

T: 01495 357788 Ext./Est: 7788

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

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services



THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

2nd December 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee will be held in Virtually via Microsoft Teams - if you would like to attend this meeting live via Microsoft Teams please contact committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk on Monday, 7th December, 2020 at 10.00 am.

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

Yours faithfully

Michelle Morris
Managing Director

AGENDA

Pages

1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required

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

Municipal Offices
Civic Centre
Ebbw Vale
NP23 6XB

Swyddfeydd Bwrdeisiol
Canolfan Dinesig
Glyn Ebwy
NP23 6XB

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

should you wish to do so. A simultaneous translation will be provided if requested.

2. **APOLOGIES**

To receive.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

To receive.

4. **COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 5 - 12

Following consideration of the minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 21st September, 2020, the minutes have been slightly amended and resubmitted for approval.

5. **COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 13 - 24

To receive the minutes of the special Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 13th October, 2020.

(Please note the minutes are submitted for points of accuracy only).

6. **COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 25 - 34

To receive the minutes of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 19th October, 2020.

(Please note the minutes are submitted for accuracy points only).

7. **ACTION SHEET - 19TH OCTOBER 2020** 35 - 38

To receive the Action Sheet.

8. **CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT – SERVICE UPDATE** 39 - 50

To consider the report of the Head of Community Services.

9. **SOUTH EAST WALES RESILIENT UPLANDS – WALES RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT SCHEME** 51 - 80

To consider the report of the Head of Community Services.

10. **ACTIVITIES REPORT – LITTERING AND DOG CONTROL ORDER ENFORCEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2019/20** 81 - 98

To consider the report of the Team Manager, Environmental Protection.

11. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 18TH JANUARY 2021** 99 - 102

To receive the report.

EXEMPT ITEM(S)

To receive and consider the following report(s) which in the opinion of the Proper Officer is/are an exempt item(s) taking into account consideration of the public interest test and that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting (the reason for the decision for the exemption is available on a schedule maintained by the Proper Officer).

12. **UPDATE CEMETERY BURIAL CAPACITY** 103 - 118

To consider the report of the Team Manager Street Scene.

To: Councillor M. Moore (Chair)
Councillor C. Meredith (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P. Baldwin
Councillor M. Cook
Councillor M. Cross
Councillor M. Day
Councillor P. Edwards
Councillor S. Healy
Councillor W. Hodgins
Councillor J. Holt
Councillor J. C. Morgan
Councillor G. Paulsen
Councillor T. Sharrem
Councillor B. Summers
Councillor L. Winnett

All other Members (for information)
Manager Director
Chief Officers

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE
COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: **COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
21ST SEPTEMBER, 2020**

REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. MOORE CHAIR)

Councillors C. Meredith (Vice-Chair)

M. Cook

S. Healy

W. Hodgins

J. Holt

H. McCarthy

J. Millard

G. Paulsen

K. Pritchard

B. Summers

L. Winnett

WITH: Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
Head of Community Services
Service Manager Development & Estates
Team Manager Waste Compliance & Development
Team Manager Street Scene
Business Transformation Officer
Marketing Projects Officer
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u> It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.	
No. 2	<u>APOLOGIES</u>	

	Apologies for absence were received for Councillor T. Sharrem.	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>Councillor B. Summers declared an interest in the following item:-</p> <p>Item No. 9 – Regional Wood Waste Recycling Facility</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on the 4th March, 2020 were submitted for points of accuracy.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the special Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on the 1st September, 2020 were submitted for points of accuracy.</p> <p>Councillor H. McCarthy reported that his apologies had not been recorded.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN'S PLAY PROVISION</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Street Scene.</p> <p>The Team Manager presented the report which provided an update on children's play area sites and sought Members' endorsement of the current work programme for the installation of play equipment into sites, in line with the priorities identified as part of the detailed play area review undertaken and reported to Council in December 2018.</p>	

The Officer spoke to the report and highlighted points contained therein. He said the report outlined the rationale for the installation of new children's play equipment purchased following funding received from Welsh Government through the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant. This funding was initially allocated for the creation of a splash park facility at the Festival Park site, however, on the basis that the owners of Festival Park were no longer in a position to take the project forward, a decision was taken under delegated authority to reallocate the funding, as the Council had to advise Welsh Government how the funds would be utilised by the end of March 2020, or the funding would be withdrawn.

Appendix 1 of the report identified play area sites where the purchased equipment would be installed, together with a future rolling programme for any further funding should it become available in the future.

The Officer concluded that Parc Bryn Bach had recently benefitted from new Welsh Government grant funding through the Valleys Regional Parks as part of the Discovery Gateway Project, and a new £185k visitor attraction (play facility) had been installed at the Park and was recently opened to the public following the COVID lockdown period, and had been very well received by visitors to the Park.

A Member expressed concern that the decision was taken under delegated authority. She referred to previous meetings where Members had requested Officers to enter into further discussions with Aneurin Leisure Trust regarding the possibility of the splash park facility at Parc Bryn Bach. However, the Member said she welcomed the investment at Duffryn Park, but would have liked engagement with children in the community on the type of play equipment they would have liked installed at the Park.

The Officer said the funding available for the splash park was £110k, however, costings for the installation etc. was in the region of £250k and ALT felt that the project was not financially viable. In terms of engagement with the community, he agreed that this was always the best way to progress, however, on this occasion the deadline to spend the funding by 31st March was extremely restricted, but he

	<p>assured that engagement would be undertaken moving forward.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member, the Officer confirmed that the £110k had already been received by the Council in 2017/18 for a splash park facility. This was about repurposing the funding in line with the priorities identified under the Council's agreed play area review.</p> <p>Another Member said he welcomed the investment on many of the Borough's play areas, but unfortunately some would be closed. However, in the future, and hopefully with new housing developments being undertaken in the Borough the provision of play facilities will increase to match the demand that new developments would bring.</p> <p>In terms of consultation a Member said he hoped that appropriate consultation would be undertaken prior to any closure of facilities being undertaken. He said some of the planned closures would mean that children would have to cross busy main roads, and this needed to be looked at.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that discussions with local Ward Members would be undertaken.</p> <p>The Officer referred Members to the extensive consultation undertaken as part of the play area review that was reported to Council in 2018 and indicated all children's play areas in Blaenau Gwent, and those at risk of closure at that point in time. He said the recommendation was that when the lifespan of those play areas at risk came to an end, further discussions would be held with local Members.</p> <p>A brief discussion ensued when a Member said she had previously raised safety concerns regarding the potential closure of Glanystruth and Maeshafod play areas, as children would have to cross a very busy main road. A Member said he agreed that children's safety was paramount, but pointed out that parents were responsible for the safety of children visiting play areas.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted, and Members endorsed the current work programme for the installation of the already purchased play</p>	
--	--	--

	<p>equipment into the sites identified at 2.14 of the report, and supported further dialogue at Ward level in respect of the future of children's play areas as listed in 2.16 of the report, in line with the "Play Area Review" undertaken in December 2018 (Option 1).</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>WASTE AND RECYCLING PERFORMANCE 2019-20</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Neighbourhood Services.</p> <p>The Team Manager presented the report which provided an update of waste and recycling performance outcomes for 2019/20.</p> <p>The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein. He said in 2018/19 the Council exceeded its WG Statutory Recycling Target for the first time. This success was built on, and this year (2019/20) the Council had exceeded the new higher target of 64%, attaining 65.31%. This was achieved through the hard work and dedication of the Waste Team, in partnership with WRAP, and with support from the Communications Team, Performance Team, Senior Management, the Leadership and most importantly the residents of Blaenau Gwent. He said this year on year success has seen Blaenau Gwent move from 22nd in 2017/18 to 11th in 2019/20 when compared to all other Welsh Local Authorities.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member regarding the garden waste collection, the Officer confirmed that the figure included the extended winter period collection, which was maintained through the winter with one vehicle. However, the scope to increase garden waste was restricted due to the limited number of green spaces in the Borough and relatively small garden sizes.</p> <p>In relation to the HWRC (Reuse), the Officer said whilst this was a small element of recycling it was intended to maximise this element and extend the service at the new facility at Roseheyworth.</p> <p>A Member said the improving figures were pleasing, but expressed concern regarding the Council's ranking position,</p>	

	<p>particularly with green waste. He also asked whether any notification had been received from Welsh Government in terms of the potential for increased fines for 2020/21 due to the impact of COVID.</p> <p>In response the Officer confirmed that no information had been received from Welsh Government in relation to penalties. Whilst the targets were challenging, the recycling figure for 2019/20 was positive, and hopefully with the continued support from residents and hard work of the teams involved the same trend would be seen in 2020/21.</p> <p>A Member referred to the increased target of 70% over the next 4 years, and asked whether the Council had the capacity to achieve this.</p> <p>The Team Manager Neighbourhood Services confirmed that Officers were already engaging with WRAP advisors on ways to progress to 70% over the next 4 years. The roll out of the Keeping up with the Jones campaign Borough wide would hopefully have an impact, and there were also other initiatives being considered in order to maximise recycling and achieve that target. The situation would be closely monitored to ensure that everything was being done to achieve the target.</p> <p>He confirmed that savings achieved through the reduction of residual waste was put back into the service to provide additional resources to continue with the kerbside waste enforcement, new recycling receptacles, and implementation of initiatives to increase recycling.</p> <p>A Member commended the Department and the success of the kerbside recycling service and he felt this justified the introduction of the system in 2015</p> <p>Another Member asked whether green waste included was collected from the Borough's social housing providers, the Officer undertook to investigate.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
No. 8	<u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 19TH OCTOBER 2020</u>	

	<p>Councillor M. Cook joined the meeting at this juncture.</p> <p>The Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled for the 19th October, 2020 was submitted.</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Cemetery Capacity report had been moved to the November meeting.</p> <p>A brief discussion ensued when the Scrutiny Officer confirmed that Straying Animals would be the subject of a future report to Committee.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted.</p>	
No. 9	<p><u>REGIONAL WOOD WASTE RECYCLING FACILITY</u></p> <p>Councillor B. Summers declared an interest in the following item.</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, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Team Leader Waste Compliance and Development.</p> <p>The Team Manager Neighbourhood Services presented the report which provided an update on the development of an Outline Business Case for a Regional Wood Recycling Facility. The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member, the Officer said it was intended for the facility to be 'green' with a low</p>	

	<p>carbon footprint, and that the majority of the machines would be electric powered.</p> <p>A Member asked whether there was the potential to generate income from the facility, and would it assist the Council in hitting its recycling target.</p> <p>The Officer said improved recycling targets was one of the benefits of the facility for participating LA's, it would also provide clarity for panel board manufacturers in terms of consistency around specification and options for income.</p> <p>A brief discussion ensued when the Officer clarified points raised by Members.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which contained information relating to the business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted, and the Outline Business Case to support the development of the Regional Wood Waste Recycling Facility to the next stage be supported (Option 1).</p>	
--	---	--

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

**REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE
COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
13TH OCTOBER, 2020**

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C. MEREDITH (CHAIR)

Councillors M. Cook
S. Healy
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
H. McCarthy
J. Millard
G. Paulsen
K. Pritchard
T. Sharrem
B. Summers
L. Winnett

**Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee
Members (Without Voting Rights)**

Councillors H. Trollope
D. Bevan
J.C. Morgan
T. Smith
S. Thomas

**WITH: Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services
Interim Corporate Director Education
Education Transformation Manager
Head of Community Services
Property Services Manager
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor**

<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	<u>APOLOGIES</u> Apologies for absence were received from:- Councillor M. Moore Councillor G. Collier Councillor L. Parsons	
No. 3	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u> No declarations of interest or dispensations were made.	
	<u>REVIEW INTO WATER SUPPLY QUALITY IN SCHOOLS</u> Due to the need to consider the following item as a matter of urgency, the Chair of the Committee has confirmed that the following matter can be considered under the Provisions of Paragraph 4(b), Section 100(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972. Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services and the Interim Corporate Director Education. The Chair reminded everyone that Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee had been invited to the meeting as observers due to the cross cutting nature of the report and therefore in line with the Constitution the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee was not permitted to vote.	

	<p>In response, a Member felt that the decision to stop Members of the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee being able to vote on the decision of the report was an interpretation of the rules of the Constitution. The Member was of the opinion that it was an instruction from the Leadership of the Council to prevent Members from voting.</p> <p>The Chair noted the comments and advised that the matter be taken up with the Leadership of the Council.</p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services informed that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the outcome of the review carried out by Integrated Water Services (IWS) in light of the water quality issues experienced in our schools during the period of closure due to COVID-19.</p> <p>The Corporate Director advised that the Council had taken a pro-active and comprehensive approach to the reopening of schools from a health and safety perspective, including water testing in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) L8 and Health & Safety Executive (HSE) specific advice. The safety of the children and staff across all school sites was a priority to the Council.</p> <p>The closure of schools during lockdown was the longest period schools had ever been closed. The Corporate Director noted that normally schools are only closed for a period of five to six weeks during the summer holidays. This period of school closures was unprecedented and lessons had been learned across a number of services.</p> <p>The Corporate Director advised that Integrated Water Services (IWS) was the firm appointed to undertake the review. The scope of the review included selecting 12 school sites from the 29 schools sites in the Borough. The schools selected were reported as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Blaen-y-Cwm Primary School 2. Bryn Bach Primary School 3. Brynmawr Foundation School 4. Canolfan yr Afon (Riverside) School 5. Coed-y-Garn Primary School 	
--	--	--

-
- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Ebbw Fawr Primary / Pen-y-Cwm Special School7. Ebbw Fawr Secondary School8. St Mary's Church in Wales Primary School9. Sofrydd Primary School10. Tredegar Comprehensive School11. Willowtown Primary School12. Ystruth Primary School | |
|--|--|

A summary of the IWS review was detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report and the Corporate Director outlined the key recommendations identified by IWS as follows:-

- 1) Investigate a suitable on-line monitoring Legionella program. To allow data information to be stored accessed and audited more efficiently.
- 2) Undertake more intensive training of staff involved in the Legionella monitoring testing program, particularly in the area of water system flushing.
- 3) Review our Legionella risk assessments to ensure that they are sufficiently up to date to comply with the legislation.
- 4) Analyse the IWS information, and implement areas of good practice.
- 5) Reconsider suitability of "normal" Legionella Risk Management Policy in the light of the on-going Covid19 situation, particularly in the area of system flushing.

The Corporate Director added that these recommendations formed the basis of an action plan to be taken forward.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services noted that the IWS review suggested that schools should not be closed due to high TVC results. However, the Council felt that high TVC sample results could indicate Legionella contamination and therefore further resampling was undertaken until the Legionella test results were obtained. The Corporate Director felt that the Council had gone further than suggested and it needed to be recognised that the Legionella Control legislation was implemented differently in terms of a specific policy among organisations which still complied with the legislation.

It was the view of the Technical, Health & Safety and Environmental Health officers, in consultation with Education colleagues that the approach to reopening schools was managed in an effective and safe manner.

Although, the Corporate Director acknowledged that there are lessons to be learned from COVID-19, which would strengthen the Council's practices and procedures going forward.

The Corporate Director further referred to the options for recommendation and noted the financial implications of the preferred Option. He pointed out that the software would need to be procured and also additional staff resources may be needed in order to ensure the increased level of monitoring and training which would be required. However, these would be reviewed and revised accordingly once the system was in place. Any additional revenue costs would be identified as a cost pressure within the Corporate Landlord budget, pending consideration of additional revenue funding being allocated in the 2021/2020 budget review process.

The Education Transformation Manager concurred with the comments raised by the Corporate Director and advised that she fully supported the response to school testing. The Manager added that the response was undertaken with the best interest of staff and pupils in mind. It was noted that going forward there would be an action plan in place which would need to be adhered to and picked up with existing and new staff.

At this juncture the Chair welcomed questions/observations from Members.

In response to a question raised in relation to contractors being invited to attend this meeting, it was confirmed that they had not been invited.

A Member expressed concern that the report had not been presented to full Council as it impacted all Elected Members. The Member also raised concerns to the significant findings outlined in the report attached at Appendix 1 and was of the opinion that this Council failed to safeguard pupils and staff in schools.

The Member further referred to issues at a local school in relation to the position of the windows above sinks. She advised that it had been informed that the position of the window with no blinds could have had an impact on the levels of legionella in the water and felt that although costs would be incurred in addressing some issues it was important going forward to prevent further legionella in school systems.

The Interim Corporate Director advised that there were lessons to be learned, although this was a corporate response, the Education Directorate acted quickly to ensure schools were safe in terms of health and safety for pupils and staff to attend.

The Education Transformation Manager advised that she had been aware of the discussions with officers who had felt that the heat from the window directed onto the taps could have contributed to the elevated levels in the water. However, this would be addressed as part of the ongoing maintenance of the school.

The Member thanked the Manager for the update and stated that it was important that the Council was compliant with procedures in place. This issue had been massive failure for our children and staff and it was important it be addressed to prevent further problems in the future.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services stated that there was no suggestion or evidence in the report which informed that the Council had 'failed' or had 'failings'. The Council took a precautionary approach to ensure that staff and pupils were safe. The Corporate Director added that there was no requirement for Councils to have a legionella policy as the Council's overall Health and Safety Policy covered Legionella along with a range of other matters and it was important to ensure that all records and training were kept up to date.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services felt that the comment 'failing' should be challenged and reiterated that pupils and staff were never at risk. The Council had followed the Corporate Health and Safety Corporate Policy and the Review had identified some good practices which the Council had felt should be taken on board going forward. However, the Corporate Director reiterated that there was no evidence that the Council had failed pupils and school staff.

Another Member raised concerns around the report and felt that the findings clearly identified significant gaps in the management plans across Blaenau Gwent in terms of the legionella testing processes and records in place. The Member noted statements from the report which included the legal policy had not been provided, risk assessments out of date and no clear lines of processes for the group or schools. The reopening of schools was headline news and the First Minister made it a clear priority and given that the Council had three months to prepare for the safe opening, the Member did not understand how there were delays. The Member recalled at the time that the Executive Member for Education had stated that it was disappointing for pupils who had planned to return to schools, however the Council's top priority was the safety of the pupils and staff. The Member felt that if the reopening of schools was a top priority the schools should have opened as expected following the announcement from the First Minister.

The Interim Corporate Director Education reiterated the point made by the Corporate Director that there was no specific requirement to have a dedicated legionella policy. The process was covered in the Health and Safety Policy and this was the same in the majority of local authorities.

The Interim Corporate Director added that in June there was a great deal of uncertainty around the re-opening schools and schools had been repurposed for key worker families and vulnerable children. There was a short space of time to ensure that from a health and safety aspect that schools were reopened effectively. At this point the Council instigated the testing work, however, there were a number of other local authorities undertaking similar testing which had identified some issues with the water supply in some schools.

The Interim Corporate Director advised that the 12 schools identified in the report were not a random sample. These schools had been identified with positive test results for TVC or legionella and following dialogue with IWS the contractor, the work had been undertaken independently.

The Interim Corporate Director also added that the comments made by the Executive Member for Education in the communication was correct, the Council's health and safety requirements was a top priority for the Council and the approach taken had been to ensure that the schools were safe for staff and learners. The Interim Corporate Director stated that although there was a delay in opening of some schools the work was delivered and it was the view of officers that the priority had been met. Importantly, all schools reopened during the summer term.

In response to further concerns raised it was advised that this was unprecedented times and schools had not been closed for such long periods of time. The Council worked closely with schools and all advice and guidance was followed, however, due to the length of the closure normal practices had not been adequate, therefore positive test results had been received. The Interim Corporate Director added that this was an unprecedented situation and the Council had recognised lessons to be learned and the action plan would be taken forward to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Education Transformation Manager added that there had been a great deal of preparatory work undertaken with schools prior to June including the maintained flushing regimes and all schools had provided evidence. However, the Manager reiterated that these regimes would not have been sufficient enough due to length of closure. The availability of contractors was limited due to furlough staff and priority work only being undertaken in light of COVID-19. If tests had been undertaken prior to schools opening these tests would have been invalid. The Manager concurred that the Council acted as promptly as it could as no one wanted see further school closures. The schools had appreciated the support the Council had put in place to ensure their safe opening.

A Member advised that positive feedback had been received from schools in terms of the support received. The Interim Corporate Director Education added that the Planning Group meeting held during school closures continued when opened and feedback from meetings had always been positive from head teachers. The Education Transformation Manager further reiterated that the schools had appreciated the support and quick outcomes to the issues.

The Manager advised that officers from Education, Technical Services and Environmental Health had ensured the findings were fully explained and the reason for actions to be put in place.

Another Member raised concerns around comments raised by the Corporate Director which appeared to differ from the report presented. The Member felt that the report clearly indicated that the Council had not met standards.

The Member also referred to the decision to not allow all Members to vote at this meeting and noted his disappointment that it had not been presented to the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee. The date of meeting had been revised and Members had been given only 3 days, including the weekend to read the report ahead of the Scrutiny Committee which was promptly followed by an Executive for the report to be approved. The Member stated that legionella was a serious disease and it was paramount that the Council had adequate testing regimes in place which were carried out accordingly.

The Member was of the opinion that the report had not been presented in its entirety. Another Member concurred and felt that the report and discussions had been staged to ensure the review was presented in a positive way.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services advised that the report received by the Council had been shared in full with Members.

Another Member stated that the issues faced were a safeguarding matter and he concurred that the report had not been presented to the recent Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee. The Member advised that schools had received excellent support, however, the appropriate systems and policy had not been followed which prevented opening following the announcement by the First Minister.

In response to the concerns raised the Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services reiterated that a robust testing regime had been undertaken with a risk approach to ensure all schools were safe and able to open. The Corporate Director advised that there was regular monitoring in place, however the schools had been closed for a longer period of time. The review did not identify any failings in terms of the testing regime or the approach to reopening albeit issues around record keeping were highlighted.

The Property Services Manager provided an explanation of the processes in place to check water quality and reiterated that the school closures were unprecedented and unplanned.

A Member felt that there was a need to be realistic in terms of recent events as across the Country there was a lockdown in place, many staff had been furloughed, travel was permitted to essential journeys only and schools were closed for many more weeks than the normal summer holidays. There had been lessons learned from the review and an action plan had been developed. The Member stated that it was disrespectful that some Members felt it appropriate to refer to the exercise as 'cover up'. The correct procedures were undertaken during very uncertain times. The Member was disappointed that Members felt that the questioning of the report was staged as it had not been discussed prior to the meeting.

A Member did not accept that the findings had been presented in full and felt that both elected Members and the public was being misguided.

Another Member welcomed the opportunity to scrutinise the report and action plan. However, the Member proposed that the action plan be rolled out across all corporate buildings and not just in schools. The Member concurred that health and safety was a corporate issue and therefore should be addressed corporately. The Member further added that if the Policy to address corporate health and safety issues needed to be amended, he suggested it be scrutinised by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee and any amendments be presented to Council for approval.

The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services felt that it would be beneficial that the action plan be rolled out across all corporate buildings and this was the intention of the Action Plan. The Corporate Director advised that the Policy would need to be presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee if there were changes to the Council's overall Health and Safety Plan or if a separate policy were to be prepared.

In response to comments made in relation to safeguarding concerns, a Member stated that this was not a safeguarding issues, it was a health and safety matter related to technical issues.

Further points were raised in relation to the report and its findings and although there was a clear action plan to be put in place going forward the report was damaging for the Council. The concerns were reiterated around the timeframes in which the report had been presented to Scrutiny and then for approval to Executive. It was felt that this was inappropriate as clear timelines needed to be in place to ensure adequate time for Members to give consideration to such important matters.

Another Member referred to the 6 monthly updates to be presented and suggested they be submitted on a quarterly basis. The Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services agreed that this could be undertaken and the Chair felt it appropriate to discuss at the next Agenda Setting Meeting to be included in the Forward Work Programme.

	<p>A Member asked when was health and safety in our schools not a safeguarding risk to children. The Member stated that if procedures or policies were not adhered to it would cause a safeguarding risk.</p> <p>The Interim Corporate Director Education advised that the primary responsibility of the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee was in relation to Child Protection and that Health and Safety responsibilities in relation to water testing were aligned to the Technical Services Department. He also that the work undertaken was a corporate response and officers worked tirelessly to respond to the situation. The respective teams across the Council worked together during the emergency response, including staff being redeployed from other service areas. The Interim Corporate Director noted the report which detailed the need to build on capacity and strengthen resources. These actions would ensure our approach to water testing would improve moving forward.</p> <p>It was thereupon proposed that the Action Plan detailed in Appendix 3 be applied across all Council buildings in respect of Health and Safety being a Corporate responsibility and the Policy be presented to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee to be considered accordingly prior to any changes being approved by full Council.</p> <p>This course of action was AGREED.</p> <p>RESOLVED, subject to the foregoing that the report be accepted and Option 2 namely, the appropriate review changes be implemented, particularly in light of COVID-19 which was still prevalent within the Country, and localised lockdowns could result in schools full or partial closures, which could result in further water quality issues.</p>	
--	---	--

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: **THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE
COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

SUBJECT: **COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
19TH OCTOBER, 2020**

REPORT OF: **DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. MOORE (CHAIR)

Councillors C. Meredith
M. Cook
S. Healy
W. Hodgins
J. Holt
J. Millard
G. Paulsen
K. Pritchard
B. Summers
L. Winnett

WITH: Corporate Director Regeneration and Community Services
Head of Community Services
Team Leader Neighbourhood Services
Team Manager Street Scene
Team Manager Natural Environment
Senior Engineer Land Drainage
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

<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	<u>APOLOGIES</u> No apologies for absence were reported.	

No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were made.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 21st September, 2020 were submitted.</p> <p>A Member referred to Item No. 7 on Page 10 of the minutes, namely a Member's comment that the 'introduction of the new system in 2015 had been a success', and said he did not agree with the statement. He said in his opinion when the scheme was introduced it was a complete failure with many problems being experienced across the Borough, and that the scheme was thrust upon the LA with no time to undertake a pilot scheme. As a result he could not support approval of the minutes with the inclusion of that comment.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Officer/Advisor undertook to seek advice on this matter.</p> <p>Another Member then referred to the next paragraph, namely the question whether green waste included the Borough's social housing providers; and said a response had not been reported.</p> <p>The Team Leader Neighbourhood Services confirmed that this information would be provided.</p> <p>Following a brief discussion;</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that approval of the minutes be <u>DEFERRED</u>.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET</u></p> <p>There were no actions arising from the Community Services Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21st September, 2020.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 7TH DECEMBER 2020</u></p>	

	<p>The Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 7th December, 2020 was submitted.</p> <p>A Member said she understood from previous discussions that it was agreed that a report on straying animals would be submitted to the next meeting.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Officer/Advisor confirmed that a request for a report had been received and undertook to discuss with the relevant Officer.</p> <p>Another Member said it was his understanding that it had been agreed to meet with farmers twice yearly to discuss issues, and suggested that an update be sought from the farmers in terms of what measures they have in place, prior to a report being submitted.</p> <p>In response the Team Manager Street Scene explained that it had been agreed to meet with local farmers individually to discuss issues, rather than as a collective, and this had commenced. C2BG also had a list of farmers to contact when reports of straying animals were received. In terms of the report due to be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee, he understood that this related to fly grazing, however, if a wider report to include straying animals was required then this could be considered.</p> <p>A Member referred to the report that was submitted to the special Scrutiny Committee the previous week re The Review of Water Supply Quality in Schools, where it was proposed that the Action Plan detailed in the Appendix be applied to all Council buildings. He asked whether this would be included in the Committee's FWP.</p> <p>In response the Chair confirmed that an Executive decision was awaited on the report.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be noted.</p>	
No. 7	<p><u>BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE FORWARD PLAN (2019-2022) 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT</u></p>	

	<p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Team Manager Natural Environment presented the report which provided an update on how the Council was meeting its statutory duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. In order to comply with the Act a Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (Appendix 1) was adopted by Council, and the report provided an overview of annual progress against the Plan.</p> <p>The Officer said the delivery mechanisms for the Plan was Service Area Action Plans; Environment Champions network and advice from the Natural Environment Team. Progress in 2019/20 by Service Area against the delivery mechanisms and activity plan for 2020/21 was shown in Appendix 2.</p> <p>He confirmed that 4 quarterly Environment Champions meetings had been held, with ten champions in the network representing all Service Areas and Councillors. Councillor Lee Parsons was the Council's Member Champion.</p> <p>In terms of the review of progress, the Forward Plan (2019-22) had not been changed, however, minor amendments have been made to accurately reflect the Service Area structure, recognising that Organisational Development sits within Commercial Services.</p> <p>A Member asked whether the funding currently in place was sufficient to continue to progress the Plan.</p> <p>The Officer said he was confident that working collaboratively with our neighbouring Authorities, that funding would continue to be secured. He was pleased to report that funding had recently been secured through Resilient Gwent to bring in extra resources which enabled recruitment of a Behaviour Change Officer, jointly with Monmouthshire CC, to support the Team, and also a Local Nature Partnership Coordinator was appointed in February and making excellent progress. A lot of work was being done to tackle problem areas and change the way we do things in order to enhance biodiversity. He also reported that the Council's Ecologist had moved on, however,</p>	
--	--	--

	<p>another appointment had been made in-house and was progressing well.</p> <p>Another Member referred to the crisp pack recycling initiative and asked whether Officers could look at options to extend this as a way of reducing black bag waste.</p> <p>The Team Leader Neighbourhood Services said there were a number of outlets within the Borough that took empty crisp packs, and undertook to consider options.</p> <p>A Member also referred to an 'eco bricks' project undertaken at a local primary school and asked that consideration be given to extending this initiative further.</p> <p>The Team Leader Natural Environment said this was an excellent example of recycling the materials we use every day and putting them to good use, and he would be keen to grow this initiative through the schools programme.</p> <p>A Member referred to grassed areas within residential areas set aside for biodiversity, and said these areas should be identified more clearly.</p> <p>In response the Officer reported that funding had been secured through Welsh Government's Nature Partnership Funding, for the provision of IT and training that would help to map these areas. He confirmed that grassland areas being used formally for recreational activities etc, would continue to be cut on a regular basis. However, a more relaxed cutting approach would be taken of other areas as much as possible to allow for biodiversity, but the Officer agreed that people needed to know why this approach was being taken.</p> <p>Another Member referred to the letter received from Welsh Government's Chief Planner, and asked whether the Council had refused any planning applications on the grounds of Planning Policy Wales 10.</p> <p>The Officer said the Council's Planners would be able to provide a more accurate response. However, he was not aware of any applications being refused specifically on the grounds of PPW10.</p>	
--	---	--

	<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the Annual Report and activity recommended this year be approved, to meet the Section 6 Duty (Option 2).</p>	
No. 8	<p><u>FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (2016- 2022)</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Senior Engineer Land Drainage presented the report which updated Members on progress of delivery of the Council's Flood Management Plan 2016-2022, and summarised progress made on the objectives and measures since its adoption and approval by Welsh Government in 2016. The Plan highlighted the hazards and risk of flooding and set out how the Authority would work with other parties and local communities to manage the risks.</p> <p>The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein. He reported that due to the severe storms encountered at the end of the year and early 2020 the Council was unable to complete a scheme anticipated to cost £40,000, with a grant value of £34,000. However, Welsh Government has agreed that this money could be carried over to the 2020-2021 budget.</p> <p>A Member referred to the repairs needed to be undertaken following Storm Dennis, in particular the repairs needed on the Ebbw Fach River embankment at Duffryn Park, and asked how many of the repairs had been completed.</p> <p>In response the Team Manager Street Scene confirmed that Welsh Government funding had been secured to undertake repair works. A schedule of works had been established, and the Officer confirmed that the Ebbw Fach River embankment was included.</p> <p>The Chair said there had been repeated incidents of flooding recently, which was extremely stressful for residents, and said it would be beneficial for Members to have information on works being undertaken.</p>	

	<p>In response the Head of Community Services undertook to provide Members with a schedule of works.</p> <p>A Member referred to the tree planting initiative at Parc Bryn Bach and asked whether any other sites in the Borough had been identified for tree planting.</p> <p>The Team Manager Natural Environment said it was not easy to find large areas of land within the Borough suitable for tree planting. Tree planting was included in our programme for improvement, and potential sites were always being explored, however, it was also important to maintain our existing stock. The Officer confirmed that work was also being undertaken with the PSB exploring funding to commission a Green Infrastructure Strategy.</p> <p>A Member referred to section 4.7 of the report, namely removal of rubbish from rivers, and said in his opinion NRW seemed to be pushing responsibility of cleaning rivers, unless in the case of an immediate threat of flooding, onto the Council or volunteers in the community.</p> <p>In response the Senior Engineer explained that as the law stood, it was the responsibility of the landowner to maintain the stretch of river passing through their land, unless there was information to say otherwise. NRW has responsibility for flood protection, and would place flood defences on the river to protect communities, but in terms of maintenance, i.e. cleaning/removal of rubbish, this was the responsibility of the landowner.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member in relation to section 4.5 of the report, the Officer explained that the scheme referred to was on the main River Ebbw by Ebbw Vale rugby ground. There were 3 culverts in the area that needed repairs, but the severe weather prevented the final culvert repair works being undertaken. However, the Officer confirmed that this scheme had now been completed.</p> <p>The Member then referred to the fact that SuDS applications were currently being sent to Caerphilly CBC for approval, and the Head of Community Services confirmed that this arrangement was currently under review.</p>	<p>Head of Community Services</p>
--	---	--

	<p>Another Member asked whether the Section liaised with Community Services in terms of maintenance of storm drains, and identifying where cleaning was required in order to prevent flooding.</p> <p>The Senior Engineer said the Section worked closely with Community Services. Camera equipment was used to survey gullies, and there was a maintenance schedule in place, however, due to the extensive number of throughout the Borough compared to the resources available, focus tended to be on ones that were known to be problematic.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and progress made over the previous 12 months be noted (Option 1).</p>	
No. 9	<p><u>NEW COUNCIL DEPOT PROPOSALS</u></p> <p>Having regard to the views expressed by the Proper Officer regarding the public interest test, that on balance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information and that the report should be exempt.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the public be excluded whilst this item of business is transacted as it is likely there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).</p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Team Leader Street Scene presented the report which provided an update on progress related to the development of a new Council Depot and proposed suitable candidate sites to be explored as part of the next stage, the development of an Outline Business Case (OBC).</p> <p>The Officer then went through the report and highlighted points contained therein. He confirmed that work on a number of activities had taken place to confirm the requirements for a new depot, which included exploring any</p>	

	<p>recent examples of other councils relocating and building a new depot, and investigating any likely collaboration opportunities. He then referred Members to the options for recommendation, namely Section 3.3 which outlined the preferred option of the Officers Working Group.</p> <p>A discussion ensued when the Officer clarified points raised by Members in relation to potential alternative sites; electric vehicles and the infrastructure required; and the financial viability of the proposal.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member regarding the existing Central Depot, the Officer confirmed that a new site would provide an opportunity for expansion to provide for any future collaborative working arrangements. He confirmed that all Members' comments would be considered by the Officer Working Group.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which contained information relation to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted and:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. One of the four sites identified in section 3.2 of the report be approved to move forward to a business planning stage. ii. WRAP be commissioned to undertake the business planning stage for the chosen site; and iii. A further report be presented for consideration on the outcomes of the business plan. 	
--	--	--

This page is intentionally left blank

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Community Scrutiny Committee – 19th October 2020

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
4	<u>Minutes – 21st September 2020</u> Item 7 – Waste and Recycling Performance 2019-20 A Member enquired regarding the green waste collected from Housing Associations and if it could be collected by the Council.	Matthew Stent	Officers have been in contact with the Registered Social Landlords [RSLs] to remind them that they can utilise Silent Valley for the disposal of their green waste. All the RSLs are entitled to contract out the collection of their green waste and it will be up to that contractor to arrange for the disposal. The Council is unable to force those contractors to dispose of the waste at Silent Valley.
6	<u>Forward Work Programme – 7th December 2020</u> Members asked that a report on Fly Grazing be included on the agenda for the meeting on 7 th December 2020.	Dave Thompson	Owing to the ongoing pandemic and the need for the Authority to prioritise resources to this response the Service would be unable to respond to this request within given timescales. Officers from the Public Protection Service are all currently heavily involved in the pandemic response; and following a recent funding announcement, officers will need to prioritise the setting up of a new Covid Regulations Enforcement Team and the officer responsible for Fly Gazing is heavily involved in this work. Given the above and considering the likely priorities for the service over the winter with the ongoing pandemic, the aim is to present the report to the meeting on 1 st March 2020.

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
7	<p><u>Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2019-2022) 2019-20 Annual Report</u></p> <p>A Member suggested potential options for recycling, e.g. crisp packets.</p>	Chris Engel / Matthew Stent	<p>Blaenau Gwent is supporting a local individual in the collection of these i.e. providing sacks for storage, collection points at offices, promotion in MD message. Waste Services will continue to offer this assistance and work closely with Chris Engel and the Biodiversity Team to see if there is any further assistance can provide be provided. However, any development towards a kerbside collection would not be cost effective. Kerbside vehicles are already at capacity and are specifically designed for the current materials collected at the kerbside. Plus, the amount of crisp packets collected would need to be significant as the material is so light yet would have minimal impact on performance. There is a moral element in their removal from the residual waste stream but we have to balance this with the resources available to us.</p>
8	<p><u>Flood Risk Management Plan (2016-2022)</u></p> <p>A schedule of works with timescales for completion to be provided and circulated to all Members.</p>	Wayne Jervis / Clive Rogers	See attachment 1.

Ref	Location	Detail	Action	Works Progress	Start Date	End Date
1	A4046 Aberbeeg Road	Section of road slip	Replace an area of defective carriageway and provide additional supports (52 piles) to bridge over the settled section of slipped embankment. Work includes site investigations, traffic management, reinstatement works	Complete	20.07.20	25.09.20
2	Aberbeeg River Embankment	Collapse of the block stone river wall	Engineering support to the embankment at the confluence of the two rivers to ensure the river is directed away from the terrace housing south of the collapse.	Complete	22.06.20	08.07.20
3	Briery Hill Hillside	Tension cracking/slip	Re-profile land and provide drainage to protect the near-by terrace housing	Design Stage	Feb-21	Mar-21
4	Church Lane	Road Slippage	Rebuild an area of carriageway and provide additional drainage blanket	At present only a temporary reinstatement has been undertaken	Feb-21	Mar-21
5	Cwmtillery Culvert	Collapsed Culvert	Replace a 12m section of 2m diameter culvert at a depth of 7m. Construct 2 new access manholes. Reinstatement the surrounding area of land.	Culvert works Complete Landscaping to commence Nov	27.07.20	14.08.20
6	Schools - Roseheyworth	Drainage works/excavation	Roseheyworth - highway drainage crossing the site Redirect storm water due to collapsed pipework to existing storm drain, to include new pipework and rebuilding of catch pit /inspection chamber with concrete manhole rings and cover slab	Complete	18.02.20	17.06.20
7	Cwm Primary	Drainage works/excavation	Construct Land drain between playing fields and school	Complete	19.02.20	20.02.20
8	Llanhilleth Institute	Flooding	Clean out flooded basement area, remove carpets and renew	Complete	06.03.20	18.03.20

TOTAL

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **7th December 2020**

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	25.11.20			07.12.20	13.01.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide scrutiny 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	Tredegear 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 - 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

This page is intentionally left blank

**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 requied
32	Resident	Abertillery	Vivian Street	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer requied
33	Resident	Brynmawr	Glamorgan Street	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer requied
34	Resident	Sofrydd	Rectory Road	Removal of DPPP	Revoke Traffic Order	No longer requied
35	Tredegar Members	Tredegar	Tredegar Town Centre	Limited Waiting Traffic Orders Varying	Review Tro's introduce time waitng 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 restiction to be removed	To create additional on street parking
37	Nigel Daniels	Abertillery	King Street	Previous restriction revoked	I ntroduce 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 waitng 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 willcreate 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 requied
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 Yelllows at junction	Prevent parking close to junction
56	Resident	Tredegar	Junction of Parkville / Park Hill	None at present	Introduce Double Yelllows 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

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 9

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **7th December 2020**

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	25.11.20			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/Walesprojectofficeradvert.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 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>

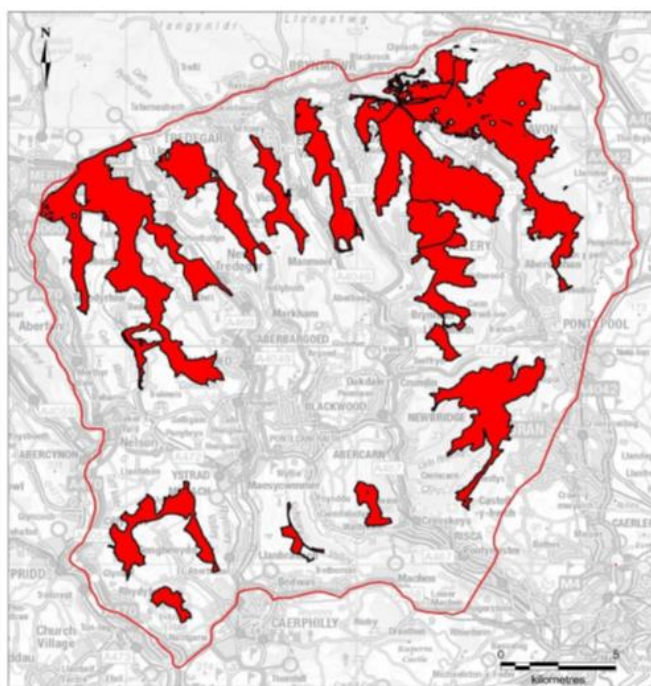
Glossary

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



This page is intentionally left blank

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>
What we propose to do	<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). 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><u>Management</u></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><u>Training and equipment</u></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.

	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	Acid grassland/heathland mosaics. Vegetation where dwarf shrubs are less than 25% of the canopy. Existing heath in poor condition.
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.
Aims	<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	➤ 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	➤ Restore all existing ponds which are overgrown or in-filled (unless with great crested newts).

	➤ 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	➤ 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.
Aims	<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
Specific management objectives	<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>

What we propose to do	<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>
Aims	<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
Specific management objectives	<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
Priority Areas	<p>This plan should aim to develop and better co-ordinate existing volunteers / groups.</p>
Desired Outcomes	<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 (Program me)	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														
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			

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 10

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny**
Date of meeting: **7th December 2020**
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	25.11.20			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 and Regeneration & Community Services Leadership Team have considered this report.

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

5.1 Well-being Plan, Objective 2 – Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities. The use of 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.

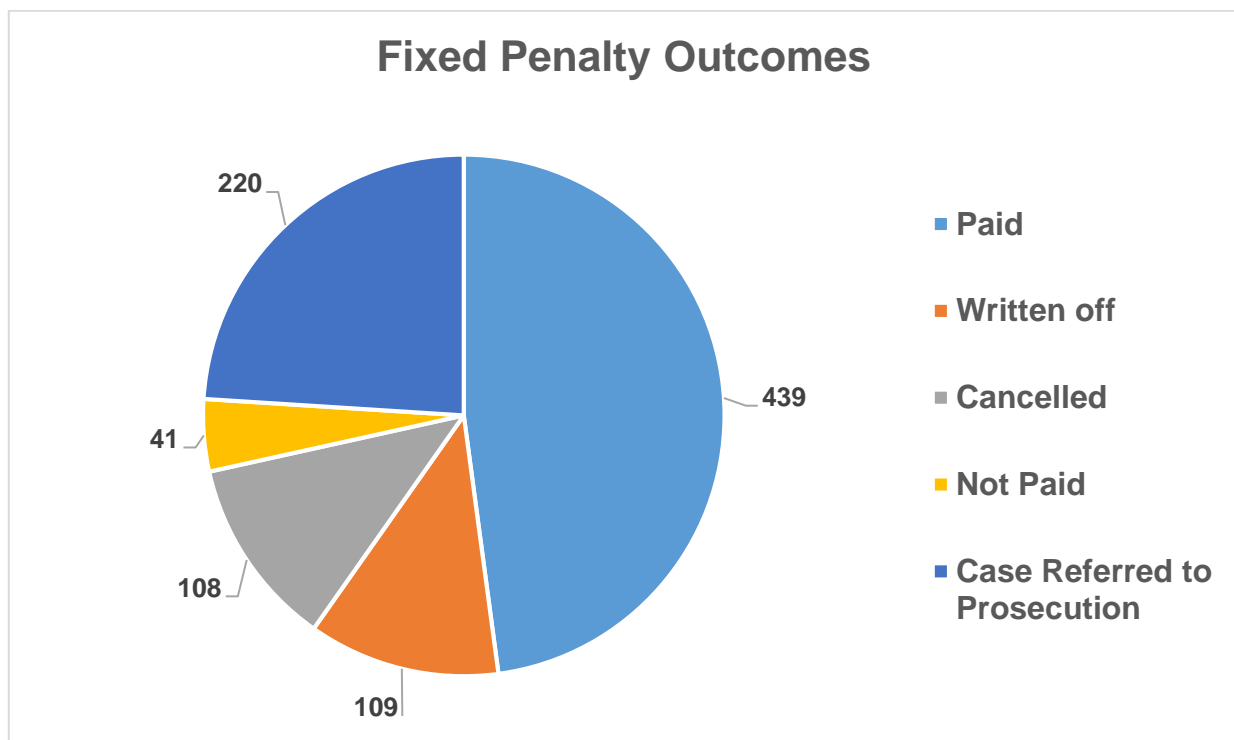
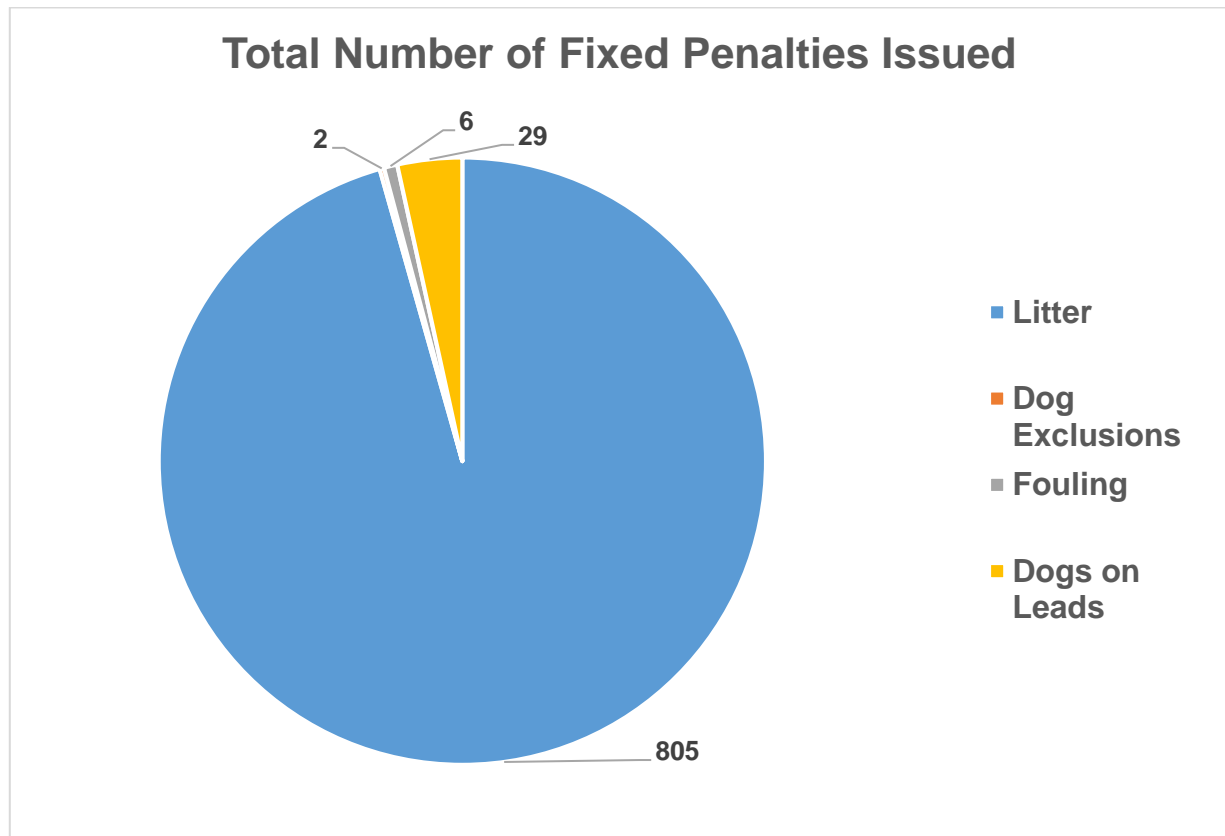
Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Fixed Penalty Notice Geographical Breakdown

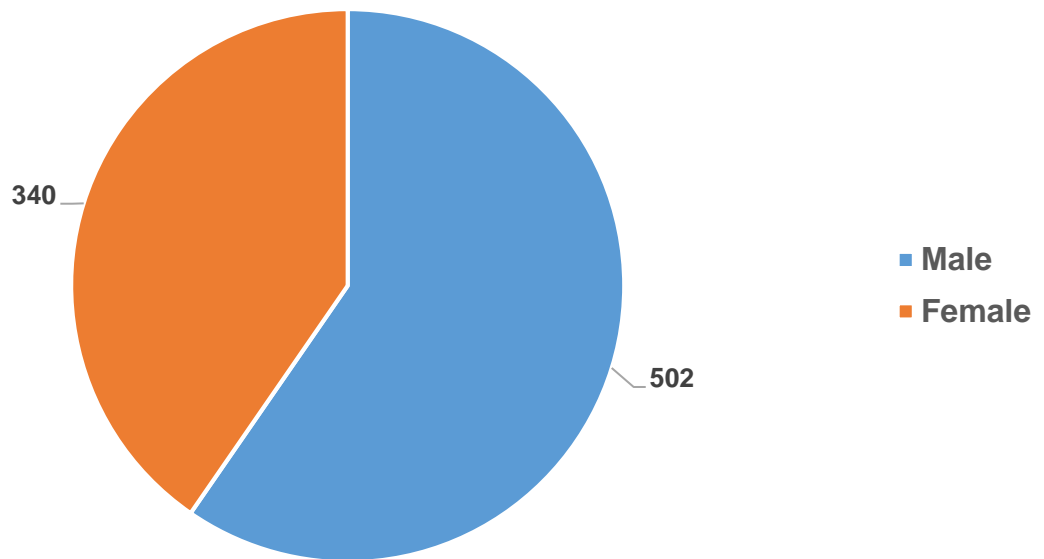
Appendix 2 – Financial Breakdown Service Cost

Appendix 3 – Dog Patrol Areas

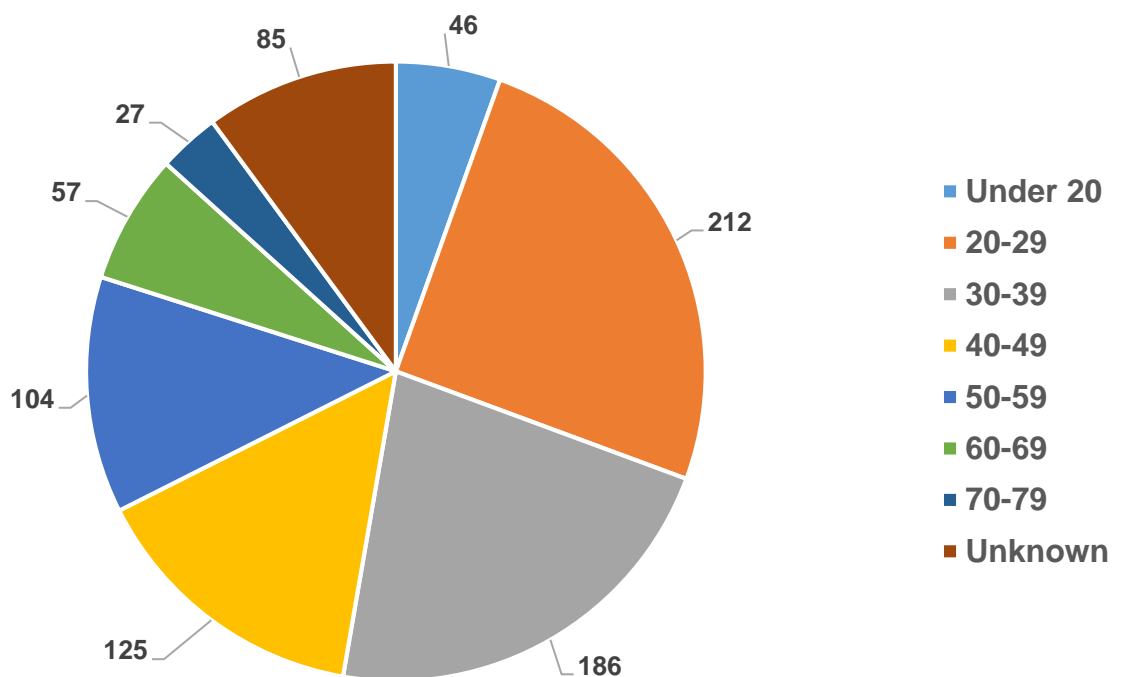
Appendix 1 Fixed Penalty Notice Geographical Breakdown



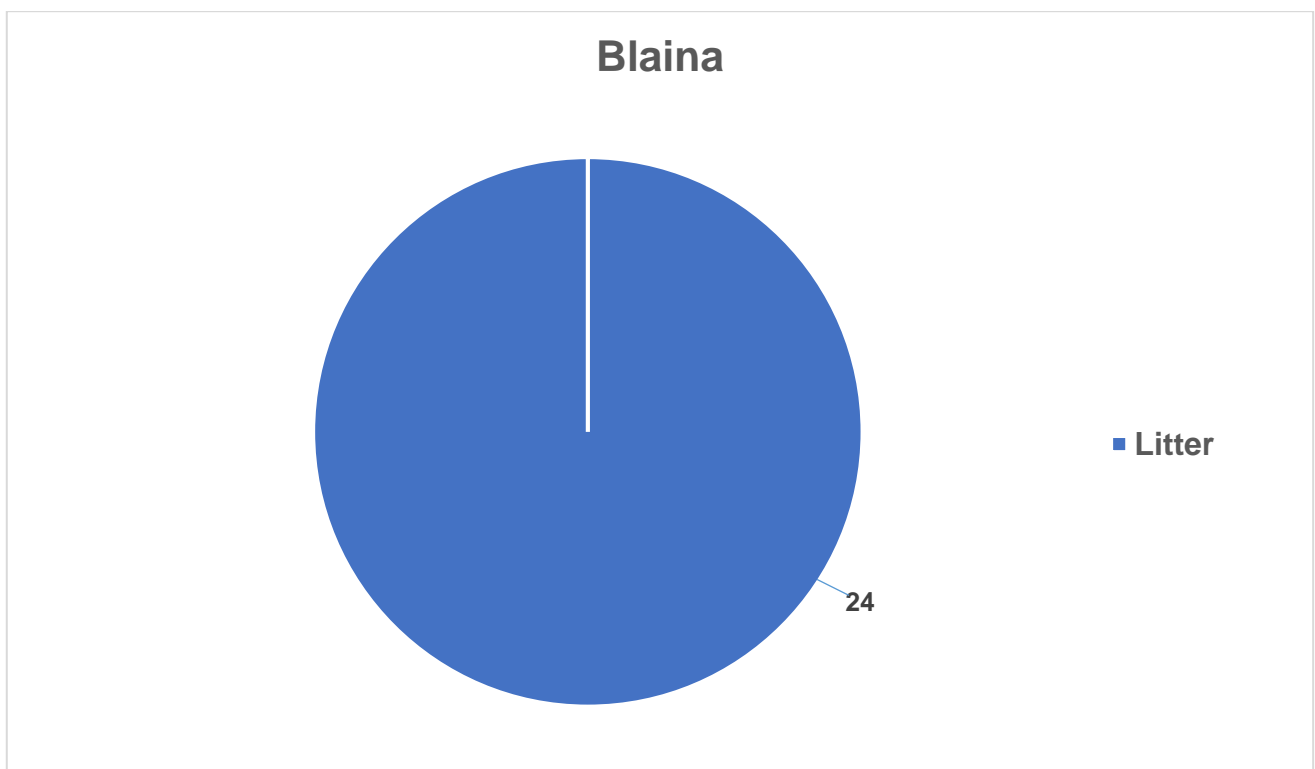
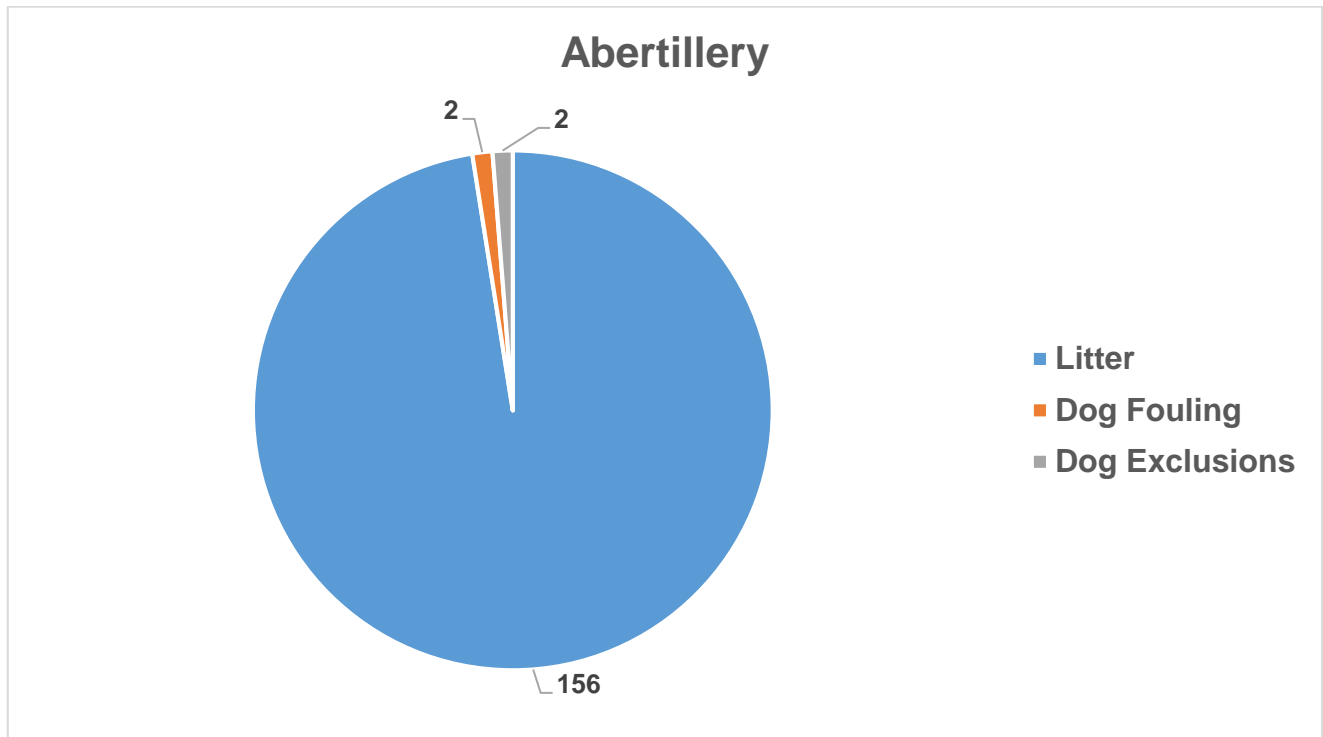
Fixed Penalties Served by Gender



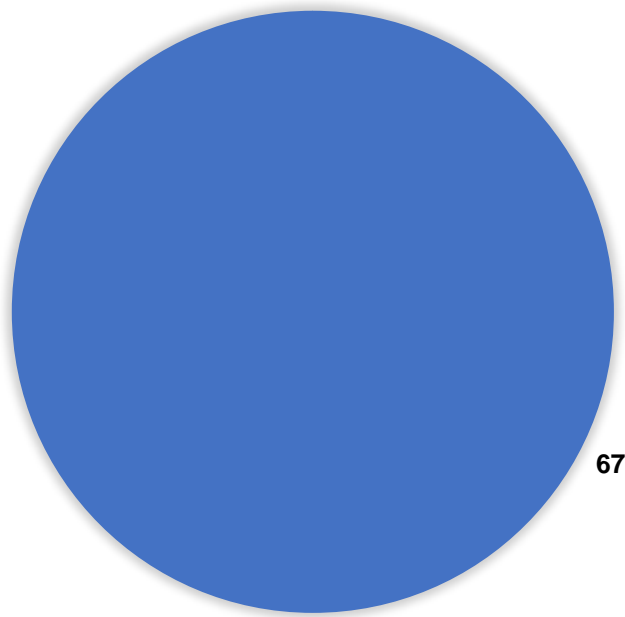
FPN's Served by Age Group



FPN's Issued by Area

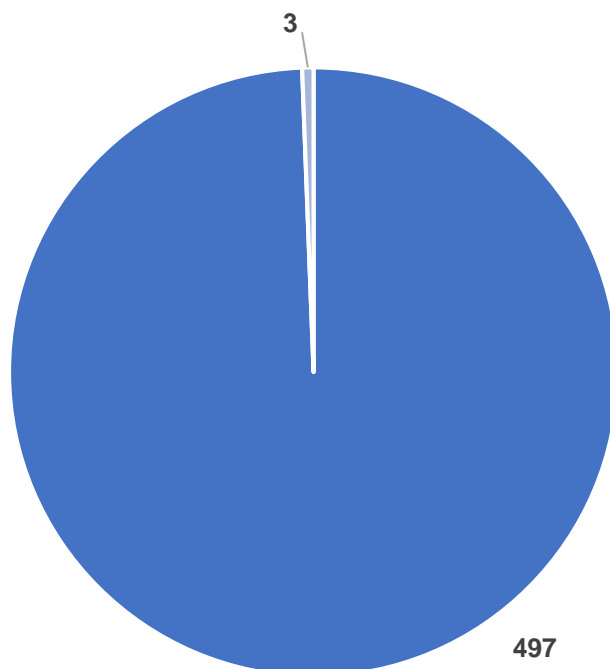


BRYNMAWR



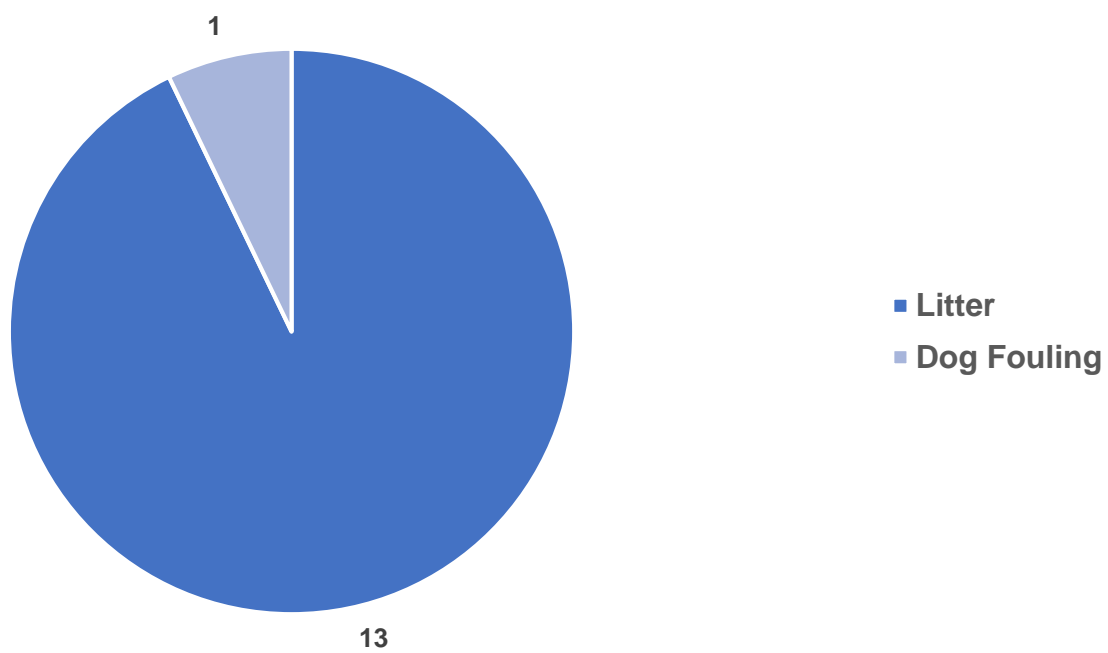
■ Litter

Ebbw Vale

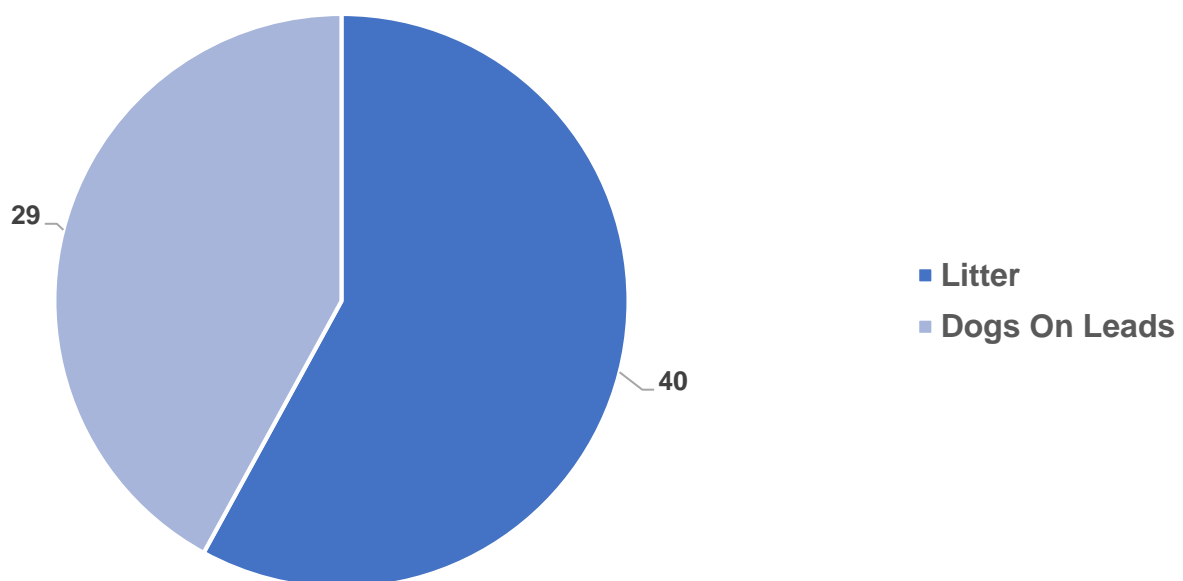


■ Litter
■ Dog Fouling

Nantyglo



Tredegar



This page is intentionally left blank

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, Waunlwyd

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 Willowtown Old Willowtown 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, Pantypwodyn 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, Milfreen Av, Gwent Terrace,School Av, Ffosmaen Rd King St Parc nan 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

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 11

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **7th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 18th January 2021**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Joanna Williams, Executive Member Environment**

Report Submitted by: **Cllr Mandy Moore, Chair of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	25.11.20			18.01.21			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Community Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 18th January 2021 for discussion and agreement.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programme link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's revised Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans.
 - 2.3 Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny makes a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
 - 2.4 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in September 2020, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
 - 2.5 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting 18th January 2021, and

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

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting 18th January 2021, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 18th January 2021

Community Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

Dates / Deadlines	Scrutiny Topic	Purpose	Lead Officer	Executive / Council
Monday 18th January 2021 Deadline: 18 th December 2020	Dis-Used Spoil Tips Update	To provide an update to Members in response to the dis used coal tip that slipped in RCT earlier this year and Welsh Government's /Coal Authority's way forward on such matters.	Clive Rogers / Carl Powell	Executive
	Pest Control – Annual Performance Report	<u>Information Only</u> To receive the annual report for Members' information.	Dave Thompson	Executive Information

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank