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The planning of school places and management of the school estate seeks to respond to the Council's wellbeing goals for all learners.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget** - Welsh Government have indicated that there will be a further Schools Capital Maintenance Grant allocated to Local Authorities in 2020/21 financial year. The Council received a Welsh Government Schools Capital Maintenance Grant of £825,673 for the 2019/20 financial year, which alongside the minor works budget, will result in a capital investment of approximately £902,000 into the school estate, once all programmed works have been completed. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, £55,255 was secured via the Welsh Government Hardship Fund, to address required facilities adaptations and works to facilitate the repurposing and reopening of schools. Minor, structural and planned works are reviewed and programmed each academic session for the preceding year.

5.2 **Risk** - The Council have a statutory duty to comply with Welsh Government legislation and policy as detailed above. The primary risks and mitigating actions are as follows:

- Sustainability issues within the school estate– this is managed and mitigated against in line with capacity assessments, projections,

condition and suitability reviews, along with the delivery of minor and planned works programmes and school organisation.

- Ineffective distribution of pupil places and/ or insufficient places to meet demand – this managed, mitigated and informed by the capacity assessment process and pupil projections, in conjunction with the admissions process.

Compliance with statutory duty and legislative obligations - this is managed in line with policy and guidance review and development on an annual basis; along with facilities (including minor works and maintenance), health and safety and FRA monitoring and review, which is undertaken on a monthly basis

5.3 **Legal** - There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 **Human Resources** - There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data** - Surplus places are set to decrease further to within and below target over the next 5 years (Please refer to **Appendix 6** for pupil projection data as at January 2019).

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public** - The management of pupil places aims to secure continued access to education places in Blaenau Gwent for current and future pupil populations. The management of the school estate seeks to secure improved condition and suitability of education facilities in line with the creation and management of sustainable education system in Blaenau Gwent

6.3 **Involvement** - Stakeholders and end user needs and engagement are of paramount importance to the planning of school places and management of the school estate.

6.4 **Thinking for the Long-term** - The planning of pupil places and management of the school estate takes account of short, medium and long-term planning arrangements informing:

- Minor works and maintenance priorities
- 21st Century Schools and School Organisation Priorities
- Capacity plans in line with school admissions.

6.5 **Preventative focus** - Management of pupil places and the school estate is focused on early identification and planning, in order to secure a school estate that is fit for purpose that contributes to raising educational standards, which is a Council priority

6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working** - Key management and operational staff across the Council and school estate, are involved in detailed annual reviews of facilities and pupil places i.e. Education, headteachers, Health and Safety, Social Services, Community Services, Planning and Building Control, Environmental Health, Highways and Development etc.

- 6.7 The pupil place and school estate management process seeks to secure appropriate levels of provision, whilst monitoring and addressing the condition and suitability of education facilities. Education works closely with partners to ensure compliance with Welsh Government legislation, and that key local, regional, and national policy developments are accounted for, whilst also taking on board learning from the previous academic year.
- 6.9 **Integration** - The process is cross-cutting in the sense that it impacts upon Education, Schools, Estates, Planning and Building Control, Community Services, and Social Services etc.; therefore, service area involvement is key to effective implementation.
- 6.9 **EqIA** - Equality impact assessments are continuously carried out in line with both the management of pupil places and the school estate.
- 6.10 **Monitoring Arrangements** - Education review and monitor both the planning of school places and management of school estate processes and outcomes consistently throughout each academic year, incorporating learning from the previous year.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1a and 1b – Surplus Place % and Graph
Appendix 2 – Live Birth Data and Graph
Appendix 3 – All Wales Graph
Appendix 4 – DoR Guidance
Appendix 5 – Condition and Suitability Assessment
Appendix 6 – January 2020 Projections

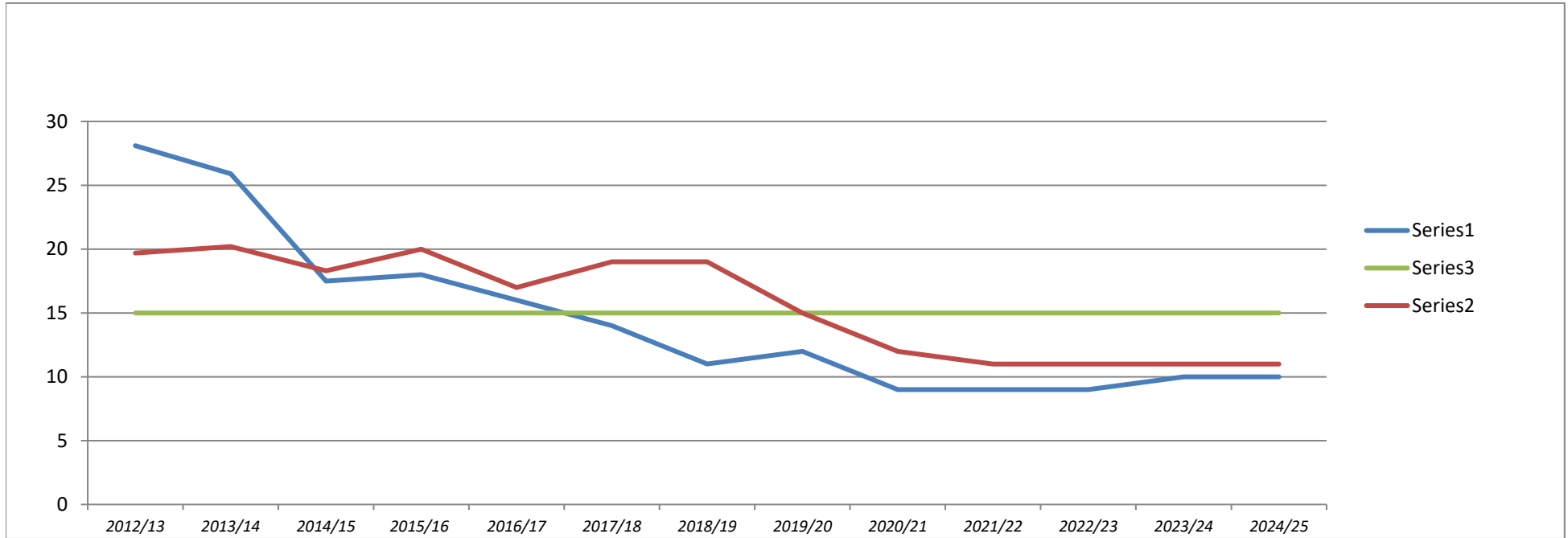
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Appendix 1 Surplus Place % between 2011 and 2019

Year	% Surplus Places –Primary Sector	% Surplus Places Secondary Sector
2011/12	28.7	19
2012/13	28.1	19.7
2013/14	25.9	20.2
2014/15	17.5	18.3
2015/16	18	20
2016/17	16	17
2017/18	14	19
2018/19	11	19
2019/20	13	16

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Annual Surplus Places Summary



Year	Primary %	Secondary %	Target %
2012/13	28.1	19.7	15
2013/14	25.9	20.2	15
2014/15	17.5	18.3	15
2015/16	18	20	15
2016/17	16	17	15
2017/18	14	19	15
2018/19	11	19	15
2019/20	12	15	15
2020/21	9	12	15
2021/22	9	11	15
2022/23	9	11	15
2023/24	10	11	15
2024/25	10	11	15

2012 - 2024 projected figures

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Appendix 1 Live Birth Data

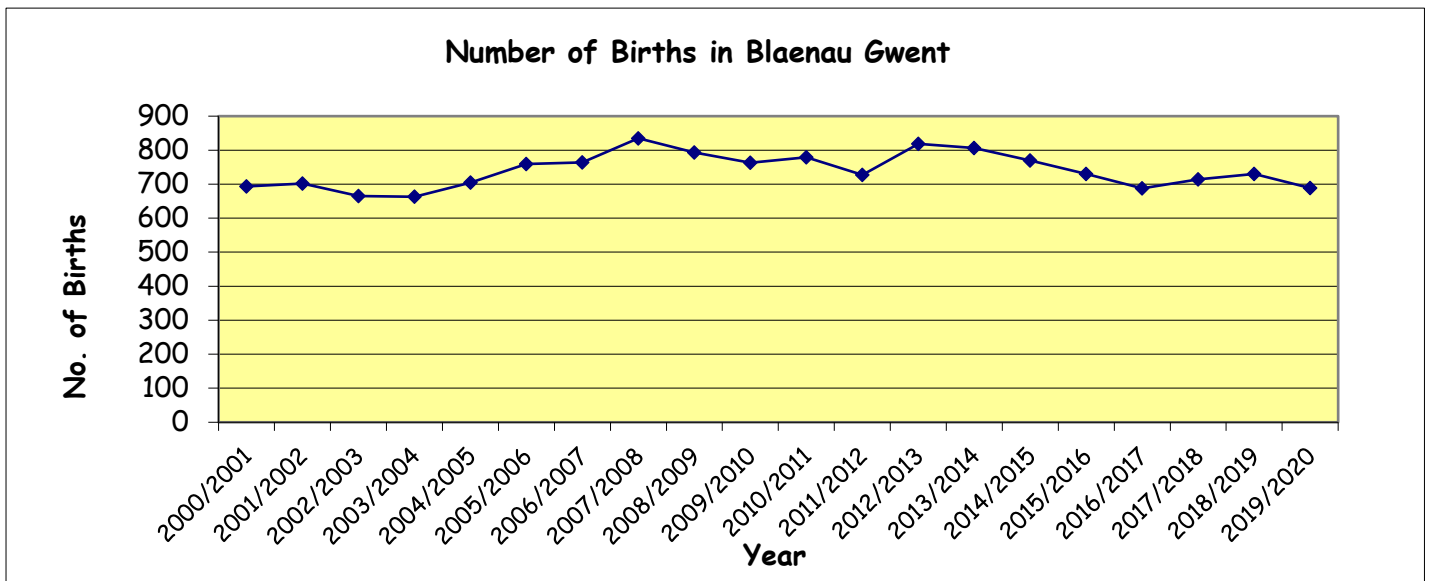
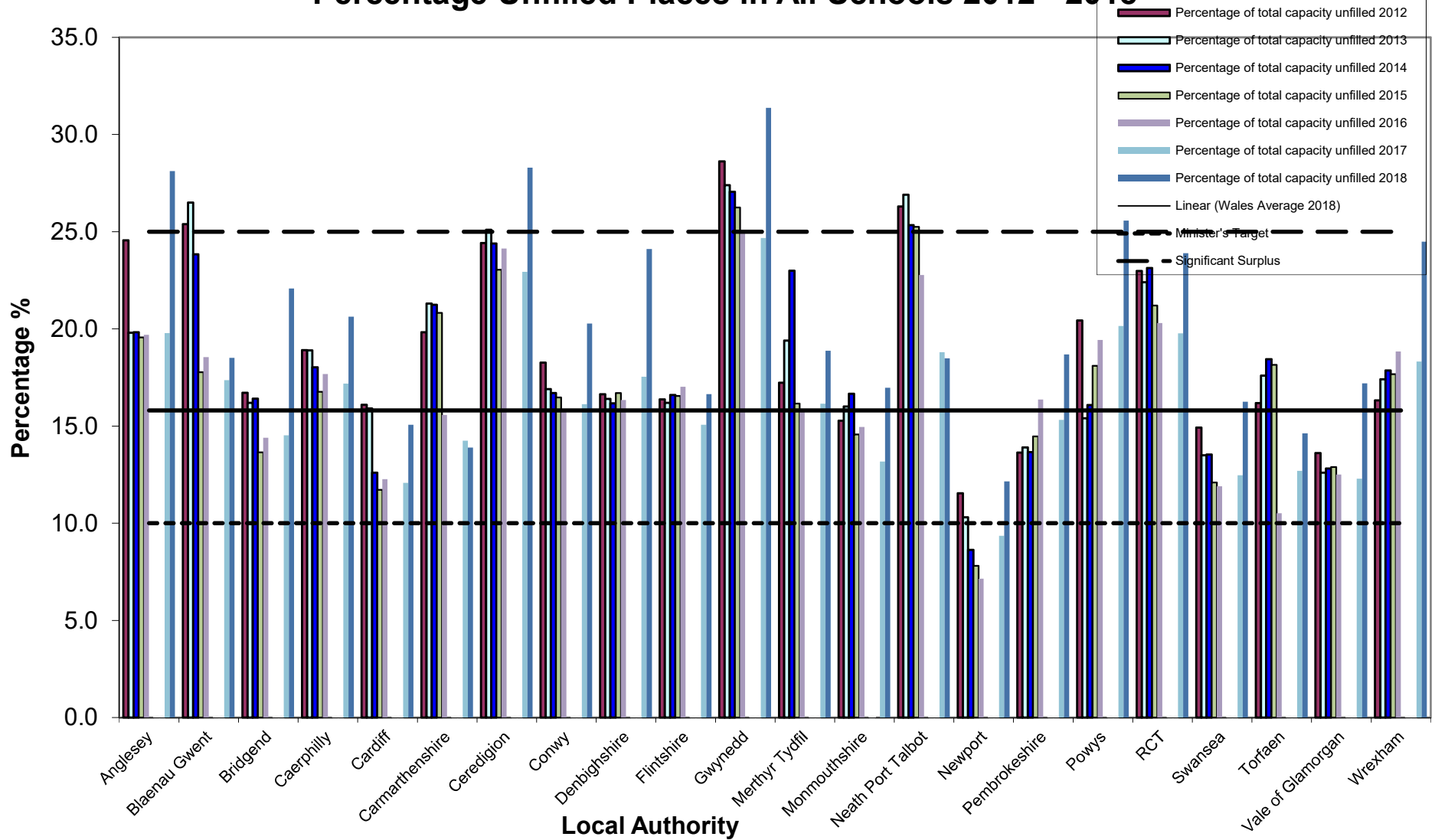


Figure 3(b): Live Birth Data

Year	No. of Births	Year	No. of Births
2000/2001	693	2011/2012	727
2001/2002	702	2012/2013	819
2002/2003	665	2013/2014	806
2003/2004	663	2014/2015	770
2004/2005	705	2015/2016	730
2005/2006	759	2016/2017	688
2006/2007	764	2017/2018	714
2007/2008	835	2018/2019	730
2008/2009	793	2019/2020	689
2009/2010	763		
2010/2011	779		

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Percentage Unfilled Places in All Schools 2012 - 2018



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Division of Responsibilities Guidance: Between Blaenau Gwent Community/Faith and Foundation Schools and Council



Version 2.0

Date of Issue: July 2019

Date of Implementation: Sept 2019

Building and Engineering Repairs and Maintenance

The purpose of the following guidance and procedure is to ensure the effective instigation, monitoring and completion of maintenance and repair works to schools by both Education and Technical Services; also, to inform quality monitoring processes.

Maintenance and repair refers to, the action necessary to retain an element of a building in, or to restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function.

The requirement for maintenance shall be not less than that necessary to meet statutory health and safety and current legal requirements. Maintenance shall mean 'maintaining an element in an effective state, safe, in efficient working order and in good repair.'

In carrying out the function of maintenance it is understood that only materials of an equivalent quality and standard will be provided and the work undertaken by competent and suitably qualified persons with all the accompanied qualifications, insurances and Risk and Method statements.

***Self-help approaches** - this involves the use of external parties approached directly via the school to address minor works identified by the headteacher and/or a member of school staff. In instances where this is deemed to be the best approach by the school, Technical Services/Health and Safety and Education approval **must be** sought prior to work being carried out in order to ensure compliance with the Council's policies such as Health and Safety, FRA, Asbestos Management etc. This does not preclude schools from carrying out works that are cost efficient to the school, they do however ensure that Headteachers, Governing Bodies comply with necessary technical and health and safety precautions/requirements prior to the works being undertaken.

Schools must complete an application form in relation to any self-help schemes they want to carry out.

On receipt of the form a decision will be taken by officers within Education/Tech Services and Health and Safety re the nature of the project, its requirements and risks involved and either:

- Agree to the school proceeding with the works themselves providing a risk assessment and the technical specification for the work has been approved by the Health and Safety and Technical Officers of the Council.
- Arrange to meet with the school and for the scheme to be project managed via the Council to ensure that it is undertaken in a legal and safe manner.

It is therefore essential that projects are planned and approval sought well in advance of implementation to avoid delay. The Council must ensure regulatory compliance with the law and that the works are undertaken by a competent person(s)/company.

Substantial - Within this document 'substantial' shall mean where the work/repair/component represents 75% or more of the whole system and/or structure concerned.

Glazing - this item of work is paid through the Glazing programme which schools contribute to annually. If schools do not contribute into the programme any works that fall under the Glazing heading will be the responsibility of the school.

School (SIMS) - this item of work is the responsibility of the individual school to fund.

SIMS* - this item of work is paid through SIMS* which schools contribute to annually. If schools do not contribute into SIMS* any works that fall under the SIMS* heading will be the responsibility of the school.

Corporate Landlord - The cost of this item of work is the responsibility of the Corporate Landlord/Council to meet.

Statutory Testing - please see page 17.

For further information and/or enquires relating to the guidance document please contact:

Education

Emma Jones: 01495 355412/ 07969336066

Claire Gardner: 01495 357704/ 07815005333

Property Services

Rob Jenkins: 01495 355389/ 07816936715 or

Paul Colston: 01495 355532/ 07964 119858

Contents Page

Section No.	Description of Works	Page No.
1	Structure	4
2	External walls	4
3	External windows and doors	4-5
4	Internal doors, partitions and walls	5
5	Roofs	5-7
6	Floors and staircases	7
7	Suspended ceilings	7
8	Internal finishes – floors	7
9	Internal finishes – walls	8
10	Internal finishes – non suspended ceilings	8
11	Electrical installations	8-9
12	Mechanical services including heating	9-10
13	Mechanical services ventilation	10
14	Mechanical services heating +vent controls	10
15	Building fittings and equipment	10
16	Sanitary fittings, appliances lab fittings	10-11
17	Gas and water services	11
18	External painting/internal decoration	11
19	Drainage from school premises	11
20	Engineering services – incoming supplies	11-12
21	Other buildings	12
22	School meals kitchen and dining halls	12
23	School sites	12-13
24	Site fitments	13
25	Drainage – school sites	13-14
26	Security measures	14
27	Miscellaneous	14
General Information		
Appendix 1	Flow chart - process on reporting repairs/maintenance	15-17

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
1	STRUCTURE						
1.1	Foundations (below top of ground floor slab)	✓			✓		
1.2	Ducts and duct covers (internal)		✓			✓	
1.3	Foundations including foundation walls up to d.p.c level – repairs including underpinning work	✓					✓
1.4	Ground Floors i.e. floor slabs, d.p.m's, hard-core filling (under 10m2 in any one area or room)		✓			✓	
1.5	Ground Floors, floor slabs, d.p.m's hard-core filling (over 10m2 in any one area or room)	✓			✓		
1.6	1 Retaining wall and d.p.c (supporting buildings) repair or replacement		✓			✓	
1.7	All Retaining walls and d.p.c's (supporting buildings) repair or replacement	✓					✓
2	EXTERNAL WALLS AND STRUCTURE						
2.1	Structural frame (steel frames, portal frames, reinforced concrete, precast concrete)	✓					✓
2.2	Access ramps and steps to external doorways		✓			✓	
2.3	Chimney stacks including flashings – repairs including repointing		✓			✓	
2.4	External rendering – repair or re-render		✓			✓	
2.5	External rendering – re-render to substantially all of an existing building	✓					✓
2.6	External walls (including cavity ties, cavity walls insulation, wall cladding, copings) repair or rebuild/re-clad		✓			✓	
2.7	External walls (including cavity ties, cavity walls insulation, wall cladding, copings) replacement of all or substantially all to a building	✓					✓
2.8	Internal walls (including cavity ties, cavity walls insulation, wall cladding, copings) repair or rebuild/re-clad		✓			✓	
2.9	Internal walls (including cavity ties, cavity walls insulation, wall cladding, copings) replacement of all or substantially all to a building	✓					✓
2.10	External walls – Demountable – repair and replacement		✓			✓	
2.11	D.P.C's cavity trays – repair or replacement		✓			✓	
2.12	D.P.C's cavity trays – replacement of all or substantially all to building	✓					✓
2.13	Cills and lintels – repairs and individual replacement		✓			✓	
2.14	Cills and lintels – replacement of all or substantially all to a building	✓					✓
2.15	Graffiti/ Moss removal			✓			✓
2.16	Repointing of brickwork		✓			✓	

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
2.17	Repointing of brickwork affecting substantial part of a building	✓					✓
3	EXTERNAL WINDOWS AND DOORS						
3.1	Single glaze, double glazing, seals, putties solar film			✓			✓
3.2	Draught proofing to windows and doors			✓			✓
3.3	Emergency exit and fire escape doors - repairs			✓			✓
3.4	Emergency exit and fire escape doors – replacement	✓					✓
3.5	Automatic roller shutter door servicing including fire shutters	✓					✓
3.6	Automatic doors – service	✓					✓
3.7	Glass upgrading and safety film	✓					✓
3.8	Linings, beads			✓			✓
3.9	Ironmongery i.e. locks, bolts, hinges, door closers, floor springs, panic bolts, handles casement stays, door safety devices etc.			✓			✓
3.10	Replacement Roller shutters to window and external doors		✓			✓	
3.11	Repair Roller shutters to window and external doors			✓			✓
3.12	Secondary glazing		✓			✓	
3.13	Window guard, steel sheet coverings to doors			✓			✓
3.14	Windows, doors and frames including mastic joints – repairs			✓			✓
3.14	Windows, doors, and frames including mastic joints – individual replacement		✓			✓	
3.15	Windows, doors, and frames including mastic joints – replacement of all or substantially all to a building	✓					✓
3.16	Window winding gear (manually or electrically operated)			✓			✓
4	INTERNAL DOORS, PARTITIONS AND WALLS						
4.1	Repair brick, block, studded, chimney breasts and flues (excluding finishes)		✓			✓	
4.2	Replace brick, block, studded, chimney breasts and flues (excluding finishes)		✓			✓	
4.3	Demolition of brick, block, studded, chimney breasts and flues (excluding finishes)		✓			✓	
4.4	Dry rot treatment including irrigation treatment to internal and external walls, re-plastering	✓			✓		
4.5	Repairs frames, architraves, skirting, dados, picture rails etc.			✓			✓
4.6	Substantial repairs frames, architraves, skirting, dados, picture rails etc.		✓			✓	

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
4.7	Replacement of frames, architraves, skirting, dados, picture rails etc.		✓			✓	
4.8	Fire screens, glazed partitions, internal windows			✓			✓
4.9	Fire screens etc. – upgrading to meet statutory notices		✓			✓	
4.10	Repair of Fire shutters (apart from kitchens)	✓			✓		
4.11	Replace of Fire shutters (apart from kitchens)	✓			✓		
4.12	Repair of Fire stops, cavity barriers and fire curtains	✓			✓		
4.13	Replace of Fire stops, cavity barriers and fire curtains	✓			✓		
4.14	Glazing see above*			✓			✓
4.15	Glass upgrading and safety film		✓			✓	
4.16	Internal doors, hinges, floor springs, door closures, locks, bolts, handles, door safety			✓			✓
4.17	Sliding/folding screens			✓		✓	
4.18	Steel sheet coverings to doors (secure stores)		✓			✓	
4.19	Toilet cubicles, shower cubicles, screens		✓			✓	
4.20	Minor alterations to partitions			✓			✓
5	ROOFS						
5.1	Asbestos cement roof cladding – repairs (without removing asbestos sheets)	✓			✓		
5.1.1	Removal of Asbestos sheets	✓			✓		
5.2	Asbestos cement roof cladding – replacement	✓			✓		
5.3	Covered links, veranda's, porches etc. if school have paid for them - rebuild or substantial repair	✓					✓
5.4	Covered links, veranda's, porches etc. if school have paid for them – repairs			✓			✓
5.5	Covered links, veranda's, porches etc. if built as part of the school - rebuild or substantial repair		✓			✓	
5.6	Covered links, veranda's, porches etc. if built as part of the school - rebuild or substantial repair		✓			✓	
5.7	Eaves, fascia's, soffit and barge boarding – repair or replacements		✓			✓	
5.8	Eaves, fascia's, soffit and barge boarding – replacement of all or substantially all to an existing roof/building	✓			✓		
5.9	Repair or replace of flashing, valley gutters or verge fillets			✓			✓
5.10	Flat roof finishes – repair leaks			✓			✓

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
5.11	Flat roof finishes – replacement (to include improving insulation standards)		✓				✓
5.12	Flat roof structure, metal deck and trusses – treat areas of rusted metal deck		✓				✓
5.13	Flat roof structure, reinforced concrete deck, beams – make good areas of spalling concrete where reinforcement exposed	✓					✓
5.14	Flat roof structure, reinforced concrete deck, metal deck and trusses, beams – replacement of all substantially all to an existing roof/building	✓					✓
5.15	Flat roof structure, timber joists and deck (e.g. plywood, wood-wool slab or composite board) repair		✓				✓
5.16	Flat roof structure, timber joists and deck (e.g. plywood, wood-wool slab or composite board) replacement		✓				✓
5.17	Asbestos insulation boards – specialist removal/ replacement of damaged/ disturbed asbestos based materials, planned or emergency	✓			✓		
5.18	Fire stops and barriers	✓				✓	
5.19	Rainwater gutters and downpipes cleaning out and repairs			✓			✓
5.20	Rainwater gutters and down pipes– replacement		✓			✓	
5.21	Rainwater gutters and down pipes replacement of all or substantially all to a building	✓				✓	
5.22	Pitched roof finishes (e.g. slate, tile etc.) repair missing or broken slates/tiles			✓			✓
5.23	Pitched roof finishes (e.g. slate, tile etc.) replacement of all or substantially all to a roof/building	✓					✓
5.24	Pitched roof structure, rafters, trussed rafters, purlins (but not trusses) – repair or replacement of parts of an existing structure		✓				✓
5.25	Pitched roof structure, rafters, trussed rafters, purlins (but not trusses) – replacement of all or substantial part of an existing structure	✓					✓
5.26	Pitched roof structure, steel portal frame, purlins	✓					✓
5.27	Rainwater outlets set in flat roofs, clean out and repair			✓			✓
5.28	Rainwater outlets set in flat roofs – individual replacement		✓			✓	
5.29	Rainwater outlets set in flat roofs – replacement of all or substantially all	✓				✓	

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		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
5.30	Reflective paint, white stone chippings (i.e. on roof) replacement of all or substantially all		✓				✓
5.31	Ridges, ridge ventilators, soffit ventilators, verges, slate or tile ventilators – repair or replace		✓				✓
5.32	Ridges, ridge ventilators, soffit ventilators, verges, slate or tile ventilators – replacement of all or substantially all to roof	✓					✓
5.33	Roof cladding (e.g. profiled steel sheets, fibre cement sheets, composite roof sheets) – repair or replacement of sheets		✓				✓
5.35	Roof cladding (e.g. profiled steel sheets, fibre cement sheets, composite roof sheets) – replacement of all substantially all to a roof/building	✓					✓
5.36	Roof edge trim, fascia's – repair or replacement of individual lengths		✓				✓
5.37	Roof edge trim, fascia's – replacement of all or substantially all to a roof/building	✓					✓
5.38	Roof screeds, insulation (to flat or pitched roofs) – repair or part replacement on an existing roof		✓				✓
5.39	Roof screeds, insulation (to flat or pitched roofs) – replacement of all or substantially all to a roof/building	✓					✓
5.40	Roof lights – glazing only			✓			✓
5.41	Roof lights (excluding glazing) – repair or replacement of individual roof lights		✓				✓
5.42	Roof lights – replacement of all/substantially all on existing roof	✓					✓
5.43	Snow and gutter boards		✓			✓	
5.44	Tank housings (including kitchen)		✓				✓
5.45	Trusses (not trussed rafters)	✓					✓
6	FLOORS AND STAIRCASES						
6.1	Fire escapes staircases (external not enclosed) – repair	✓				✓	
6.2	Fire escapes staircases (external not enclosed) - replacement	✓				✓	
6.3	Staircases, handrails and balustrades – repair change to school			✓			✓
6.4	Staircases, handrails and balustrades - replacement	✓					✓
6.5	Suspended floors (structure) – repair or replacement of (i.e. joists and floor boards or individual beams)		✓			✓	
6.6	Suspended floors (structure) – replacement of all or substantially all of structure	✓			✓		
6.7	Floor Screeds - repair		✓			✓	
6.8	Floor screeds – substantial replacement to floors	✓			✓		

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7	SUSPENDED CEILINGS						
7.1	Asbestos insulating boards – Inspection/air testing, applying sealant coats to asbestos surfaces for protection	✓			✓		
7.2	Insulation		✓			✓	
7.3	Structure (i.e. grid, suspension system and tiles etc..) repairs		✓				✓
7.4	Structure (i.e. grid, suspension system and tiles etc..) substantial renewal	✓				✓	
8	INTERNAL FINISHES FLOORS						
8.1	Flooring bonded to screed including tiles/carpets (non asbestos)			✓		✓	
8.2	Removal of asbestos tile and bonding	✓			✓		
8.3	Door mats, loose and fitted carpets, carpet tiles			✓		✓	
8.4	Mat wells, nosings, cover and expansion strips			✓		✓	
8.5	Woodstrip, wood block, Granwood block, quarry or ceramic tiles including screed bed, grano/terrazzo – repair floors		✓			✓	
8.6	Woodstrip, wood block, Granwood block, quarry or ceramic tiles including screed bed, grano/terrazzo – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
9	INTERNAL FINISHES – WALLS						
9.1	Plaster, dry lining, artex, covings etc.			✓		✓	
9.2	Skirting's, dado rails			✓		✓	
9.3	Wall tiles, terrazzo etc.			✓		✓	
9.4	Wood strip panelling		✓			✓	
10	INTERNAL FINISHES – NON SUSPENDED CEILINGS						
10.1	Asbestolux	✓			✓		
10.2	Fibreboard, supalux etc.			✓		✓	
10.3	Hardwood or softwood strip panelling			✓		✓	
10.4	Plaster or plasterboard			✓		✓	
10.5	Upgrading of fire rating	✓			✓		
10.6	removal of artex ceilings	✓			✓		
10.7	Finish to ceilings (e.g. acoustic tile, plasterboard) including access panel	✓			✓		
11	ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS						
11.1	Enabling work for cabling for IT networking (Council funded)	✓			✓		
11.2	Class change systems repair			✓			✓

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
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11.3	Substantial Repair of Class change systems (if installed through CL)		✓			✓	
11.4	Drama and stage lighting (for school purposes)			✓			✓
	Installation of Drama and stage lighting		✓			✓	
11.5	Drama and stage lighting (for school purposes only) - inspection and testing (statutory)	✓			✓		
11.6	Earth bonding to meet regulations following repair or inspection		✓			✓	
11.7	Earth bonding to meet regulations following repair or inspection – substantial repairs (other than work not done in accordance with guidelines)	✓			✓		
11.8	Minor electrical work to mobile classroom (LA owned)		✓			✓	
11.9	Electrical installation – replacement of substantial element of obsolete or dangerous installation	✓			✓		
11.10	Emergency lighting repair/replace			✓			✓
11.11	Emergency lighting - substantial replacement	✓			✓		
11.12	External lighting fixed to external walls (limited installation up to 5 lights)			✓			✓
11.13	Extractor fans, in external walls or on roof (excluding kitchen)		✓			✓	
11.14	Extractor fans – internal			✓			✓
11.15	Fire alarms system (including panels, break glass, smoke detectors etc..) –repairs and replacement of parts (excluding main panel)			✓			✓
11.16	Fire alarm systems – monitoring (excluding service provider charges), inspection and service		✓	✓		✓	✓
11.17	Fire alarm systems – total replacement of system or replacement of main panel	✓			✓		
11.18	Fuses, M.C.B's, R.C.D's final distribution of power and lighting circuits including switches – , repairs and replacement			✓			✓
11.19	Internal lighting, light fittings – repairs and maintenance, replacement			✓			✓
11.20	Internal lighting, light fittings – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
11.21	Light fittings – cleaning, replacement of starters, diffusers, lamps and shades			✓			✓
11.22	Lightning conductors – repairs/replacement		✓			✓	
11.23	Lightning conductors – inspection and testing	✓			✓		
11.24	Main switchgear including distribution boards – replacement	✓			✓		
11.25	Main switchgear including distribution boards – repair		✓			✓	
11.26	Portable electrical appliances – annual testing and repairs/replacement of			✓			✓

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
11.25	Repair/replacement of Portable fans			✓			✓
11.26	Power points and sockets including low voltage – repairs and replacement			✓			✓
11.27	Power sockets on wall benches and computer worktops			✓			✓
11.28	Public address and sound amplification systems repair			✓			✓
11.29	Public address and sound amplification systems if installed by CL substantial replacement		✓			✓	
11.30	Radio/TV aerials cabling and sockets			✓			✓
11.31	Remedial works – repair/replacement following electrical inspections/testing			✓			✓
11.32	Sub-mains, sections boards, three phase switch gear including distribution boards – repair/replacement	✓			✓		
11.33	Switchgear from incoming substation to electrical switchgear – repair/replace/maintain	✓			✓		
11.34	Telephone installation and associated trunking			✓			✓
11.35	Water heaters (electrical) – repairs			✓			✓
11.36	Water heaters (electrical) – replacement		✓			✓	
12	PHOTO VOLTAIC (PV)						
12.1	Renewable Energy/systems						
12.2	Photo Voltaic(PV) system Maintenance			✓			✓
12.3	Photo Voltaic(PV) system Repair			✓			✓
12.4	Photo Voltaic(PV) system inverter Replacement	50%		50%	50%		50%
12.5	Photo Voltaic(PV) system panel replacement up to 6			✓			✓
12.6	Photo Voltaic(PV) system panel replacement over 6		✓			✓	
12.7	Photo Voltaic(PV) system Substantial Replacement	✓			✓		
12.8	Solar Hot water system maintenance			✓			✓
12.9	Solar Hot water system Substantial Replacement	✓			✓		
12.10	Biomass Boiler repair/maintenance			✓			✓
12.11	Biomass Boiler new installation	✓			✓		
12.12	Biomass Boiler substantial replacement/repair		✓			✓	
12.13	Ground/Air source heat pump new installation	✓			✓		
12.14	Ground/Air source heat pump Repair/Maintenance			✓			✓
12.15	Ground/Air source heat pump substantial replacement/repair		✓			✓	

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		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
13	MECHANICAL SERVICES INCLUDING HEATING						
13.1	Asbestos based heating and D.H.W installation lagging – replacement, testing or monitoring	✓			✓		
13.2	Monthly domestic hot water statutory testing (legionella's)	✓			✓		
13.3	Fixed electric or gas heaters – replacement		✓			✓	
13.4	Freestanding flues non asbestos – repairs		✓			✓	
13.5	Freestanding flues asbestos – removal	✓			✓		
13.6	Freestanding flues – inspection and substantial replacement non asbestos		✓			✓	
13.7	Freestanding flues – inspection and substantial replacement asbestos	✓				✓	
13.8	Heat emitters (radiators, natural and fan convectors etc..) filters of single thermostats, controls and motors – cleaning, repairs and replacement			✓			✓
13.9	Heat emitters – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
13.10	Combined heat and power units – replacement	✓			✓		
13.11	Combined heat and power units maintenance/repairs			✓			✓
13.12	Heating boilers, direct gas fired hot water boilers, burners, plate heat exchangers, pumps and flues – repairs and maintenance including replacing pumps		✓			✓	
13.13	Heating pipework including valves, isolation valves, insulation and automatic air vents – repair/replacement of single units			✓			✓
13.14	Heating pipework including valves, isolation valves, insulation and automatic air vents – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
13.15	Laboratory equipment taps, valves, heat treatment equipment – repairs/replacement			✓			✓
13.16	Gas pipework, distribution valves – repairs and maintenance		✓			✓	
13.17	Pressure vessels – testing and repair statutory			✓			✓
13.18	Pressure vessels – renewal	✓			✓		
13.19	Protective guards to controls and flue outlets – repair and maintenance			✓			✓
13.20	Repairs following statutory inspection and servicing of all mechanical and Electrical services			✓			✓
13.21	Automatic gas isolation and gas detection equipment servicing	✓			✓		
13.22	Repairs following statutory gas safety tests			✓			✓
13.23	Thermostatic radiator valves, motorised valves – repairs/replacement			✓			✓
13.24	Hydrotherapy pools – service and inspection	✓			✓		
13.25	Hydrotherapy pools – equipment repair and renewal		✓			✓	

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		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
14	VENTILATION						
14.1	Air handling units – replacement	✓			✓		
14.2	Air handling units (mechanical, electrical services and controls) repairs and maintenance		✓			✓	
14.3	Fan speed controllers – repair and replacement		✓			✓	
14.4	Induced draft and extract fans – repair/replacement and cleaning		✓			✓	
14.5	Ventilation grilles, ductwork and canopies (excluding kitchens) cleaning		✓			✓	
14.6	Ventilation grilles, ductwork and canopies (excluding kitchens) – repair/replacement	✓			✓		
14.7	Ventilation fans and ducting for dust and fume extraction – repairs, replacement and cleaning			✓			✓
14.8	Dust and extract systems – inspection statutory	✓			✓		
14.9	Air conditioning – repairs and maintenance			✓ x			✓
14.10	Air conditioning – replacement if installed by CL	✓			✓		
14.11	Air conditioning – service and inspection Statutory			✓			✓
15	HEATING AND VENTILATION – CONTROLS						
15.1	Building energy management systems – remote monitoring and remote adjustments (where they exist)	✓			✓		
15.2	Heating controls/Sensors/Actuator etc.. – repair/replacement and calibration			✓			✓
15.3	Heating control systems – full replacement	✓			✓		
15.4	Energy saving measures/projects assessed on an individual basis			✓			✓
15.5	Monitoring of energy use – oil fuel, water, electric and gas consumptions excluding on site readings	✓			✓		
15.6	Time controllers, optimisers and weather compensators – repair/replacement and adjustment of individual items			✓			✓
16	BUILDING FITTINGS AND EQUIPMENT						
16.1	Fire extinguishers, blankets etc.. – repair, recharge and replacement		✓			✓	
16.2	Fire extinguishers, blankets etc.. – annual servicing and inspection statutory	✓			✓		
16.3	Hose reels – repair and replacement	✓			✓		
16.4	Hose reels – annual servicing and inspection	✓			✓		

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16.5	Fixed fume cupboards and associated extract flues – statutory inspection and repair			✓			✓
16.6	Fixed fume cupboards and associated flues – initial inspection complete replacement	✓			✓		
16.7	Fixed and portable stages – repair and replacement			✓			✓
17	SANITARY FITTINGS, APPLIANCES, LABORATORY FITTINGS (including connections to services and wastes together with all above ground drainage)						
17.1	All sanitary appliances, wc pans and cisterns, urinals, sinks, basins, shower trays, inc cubicles, cleaning, caretaker's sink and sink units			✓			✓
17.2	Drinking fountain Repairs/Renewal			✓			✓
17.3	Incinerators		✓			✓	
17.4	Laboratory and classroom/workshop sinks repairs and replacement			✓			✓
18	GAS AND WATER SERVICES						
18.1	Gas services and connections to equipment – repair or replacement (to include repairing gas leaks		✓			✓	
18.2	Hot and cold water services and connections to sanitary fittings (from incoming stop valve including services between buildings)			✓			✓
18.3	Isolating valves, regulating valves etc..			✓			✓
18.4	Thermostatic mixing valves – repairs/renewals			✓			✓
18.5	Thermostatic mixing valves – servicing/cleaning	✓			✓		
18.6	Water risk assessments (control of legionella)	✓			✓		
18.7	Repair following legionella inspection			✓			✓
18.8	Water sprinkler system Repairs (i.e. fire)	✓		✓	✓		✓
18.9	Water storage tanks – cleaning and disinfection	✓			✓		
18.10	Water storage tanks and calorifiers – repairs including replacement of ball valves		✓			✓	
18.11	Water storage tanks and calorifiers - replacement	✓			✓		
19	EXTERNAL REPAINTING/INTERNAL REDECORATION						
19.1	External repainting complete including fences and outbuildings Should not be here			✓			✓
19.2	Internal repainting including varnishing, sprayed finishes, fire retardant coatings Should not be here			✓			✓
19.3	Murals painted insignia and other art work, playground markings Should not be here			✓			✓

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		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
19.4	Wallpapering or other applied finishes Should not be here			✓			✓
20	DRAINAGE FROM SCHOOL BUILDINGS						
20.1	Clearing blockages, cleaning channels and grease traps, emptying and cleansing septic tanks			✓			✓
20.2	Drainage pipes – clearing blockages, cleaning or jetting			✓			✓
20.3	Drainage pipes – repairs including replacement of collapsed or fractured		✓			✓	
20.4	Drainage pipes – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
20.5	Manhole covers and frames, gulley's and grids, grease traps, internal floor gratings, channels, rodding eyes - repair		✓			✓	
20.6	Manhole covers and frames, gulley's and grids, grease traps, internal floor gratings, channels, rodding eyes – replacement		✓			✓	
20.7	Manholes and inspection chambers – repair including repointing works and renewing benching	✓			✓		
20.8	Manholes and inspection chambers – replacement	✓			✓		
20.9	Sewage pumps – cleaning blockage or repair due to blockage			✓			✓
20.10	Sewage pumps – replacement	✓			✓		
21	ENGINEERING SERVICES – MAINS SUPPLY (from point of entry into School Buildings and between buildings)						
21.1	Electric	✓			✓		
21.2	Gas	✓			✓		
21.3	Water	✓			✓		
22	OTHER BUILDINGS						
22.1	Demountable classrooms, fuel stores, external toilets		✓			✓	
22.2	School house	✓			✓		
22.3	Greenhouses, potting sheds, garages, buildings erected by the school			✓			✓
22.4	Swimming pool (LA provided) – hygiene, cleansing, cleaning, maintenance and repairs (internal and external)	✓			✓		
23	SCHOOL MEALS KITCHENS AND DINING HALLS						

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		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
23.1	Kitchen (including stores, toilet accommodation) maintaining kitchen to LA requirements including cleaning and drainage systems, internal redecoration, repairs to internal finishes, repairs or replacement of sanitary fittings	✓			✓		
23.2	Kitchen cleaning of grease traps and associated drainage	✓			✓		
23.3	Kitchens (including stores, toilet accommodation) – external repairs and repainting	✓			✓		
23.4	Kitchen refurbishment/enhancement works to meet legislation and food safety requirements (e.g. provision of additional ventilation, formation of ante-spaces and changing areas, decoration)	✓			✓		
23.5	Extract ventilation and ductwork, filters, canopies fans, motors etc. repairs and maintenance	✓			✓		
23.6	Extract ventilation and ductwork, filters, canopies fans, motors etc. – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
23.7	Dining halls – internal and external repairs including redecoration	✓			✓		
24	SCHOOL SITES						
24.1	Access roads, bus parking and turning areas, car parks, paths and paved areas including kerbs, sleeping policemen and retaining walls there to repairs within school buildings			✓			✓
24.2	Access roads, bus parking an turning areas, car parks, paths and paved areas including kerbs, sleeping policemen and retaining walls thereto – substantial repairs/replacement within school boundary	✓			✓		
24.3	Boundary walls, perimeter fencing and gates and retaining walls – there to – repairs			✓			✓
24.4	Boundary walls, perimeter fencing and gates and retaining walls thereto – substantial repairs/replacement	✓			✓		
24.5	Demolition and site clearance of large structures (removal of mobile classrooms) including making good of ground finish	✓			✓		
24.6	Demolition and site clearance of small structures (small outbuildings, sheds, incinerators etc..) including making good of ground finish		✓			✓	
24.7	Fire hydrants – maintenance and servicing statutory	✓			✓		
24.8	Free standing/ fixed safety railings		✓			✓	
24.9	Gas meter chambers and utility housings		✓			✓	
24.10	Kitchen yards, bin areas, screen walls and fences		✓			✓	

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		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
24.11	Nursery play area fencing and gates – repairs/replacement		✓			✓	
24.12	Nursery play area fencing and gates – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
24.13	Playground and play court fencing – repairs and replacement		✓			✓	
24.14	Playground and play court fencing – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
24.15	Playground and play court markings for games			✓			✓
24.16	Playgrounds – complete resurfacing	✓			✓		
24.17	Playgrounds and play courts – repairs			✓			✓
24.18	Playgrounds and play courts –sweeping of surface to removal gravel			✓			✓
24.19	Pointing to boundary walls, retaining walls etc.			✓			✓
24.20	Pointing to boundary walls, retaining walls etc. substantial areas	✓			✓		
24.21	Steps and ramps to access buildings – maintenance		✓			✓	
24.22	Steps and ramps within site – replacement		✓			✓	
24.23	Site lighting columns and lanterns – access roads, car parks – inspection and substantial renewal		✓			✓	
24.24	Site lighting columns and lanterns – access roads, car parks – re-lamping and repairs		✓			✓	
24.25	Sports field floodlighting – inspection only	✓			✓		
24.26	Sports field floodlighting – repair and renewal		✓			✓	
24.27	Underground ducts and duct covers for services between school buildings – repair/maintenance/replacement	✓			✓		
25	SITE FITMENTS						
25.1	Cycle sheds, racks and blocks			✓			✓
25.2	Free standing drinking fountains			✓			✓
25.3	Free-standing flag poles			✓			✓
25.4	Free standing lighting standards – statutory inspection	✓			✓		
25.5	Free-standing lighting standards – repair and replacement		✓			✓	
25.6	Free standing school name board and directional signing			✓			✓
25.7	Sculptures, fountains and other site features			✓			✓
26	DRAINAGE SCHOOL SITE						
26.1	Ground and surface water pumps and chambers – cleaning, emptying and repairs			✓			✓
26.2	Ground and surface water pumps and chambers – replacement and servicing		✓			✓	

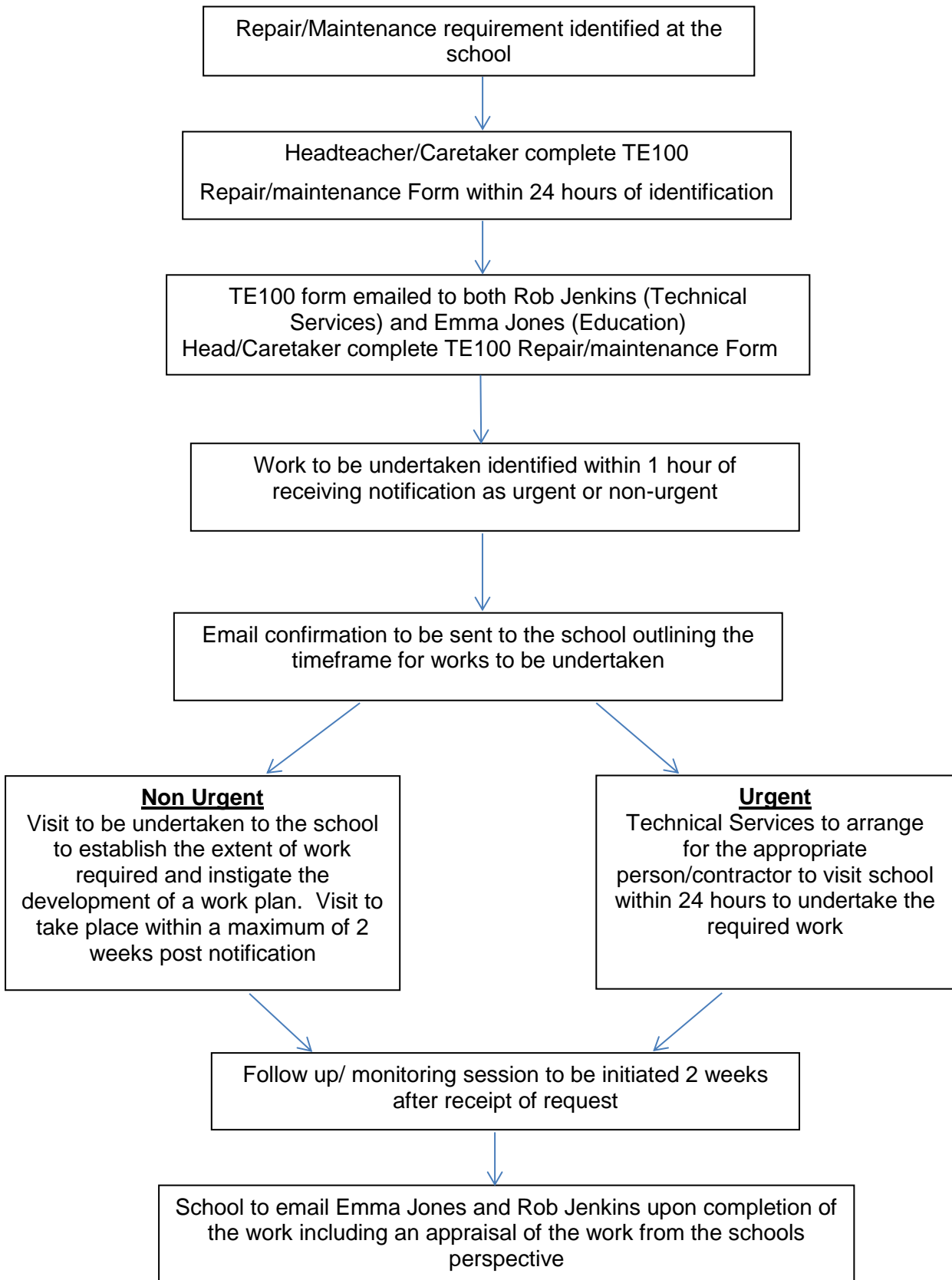
Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
26.3	Sewage pumps and pump chambers – cleaning emptying and repairs and servicing			✓			✓
26.4	Sewage pumps and pump chambers – replacement	✓			✓		
26.5	Surface water drains – cleaning blockages minor repairs			✓			✓
26.6	Surface water manhole covers and frames, gully's and grids, rodding eyes		✓			✓	
26.7	Surface water manhole and inspection chambers – repair including repointing works and renewing benching		✓			✓	
26.8	Surface water manholes and inspection chambers – replacement	✓			✓		
26.9	Surface water drainage pipes – clearing blockages, cleansing or jetting			✓			✓
26.10	Surface water drainage pipes – including replacement of collapsed or fractured pipes			✓			✓
26.11	Surface water drainage pipes – substantial replacement	✓			✓		
27	SECURITY MEASURES						
27.1	Entry phones, door access systems			✓			✓
27.2	Intruder alarm systems – repairs, servicing and monitoring			✓			✓
27.3	Intruder alarm systems (LA provided)servicing and monitoring			✓			✓
27.4	Security fencing (around school buildings not site)repair			✓			✓
27.5	Security gates and grills to entrances and exits attached to school buildings including windows			✓			✓
27.6	Intruder alarm replacement		✓			✓	
27.7	Security lighting – free-standing			✓			✓
27.8	Security fencing substantial replacement	✓			✓		
27.9	Security lighting – fixed to buildings			✓			✓
27.10	Security locks (internal and external windows and doors)			✓			✓
27.11	Video surveillance system/CCTV repair and maintenance			✓			✓
28	MISCELLANEOUS						
28.1	Asbestos removal – inspection/air testing, applying sealant coats to asbestos surfaces for protection	✓			✓		
28.2	Asbestos removal – specialist removal/replacement of damaged/disturbed asbestos based materials, planned or emergency	✓			✓		
28.3	Lift, stair lifts, passenger lifts and hoists – inspection and renewal	✓			✓		

Section	Description of Works	Community Schools			Faith/Foundation Schools		
		Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School	Corporate Landlord	Sims *	School
28.4	Lifts, stair lifts, passenger lifts and hoists – repairs		✓			✓	
28.5	Bell/clock towers		✓			✓	
28.6	Rodent and insect infestation measures			✓			✓
28.7	Works arising as a result of changes in legislation	✓			✓		

Statutory Test	Corporate Landlord	School
Water Hygiene/Legionella	X	
Fire Alarms		X
Emergency Lighting		X
Lifts	X	
Evacuation Chairs	X	
Portable Fire Fighting Equipment	X	
Gas Boilers		X
Mansafe Systems	X	
Rollershutter Doors	X	
Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)		X
Automatic Doors	X	
Intruder Alarms		X
F Gas Testing		X
Lighting Protection	X	
Safety Glazing	X	
Thermostatic Mixing Valves	X	
Pool Sampling	X	
Sprinkler Systems	X	
Gas Fired Appliances		X
Dry Riser Systems	X	
Asbestos Management costs	X	
Drama/Stage Lighting	X	
Chimney Inspections	X	
Fume Cupboards		X
Gas Suppression Systems	X	
Pressurisation Units		X
Fire Dampers	X	
Periodic Electrical Inspection (not Annual)	25%	75%

Catering Responsibilities	Signed into Catering SLA		Not signed into Catering SLA	
	Corporate Landlord	School	Corporate Landlord	School
For replacement or repair of all catering equipment and Elec, Mechanical and Waste Services up to £750		X		x
For replacement or repair of all catering equipment and Electrical, Mechanical and Waste Services Between £751 and £1500	50%	50%		x
For replacement of all catering equipment and Electrical, Mechanical and Waste Services over £1500	X			x
Gas statutory safety testing for kitchen	X			x
Statutory Canopy cleans for kitchen		X		x
For all repairs after or during Statutory Testing		X		x
For reactive repairs to Catering Equipment or kitchen envelope		X		x
Repairs to electricity supply within kitchen up to kitchen equipment	X			x
Repairs to Gas supply within kitchen up to kitchen equipment	X			x
Full kitchen refurbishment	X			x
Decoration to any part of kitchen including toilet area	X			x
Full Redecoration to kitchen	X			x
Repairs to kitchen canopy including new filters	X			x
Renewal or installation of Kitchen Canopy	X			x
Repairs to cashless system	X			x
Renewal of Cashless System	X			x

Process Chart for Schools for notifying Technical Services and Education Department of repairs/maintenance required at school



TE100 REPAIR/MAINTENANCE REPORT FORM

Section A: To be completed by the Head or Caretaker

Name of School:	
Name:	
Position held:	
Date Reported:	
Description of repair/maintenance required:	
Location or repair/maintenance:	

TE100 REPAIR/MAINTENANCE REPORT FORM

Section B: To be completed by Technical Services

Urgent:	Non Urgent:
Action:	Action:
Proceed: Yes/No	Proceed: Yes/No
Contractor/Maintenance Officer contacted:	Contractor/Maintenance Officer contacted:
Estimate of Costs:	Estimate of Costs:
Costs to be paid from CL / S / S*	Costs to be paid from CL / S / S*
Timeframe for works to be completed:	Timeframe for works to be completed:
Date of Completion:	Date of Completion:
Signed Off by:	Signed Off by:

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Appendix 5 – Overall Building Condition and Suitability Ratings

	A	B	B/C	C	D
Primary (19 Schools – 19 buildings)					
Condition	0	11	0	7	1
Suitability	3	7	9	0	0
Secondary (2 schools – 2 buildings)					
Condition	0	1	0	1	0
Suitability		1	0	1	0
Middle (2 schools - 6 buildings)					
Condition	4	1	0	1	0
Suitability	4	1	0	1	0
Special (2 schools- 4 buildings)					
Condition	1	1	0	2	0
Suitability	1	2	0	1	0

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	Jan-20				Jan-21		Jan-22			Jan-23		Jan-24		Jan-25	
	Capacity 2019/20	actual No on Roll	Overall Proj No	capacity 2020/21	Proj No	Overall Proj No	capacity 2021/22	Proj No	Overall Proj No	Proj No	Overall Proj No	Proj No	Overall Proj No	Proj No	Overall Proj No
Primary	5925	5227	12	5845	5296	9	5813	5305	9	5302	9	5251	10	5207	10
Secondary	3463	2907	16	3463	2928	15	3463	3062	12	3072	11	3095	11	3073	11
Total	9388	8134	13	9308	8224	12	9276	8367	10	8374	10	8346	10	8280	11

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Agenda Item 21

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Education ICT - Infrastructure Connectivity Project**

Portfolio Holder: **Education and Learning Portfolio – Cllr. Joanne Collins**

Report Submitted by: **Lyn Phillips-Corporate Director of Education**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
25.11.20	25.11.20	17.12.20			15.12.20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report, is to provide Members of the Executive Committee with the opportunity to consider the progress in relation to the ICT - Infrastructure Connectivity Project (ICP). In addition, the report will provide an overview of the Welsh Government's Hwb EdTech Programme and its alignment with the Blaenau Gwent ICP.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Blaenau Gwent Infrastructure and Connectivity Project

In 2017, Education and the Shared Resource Service (SRS) worked in partnership with schools to review the status of and develop a project proposal, to enhance ICT infrastructure and connectivity throughout the school estate, whilst also addressing gaps and consistency issues. The proposal aimed to improve the delivery of teaching and learning, whilst also facilitating delivery in line with the Digital Competency Framework, and effectively contributing to the overall curriculum aspirations for Wales. The proposal also sought to build upon the outcomes realised as a result of the Living in Digital Wales (LiDW) Grant initiated in 2014, which focused on improving standards of connectivity.

- 2.2 In order to develop an Infrastructure and Connectivity Project (ICP) business case, Education worked closely with SRS and schools via the development of an ICT Strategy Group (comprised of Headteacher, Council, SRS, Education Achievement Service, Welsh Government and other relevant representatives). The business case was based upon a detailed audit of infrastructure and connectivity, along with an appreciation of school-based ICT operation issues. The proposal was developed, consulted upon and taken via the Council's political processes and approved in 2018.

- 2.3 In addition to the proposal, the SRS schools Service Level Agreement (SLA) was re-developed to account for the changes throughout the school estate, whilst also seeking to secure improved standards in relation to service delivery. All schools signed up for a 3-year period to the newly established SLA arrangements in 2018.

- 2.4 The project was initiated in November 2018, with relevant staff recruited to undertake the physical works; project management processes were agreed and a project group established. Implementation began in March 2019, to allow SRS, British Telecom, third party contractor Stoneleigh, and relevant Council services to undertake preparatory works including: school network equipment audits, identification and management of facilities implications, programming and delivery of the initial pilot phase. The projected project end date was summer 2020.
- 2.5 The capital investment of £560,000 will achieve the following throughout the school estate:
- **Migration to the Schools EDU Network**, improving the network infrastructure within schools throughout BG.
 - **Improved internet connectivity and use** – Prior to project inception, school usage on the connection peaked at just over 50%. Internet usage in schools is expected to increase following these improvements. Should the capacity for schools have remained the same this would create a bottle neck, which despite faster connection, would mean that schools experience slowness.
 - **School connectivity** – Connection between the school and the central infrastructure. Achieving LiDW 2020 aspirations for all schools; i.e. 100MB for primary schools and 1GB for secondary schools, for middle schools on separate sites the primary and secondary requirements will apply.
 - In- school infrastructure to ensure **effective internet access to meet current and future** requirements and aspirations (switches and wireless).
 - **Internal connectivity** - the BG standard is defined as infrastructure and connectivity for every person in the school (student, teacher, adult) to have a maximum **1.5 internet connected devices simultaneously in appropriate areas**.
 - Provision of **secure remote access for teachers, pupils, parents and governors**.
 - **Centralised infrastructure including** school file storage, infrastructure licensing, software deployment servers (SCCM).
 - **Secure e-safety** infrastructure arrangements – to include web filtering, anti-virus protection, and Bring Your Own Device (BYOD).
 - **Centralised SIMS** – SIMS will be hosted centrally ensuring consistency and continuity of access.
- 2.6 The objectives of the ICP include:
- Connectivity will be enhanced across the school estate by improving line speed;
 - Creation of opportunities for consistency in the provision of education and learning via the medium of technology;
 - To address cabling issues, resulting in improved wireless coverage through the installation of additional Wi-Fi access points;
 - Creation of an ICT infrastructure that underpins, supports and facilitates effective school to school working;

- All primary schools will have 100MB connectivity and all secondary schools will have 1GB of connectivity;
- To provide a centralised file storage and backup solution to all schools; and,
- To provide a web filtering solution that supports safeguarding for both staff and pupils in schools.

2.7 **Welsh Government Hwb EdTech Initiative**

During 2019, the Welsh Government launched the Hwb EdTech (HET) initiative, which over a 3-year period, will realise an investment of over £2 million (£900,000 over waves 1 and 2) throughout the school estate. The programme is divided into Waves as follows:

- **Wave 1 – 2019/20**
Broadband Connectivity
Data Network Cabinets
Core Switches
Routers
Associated Cabling
UPS
- **Wave 2 – 2019/20**
In-school Cabling
Edge Switches
Wireless Access Points
Wired Access Points
- **Wave 3 – 2020/21**
Whole-school Meraki Device Management
Caching solutions supporting classroom learning
Servers
- **Wave 4 – 2021/22**
Replace unsupported devices
Acquire additional devices
Charging trolleys

2.8 The status of the ICP placed Blaenau Gwent in a strong position to further enhance infrastructure in line with the first 3 waves of Hwb EdTech funding. This meant that we were able to incorporate the additional work programme into the ICP, and realise efficiencies in terms of both time and resources. Welsh Government stipulate that the waves need to be signed off sequentially. Blaenau Gwent are due to successfully sign off the first 3 waves in January 2021. The Hwb EdTech funding has permitted additional infrastructure priorities to be reviewed and addressed.

2.9 **Figure 1** below outlines the investment priorities for both the Blaenau Gwent ICP and Hwb EdTech Programme:

Blaenau Gwent Project Investment	Hwb EdTech Programme Investment (Waves 1 and 2)
SchoolsEdu Migration	Core Fibre Infrastructure
Obsolete Wi-Fi Replacement	Nearing End of Life Wi-Fi Replacement

ICT Infrastructure Replacement	Switch/Router Replacement
Onsite Cache Server	Main Cabinet Replacement
Licensing Meraki	UPS Battery/Power Surge Protection
PinSafe Remote Access	Associated Cabling/Wired Connections
Internet Connection Upgrades	-
Migration – Schools Standardisation	-
Migration – Issue Management and Mitigation	-

2.10 During the Spring-term 2020, Welsh Government announced funding to address the needs of digitally disadvantaged learners and associated device replacement in schools, including a Hwb In-schools Infrastructure Grant Scheme (HISIG). This aspect of the device-based funding wave was initiated earlier than planned, to address issues resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the funding allocation for Blaenau Gwent was confirmed as £605,254. The criteria for the funding included: device replacement costs, servers, licensing to support re-build and programming of end of life (EOL) devices to meet the needs of digitally excluded learners; along with Mi-Fi units to support home-based connectivity. Education established a delivery plan in partnership with SRS and schools, to reduce and replace the number of end of life devices, whilst also successfully meeting the needs of staff, pupils, and those experiencing digital exclusion throughout the school closure period and beyond.

2.11 **Progress to Date**
Despite the impact of COVID-19 which has resulted in both school access and resourcing issues, along with extensive additional planning and risk assessment requirements; excellent progress has been made in line with delivery of the ICP. As a result, there is only one ICP migration remaining at Pen Y Cwm Special School, which is programmed for delivery in December 2020. The project has faced a series of challenges along the way, including: facilities, technical and resourcing issues, service disruption associated with external factors etc. However, issue management has been strong, and addressed by SRS via detailed action plans, which are effectively monitored in partnership with the Council and schools.

2.12 Waves 1-3 of the HET are programmed for completion by January 31st 2021, with works across the following 6 sites remaining: Rhos y Fedwen, St Joseph's Glanhowy and Ystruth Primary Schools, along with ALC Roseheyworth and Tillery Street Campuses.

2.13 Additional benefits have been realised in line with project delivery, including:

- Full rebuild/reconfiguration of school-based devices.
- Development of a hardware inventory across school estate
- End user device security and management enhancements

In addition to the above, sustainability planning is underway to address the associated long-term strategic priorities throughout the school estate.

Schools and relevant partners have already been consulted upon and agreed key underlying principles. A detailed plan will be developed in January 2021, for implementation from September 2021.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

Option 1: Members considers and accepts the report.

Option 2: Members considers the report and provides comments relating to improvements that can be made.

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

4.1 Education is a Strategic priority within the Council's Corporate Plan, of which the development and sustainability of school-based ICT provision is an essential component in relation to teaching, learning and pupil outcomes.

4.2 Welsh Government determined their curriculum aspirations within 'A Curriculum for Wales – a Curriculum for Life' (2015). The plan in delivering these aspirations is directly aligned to key recommendations emerging from Professor Donaldson's 'Successful Futures' report, which places the issue of technology at the heart of new curriculum arrangements.

4.3 Welsh Government subsequently developed the Digital Competency Framework (in line with the Donaldson report, and 'A Curriculum for Wales – a Curriculum for Life', 2015). The DCF establishes a framework for the delivery of ICT across the curriculum that will enable the development of a digitally skilled pupil population in the use of technologies, whilst preparing them for future progression routes and career pathways. It is recognised that supporting digital skill building will potentially stimulate the local economy and economic activity. The DCF provides the basis for the strategic approach to the delivery of ICT across the school estate within Blaenau Gwent. Education's ambition in line with DCF and Successful Futures, is to maximise the use of new technologies in delivering the curriculum, in order to increase the digital competency and capabilities of learners.

5.1 ***Impact on Budget***

There are no new or additional budgetary implications for the Council. Both projects are currently on profile, with a favourable variance at present. The capital budgets and grants are as follows, with future allocations aligned to the Hwb EdTech Programme pending confirmation, further information for which is anticipated in 2021:

- ICP £250,000
- HET £900,000 (Waves 1 and 2)
- Welsh Government Hwb EdTech funding to address digital disadvantage and associated device requirements (inclusive of the HISIG) £605,524

5.2 ***Risk*** - The primary risk associated with project delivery is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated implications. In addition, minimising

disruption is vital to ensure that schools continue to operate effectively to support increased digital requirements, including virtual and distance learning. The latter has the potential to increase the timescales for completion, and minimise the opportunity for error. There is a detailed implementation plan, which encompasses learning to date, along with an in-depth appreciation of facilities and associated requirements. Staff and budgetary contingencies have been built in, and the project delivery timeline extended to address time constraints and accommodate increased work programming.

5.3 **Legal** – There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

5.4 **Human Resources** – There are no direct human resource implications associated with the report, sufficient staffing and other resources have been secured and contingencies built-in.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

To date the following outcomes have been achieved:

- 1,214 devices and 141 Mi-Fi units have been distributed to digitally disadvantaged learners.
- 2,247 devices have been ordered to replace end of life devices throughout the school estate. Set-up and distribution is programmed throughout the autumn-term 2020 and spring-term 2021 in line with Welsh Government procurement timelines.
- 29 out of 30 school sites have been fully migrated and their connectivity addressed under the ICP
- Infrastructure upgrades have been completed in 24 out of 30 school sites, with the remaining schools programmed for completion over the next 6-8 weeks.
- Device and infrastructure audits have been completed and updated for all schools.

Post project delivery, an impact assessment will be completed, along with a full scale project evaluation.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public (This section is mandatory)** - The primary outcomes associated with projects are driven by two key education objectives:

- Improved quality of teaching and learning via the development of a fit for purpose ICT infrastructure; and,
- Improved standards of education, pupil attainment and outcomes.

Both of which aim to secure the development of a digitally skilled pupil population in the use of technologies, whilst preparing them for future progression routes and career pathways. It is recognised that supporting digital skill building will potentially stimulate the local economy and economic activity in the future.

- 6.3 **Involvement** - Stakeholder and end user needs and engagement are of paramount importance, and a key focus of both projects. The projects have and continue to be subject to consultation, which has been used to inform development, delivery, progression and learning.
- 6.4 **Thinking for the Long term**
All of the research undertaken during the project development and delivery phase, has and will be used to underpin and inform the development of a Blaenau Gwent Education ICT Strategy. The projects and strategy will form part of a 10-year plan in addressing delivery, infrastructure, connectivity and device-based sustainability throughout the school estate.
- 6.4.1 Shared Resource Service Wales SLA, will be reviewed with schools on a 3-yearly basis – in line with the economic life of the assets. The SLA will ensure that SRS are able to provide the required level of support in managing the infrastructure and connectivity requirements of Blaenau Gwent's schools. This in turn will ensure effective management, maintenance and use of the investment.
- 6.5 **Preventative focus** – The ICP and Hwb EdTech Projects aim to address existing ICT issues and enhance provision, whilst ensuring parity across the school estate.
- 6.6 **Collaboration / partnership working** – Both projects require a collaborative approach in terms development, implementation and monitoring. This is carried out via the ICT Strategy Group, Project Group, Welsh Government and SRS delivery team meetings. The Project Group has wide ranging representation from partner organisations and services throughout the Council.
- 6.7 **Integration** – The Council, SRS and Schools work in an integrated way to ensure effective project implementation, and secure appropriate skills, knowledge etc. to support a strategic approach in the medium to long-term.
- 6.8 **EqIA** – There is no adverse impact upon the protected characteristics.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements** - Both projects are managed in accordance with the Corporate Project Management Framework and the PRINCE 2 methodology. Project monitoring is carried out via the Project Group, ICT Strategy Group, along with regular reporting to Welsh Government. It is assured via the 21st Schools Programme Management arrangements and reported via the Councils political processes.

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Agenda Item 22

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: 17.12.20

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: 17.12.20

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Integrated Care Fund (ICF) Update 2019/20**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**

Report Submitted by: **Alyson Hoskins – Head of Adult Services**

Reporting Pathway (Dates to be Entered)								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
17/11/20		17.12.20			10/12/20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview for Executive Members on the current allocation of funding for projects monitored by the Social Services Department and funded via the Welsh Government Integrated Care Fund (ICF) as at November 2020.
- 1.2 It also highlights the current position in relation to the announcement that there will be a further extension of the fund for a further 12 months' transition year (2021/22) and demonstrates how we are addressing the risks associated with the potential ceasing of the funding from April 2022.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Previous annual reports have identified the history of the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) - (formerly known as the Intermediate Care Fund) and members will be aware that ICF funding has been available to health and social care organisations since 2014/2015.
- 2.2 Whilst initially only being available for funding projects in Adult Services, in the past 2 years' eligibility for funding has been expanded and now includes funding to support key preventative projects across both Adult and Children social care.
- 2.3 The Integrated Care Fund is currently governed via the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) structures and the grant funding is administered through the ICF performance monitoring unit within Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB). The fund can be accessed by sectors that support the priorities of the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and the overarching population needs assessment for Gwent. The grant supports the delivery of the key priorities in the areas of:

- Older people with complex needs and long term conditions including dementia
 - People with Learning Disabilities
 - Children with Complex Needs due to disability or illness
 - Carers, including young carers
- 2.4 The allocation and bidding process can be complex as there are both revenue and capital funding streams within the investment plan of ICF. The current Blaenau Gwent allocation for revenue is £950,275 (Adult Services) and £372,909 (Children Services). The allocation of capital ICF for BG is currently £544,979 - (£375,829 – Adult Services and £169,150 – Children Services).
- 2.5 Within Blaenau Gwent we have been successful and proportionate in accessing this fund since its inception. Projects we have developed have been aligned to our strategic priorities including both the 'Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century' Strategy and the Reduction in Children Looked After Strategy alongside the wider cultural changes required following the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and Welsh Government's new long term plan for health and social care 'A Healthier Wales' including alignment to the 'Gwent transformational offer'. A full summary of current ICF revenue projects in Blaenau Gwent are attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.6 During 2019/20 partners were notified that the current ICF funding stream would cease at the end of the 2020/21 financial year and significant concerns were raised by all partners including this Local Authority, on our ability to continue to fund the existing initiatives from within their core budget allocation.
- 2.7 However, on 24th August 2020, Welsh Government officials confirmed the current allocation of ICF (revenue of £89 million and capital of £40 million across Wales) would continue for 2021/22, although at the time of writing this update no formal allocation has been confirmed for the Gwent region, although the Gwent Regional Partnership Board has been told verbally by Welsh Government that our current Integrated Care Fund allocation should continue for a further 12 months 'transition' year in its current format until March 2022.
- 2.8 Following confirmation of this verbal decision and as part of the planning for the transition period, the Regional Partnership Board has supported the development of robust impact assessments to enable the partners to have a proactive approach to the planned closure of any initiatives.
- 2.9 There has also been concerns raised as to the additional cost pressures we would face due to the impact of potential redundancy costs across our service budgets as currently across Adult and Children Services in Blaenau Gwent, we have 24.66 whole time equivalent (wte) posts funded by this grant equating to 29 staff contracts; with 11 staff members with permanent employment/ secondments arrangements and 18 staff with fixed term contracts.

2.10 As a response to the situation, and to ensure that partners are able to measure the impact of the closure of these services on our day to day operations and strategic priorities, we have agreed a number of actions which will be undertaken during the next 6 months and beyond into the transition period year 2021/22, these include:

- a) The 5 LA's in Gwent, along with ABUHB and Third Sector groups are undertaking a series of specific project evaluations. These are being led by the ICF project officers employed by the ABUHB and focus on the delivery of the project outcomes, performance information and overall value for money. Some projects are subject to a full 'deep dive' whilst others have a lighter desk top audit approach. The outcomes of these evaluations are being reported to the relevant partnership boards within the RPB governance structure.
- b) Each LA has been asked to risk rate their ICF projects and to identify the impact of the withdrawal of the funding and cessation of the services. The evaluation for Blaenau Gwent – undertaken in August 2020 has reported that 13 of the 14 projects are ranked as a high/ critical priority should they not be funded after March 2022 with 5 of the 13 being identified as service critical. These 5 services were all part of the Children Service portfolio.
- c) An indicative scoping exercise has been completed across Gwent partners in relation to the projected redundancy costs that are to be incurred should the grant cease. In addition to this we have highlighted to Welsh Government how there are restrictions within the grant conditions to enable the funding to be used to cover cost pressures for redundancies. The estimated indicative costs across Gwent which were submitted to Welsh Government were £1,353,588 (432 wte posts) for Gwent partners and a redundancy cost pressure identified of £28,232 specifically for BG staff – although this will increase with the additional year's extension of the funding and the figures will need to be revisited during Summer 2021 as part of a planned exit strategy.
- d) Internal service reviews are being undertaken for specific teams for example, we have an ongoing evidence based review of the referral pathways in our Adults IAA team and part of this review includes a focus on how some of the functions of the existing ICF posts can be incorporated into the wider functions of the team.
- e) There is a Corporate review being undertaken across the Local Authority of the current grant allocations, governance arrangements and how they link to Council priorities. The ICF funding streams are currently being evaluated as part of this review and will be subject to a future report to CLT and scrutiny committees in early 2021.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The options for consideration are:

3.2 **Option 1** – to agree the report and the actions currently underway to evaluate the future impact of the cessation of the ICF funded posts and services.

- 3.3 **Option 2** – to note the report and propose an alternative approach in relation to the options for mitigating the risks face by the cessation of the ICF funding from April 2022.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

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

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

The report is fulfilling our statutory functions under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and accompanying regulations.

4.2 The report is also fulfilling a number of the Social Services aims within the Corporate Plan:

- To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own wellbeing;
- 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.

4.3 A number of the areas being progressed by the ICF projects will support us to achieve two of the Wellbeing Plan objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone;
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the place that they live, learn, work and play.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

Option 1 – The governance of the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) is overseen by the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and a partnership approach across health and social care partners has been developed to consider the wider implications of the cessation of the partnership funding.

Option 2 – If Executive were to recommend alternative approaches to those outlined in this report, then it will be appropriate to consider these alongside our neighbouring authorities and the health board to maintain a consensus in approach.

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

The Integrated Care Capital and Revenue Fund has historically provided significant investment enabling both Adult and Children Services to develop a number of projects across Blaenau Gwent and Gwent as a whole, and should this funding be removed at the end of the proposed transition period

we will have significant financial consequences going forward. This includes potential loss of preventative services across Children Services, in particular those services which are specifically aimed at reducing the numbers of children and young people who may otherwise require admission to our care system. These services have not only improved outcomes for young people but also have reduced the numbers of costly residential placements required.

Whilst there are no immediate impacts on the budget, there are clearly concerns in relation to the impact of the closure of the schemes should all funding cease from April 2022. The introduction of an additional 12 months' transition funding enables the department to fully evaluate the schemes based on their impact and seek alternative funding options. During this time the impact of the potential redundancy costs will also be evaluated.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.3 ***Legal***

The Legal department will become involved in considering and advising on any legal agreements associated with the future closure of ICF funded projects.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

Colleagues from across our Organisational Development and Finance Teams have supported in the collation of potential redundancy cost pressures during the Summer 2020 and will become involved in considering and advising on any human resource issues associated with the future closure of ICF funded projects.

6. **Supporting Evidence:**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Not applicable.

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

In line with our local and national priorities, our ICF projects promote seamless provision of health and social care services across Gwent.

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

The Regional Partnership Board has facilitated partnership working from across our Health, Social Care and Third sector partners in developing and evaluating ICF projects. This work has included representation from the Citizens Panel to ensure engagement and involvement in its direction.

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

Both ICF and transformation grant funded projects provides the opportunity to test innovative practices and work collectively to progress integration and partnership working across the Gwent region.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

All ICF projects focus as much as possible on how Health and Social Services can work together in a more preventative way to minimise dependency on statutory provisions.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The role the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) is to work collaboratively across boundaries to benefit citizens requiring health and social care services across Gwent. The Governance and future developments of the ICF programme are being closely scrutinised by the RPB.

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

All ICF projects focus as much as possible on how Health and Social Services can integrate to provide a seamless service model for recipients of health and social care provision.

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

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The monitoring arrangements for the Regional Partnership Board are through the Social Services Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis and include regular reports relating to ICF and wider Gwent grant funding streams.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – ICF funded projects in Blaenau Gwent.

APPENDIX 1 - INTEGRATED CARE FUND (ICF) INVESTMENT IN BLAENAU GWENT UPDATE

ID	Organisation		Project Ref.	Project	[Funding] Allocation	Description of investment	Other comments	Total Project WTE
1	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	OP-BGCC-COMM-01	BG Mynydd Practitioner	£32,640	This post has been utilised to develop the integration between our in house home care team and our Community Resource Team reablement service	Post is currently being advertised as previous post holder secured alternative employment.	1.00
5	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	OP-BGCC-COMM-05	Community Co-Ordinators - Blaenau Gwent	£72,270	These two posts are community connectors within in our Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) team. They also work across our GP surgeries and third sector groups to promote preventative opportunities and reduce reliance on statutory provision	Redundancy pressures associated with these posts as posts were created in 2015. During COVID response these posts have been used to support the locality hub teams. Defined as a high priority service	2.00
11	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	OP-BGCC-COMM-11	Social Value Project - Catering & Community Meals Enterprise	£47,220	This is a new post for 2020 and is leading on the review of our community meals service since it transferred to SSD in April 2020	Post holder is seconded to BG from Caerphilly.	1.00
33	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	OP-NCC-IP-03	Advocacy Access	£115,000	This funding is used across the 5 LA's and has been accessed to develop the Gwent Advocacy Strategy and commission advocates for vulnerable adults in line with Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014	Defined as a high priority service	4.00
35	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	OP-BGCC-CARE-02	(Previously Step Up/Down Beds & Cariad Intermediate Care Beds 0 Phase 2 [Additional 4 Units])	£347,536	This funding is used to commission step up / down beds to prevent hospital admissions and reduce length of unnecessary stays in hospital. The funding is used to fund 8 beds in various settings plus the staff to support them.	This scheme has been significantly impacted by COVID as we are greatly restricted by WG guidance on temporary placements at care homes and extra care facilities. No redundancy costs as staff are seconded from substantive posts. Defined as a high priority service	4.52

48	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	LD-BGCC-TRAN-01	Transition - Development Of Integrated Working Across Adult And Children's Services In Gwent	£70,500	These posts are for 2 social workers within the Disability Team who work solely on the transition of children to adult services.	It is anticipated that there will no redundancy implications as we anticipate social work vacancies across our teams. Defined as a high priority service	2.00
52	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	LD-BGCC-COMM-01	Community Co-Ordinator	£26,520	This post is the same as the are community connectors post highlighted above but was established at a later funding allocation and specifically to work with adults who have a learning disability.	No redundancy pressures associated with this post as post holder is on secondment from Community Options team. During COVID response these posts have been used to support the locality hub teams. Defined as a high priority service	1.00
73	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	CIYC-BGCC-COMM-05	Carers Co-Ordinators - Blaenau Gwent	£49,322	This post is also a community connectors within in our Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) team but has enabled the department to strengthen support to unpaid family carers. They also work across our GP surgeries and third sector groups to promote preventative opportunities and reduce reliance on statutory provision	Redundancy pressures associated with this posts as posts was created in 2015. During COVID response these posts have been used to support the locality hub teams. Defined as a high priority service	1.00
78	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	CIYC-BGCC-SUPP-05	Carers Support - Blaenau Gwent	£52,950	These two part time posts have been developed in part ship with Carers Trust South Wales and provide a support service to unpaid family carers. This is mainly provided via the IAA and GP surgeries across BG.	During COVID these two staff members have developed an telephone and online support service in addition to their weekly GP service. Defined as a high priority service	1.60
86	Blaenau Gwent	Children Services	EIS-BGCC-CONF-01	Family Group Conferences (BG)	£77,694	Coordination of Family Group Conferences / Meetings within each of the five Local Authority areas using a regional service model to be delivered on a local level. Meetings are used when there is a risk of child coming into care as	Coordination of these meetings are integral to the Child Looked After Reduction strategy in BG. No current redundancy issues as these are new posts in 2020. Defined as a critical service	2.00

91	Blaenau Gwent	Children Services	EIS-BGCC-MED-01	Mediation Support (BG)	£34,847	This funding delivers a Young Person's Mediation Service aimed at ages 14 years and above. The model works with young people and their families where conflict has led to the young person either leaving or being asked to leave their home. The service provides young people with the opportunity to talk about their worries and concerns and assist them to explore available options and retain control over their lives	As above	1.00
96	Blaenau Gwent	Children Services	EIS-BGCC-SGO-01	Special Guardianship Order Support (BG)	£135,521	This funding delivers a Gwent wide 'offer' of support to Special Guardians to both assist them in their caring role but also to assist the Courts in having a viable alternative to adoption and long term fostering. A Special Guardianship Order (SGO) provides a legally secure placement for a child until they reach the age of eighteen years. It can be a positive alternative to adoption because it retains the child's sense of identity and belonging.	As above	3.00
101	Blaenau Gwent	Children Services	EIS-BGCC-EEOC-01	Enhanced Edge Of Care (BG)	£124,847	This funding enhances our Local Authorities Edge of Care Team (known as Supporting Change Team in Blaenau Gwent) with the additional resources of a dedicated psychological support worker, educational support worker and a children's community connector.	As above	3.00
144	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	DEM-LA-LW-06	Early Intervention Dementia Reablement Services	£136,317	This funding has been provided to increase our current reablement team to enable the Community Resource Team to provide bespoke support for people with dementia and memory loss	These posts are provided by colleagues in ABUHB. Defined as a high priority service	

Capital ICF Investment

	Blaenau Gwent	Adults Services	ICF-GWE-29	Augusta House respite expansion	£375,829	This funding has been provided to expand our current accommodation offer at Augusta House to include additional independent accommodation units		
	Blaenau Gwent	Children Services	ICF GWE 30/ ICF DCP GWE 53	Integrated Family Resource Centre (Beaufort Road) / Children's Resource Centre Re-design	£130,475 £38,675	Redesign of office accommodation to meet the needs of you people including development of bespoke facilities to promote the independence of young people		

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