

T: 01495 357785 Ext./Est: 7785

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

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services



THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND

27th November 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Regeneration 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 Wednesday, 2nd 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.

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. **REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 5 - 10
To receive the minutes of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 21st October, 2020.
Please note the minutes are submitted for points of accuracy only.
5. **ACTION SHEET - 21ST OCTOBER 2020** 11 - 12
To receive the Action Sheet.
6. **TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP** 13 - 18
To consider the report of the Service Manager Business and Regeneration.
7. **DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE** 19 - 54
To consider the report of the Destination Management Officer.
8. **CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2020/21 QUARTER 1** 55 - 62
To consider the report of the Managing Director.
9. **ENERGY PROSPECTUS ANNUAL REVIEW** 63 - 88
To consider the report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.
10. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 6TH JANUARY 2021** 89 - 92
To consider the report of the Chair of the Regeneration

Scrutiny Committee.

To: Councillor J. Hill (Chair)
Councillor G. A. Davies (Vice-Chair)
Councillor M. Cook
Councillor M. Cross
Councillor G. L. Davies
Councillor P. Edwards
Councillor K. Hayden
Councillor S. Healy
Councillor W. Hodgins
Councillor H. McCarthy
Councillor J. C. Morgan
Councillor J. P. Morgan
Councillor L. Parsons
Councillor K. Rowson
Councillor B. Willis

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 REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21st OCTOBER, 2020

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC & COMMITTEE SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR J. HILL (CHAIR)

Councillors P. Edwards
 G.A. Davies
 J. Millard
 J.C. Morgan
 J.P. Morgan
 L. Parsons
 K. Rowson
 B. Willis
 S. Healy (substitute)
 M. Cook (substitute)

AND: Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community Services
 Head of Regeneration & Development
 Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities
 Team Leader Thriving Communities
 Business & Regeneration Manager
 Service Manager Development & Estates
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

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

	<p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Elias and H. McCarthy.</p> <p>It was reported that Councillors S. Healy and M. Cook was in attendance acting as substitutes for Councillors G. Collier and M. Holland. However, should Councillor Collier or Holland attend the meeting, then Councillors Healy and Cook would leave.</p>	
No. 3	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
No. 4	<p><u>REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The minutes of the special Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd September, 2020 were submitted.</p> <p>Councillors P. Edwards and J.C. Morgan asked that their names be recorded against approval of the minutes.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
No. 5	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 23rd SEPTEMBER, 2020</u></p> <p>There were no actions arising from the special meeting of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd September, 2020.</p>	
No. 6	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME: 2ND DECEMBER 2020</u></p> <p>The Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 2nd December, 2020 was submitted.</p> <p>It was reported that ‘Report Submitted By’ on the first page should be amended to read Councillor John Hill, Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>A Member referred to the Information Pack items, namely the Business Improvement District (BID) Update report and asked that this be brought into the FWP moving forward.</p>	Chair/ Scrutiny Officer

	<p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the report be accepted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>TOWN CENTRE TASK AND FINISH AND ECONOMIC RESPONSE FOLLOWING COVID-19</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p> <p>At the invitation of the Chair, the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities presented the report which provided Members with an update on the work of the Task and Finish Group and sought agreement to re-establish the Task and Finish group to continue their work on a Town Centre Strategy.</p> <p>The Officer said in December 2019 the Regeneration Scrutiny approved a report to establish a Town Centre Task and Finish Group with the membership as follows:</p> <p>Councillor Joanna Wilkins Councillor Keri Rowson Councillor Wayne Hodgins Councillor Phil Edwards Councillor John Morgan Councillor Lee Parsons Councillor John Hill</p> <p>The membership ensured that all town centres had representation at a local level, and two meetings of the group were held prior to the Covid lockdown period.</p> <p>In terms of membership of the Group moving forward, the Officer reported that at the Council's AGM Councillor Joanna Wilkins was appointed Executive Member for Environment and as a result would no longer sit on the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. However, despite this there still remained sufficient representation for the towns across the remaining Members of the Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>The Officer reported that during March the Council was invited by the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government to submit an application to receive revenue funding support, and each LA across Wales was able to</p>	

access up to £25,000 through the Welsh Government Transforming Towns programme. The money was earmarked for spend on possible options which included developing masterplans; digital projects and provisions; community/stakeholder engagement; empty property/enforcement work; green infrastructure audit; place branding.

It was therefore proposed to take forward an overall place branding approach for Blaenau Gwent which will be supported by each of the towns and the areas they most want to 'shout' about. This would also be supported through the investigation of how a digital approach could support the traditional 'bricks and mortar' trading. Additional to the place branding work, an agreed programme of marketing and communications to support the town centres would be developed and put into action, with support from the Town Centre Forums.

The Officer also reported that a Town Centre Business Development Officer had recently been appointed to commence on the 1st November, 2020. This post would be key in taking forward the work of the Task and Finish Group, and delivery of the Town Centre Strategy; and supporting town centre businesses.

The Officer then went through the Options highlighted in the report and confirmed that in advance of the first Task and Finish Group meeting, Members would be provided with a briefing note of previous discussions, along with a short presentation at the start of the meeting to refresh previous discussions and confirm the next steps. This meeting would also include discussion and agreement on timescales for the Task and Finish Group and reporting of outcomes.

A Member said he welcomed the report, and the appointment of a Town Centre Business Development Officer. In terms of membership of the Group he said he was happy to represent Abertillery moving forward, with the agreement of Members.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and re-establish the Task and Finish Group (with the existing membership); and recommence their

	<p>consideration of the Town Centre Strategy. The Group would revisit previous areas considered to ensure that they aligned with any COVID-19 adaptations that may be required, but the focus would be upon the remaining areas not yet discussed with a view towards concluding the work of the Task and Finish Group as soon as possible. (Option 1)</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>BRYNMAWR AND NANTYGLO MASTERPLAN</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 the report of the Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities.</p> <p>The Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities presented the report which provided an update on the Masterplan commissioned for key sites within Brynmawr and Nantyglo, and sought endorsement on a proposed series of recommendations.</p> <p>The Officer said Brynmawr was the focal point for the communities of the Upper Ebbw Fach Valley. However, as with all town centres, the sustained fall in footfall presented a real challenge, and therefore a focus on projects and measures to attract people in the area was important. The defined study area straddled both the Brynmawr and Nantyglo wards with the key principles of the study focusing specifically on key strategic sites. Development scenarios and routes to market have been identified for each of the sites, and consultants have also carried out market analysis against each of the development options; developed initial schematics for each of the scenarios, and carried out consultation activity which included Blaenau Gwent Officers, Member engagement and public consultation.</p>	

A Member said he welcomed the report, but stressed the importance of flexibility within the Masterplan moving forward to take into account development of any further potential sites.

In response the Officer assured that the document would be fluid, and said it provided a foundation and the principles on which each site and decision would be taken forward.

A brief discussion ensued when the Officer clarified points raised by Members.

The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report which contained information relating to the financial/business affairs of persons other than the Authority be accepted, and endorsed the findings of the Brynmawr and Nantyglo Masterplan and agreed to the next steps for work to be undertaken in the following areas:-

- Development of funding applications to support further activity (site investigations, site acquisition and demolition);
- Continued dialogue with key stakeholders; and
- Further develop potential development options for the Brynmawr Boilerhouse (delivery model, funding options, future use). (*Option 2*)

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Action Sheet

Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 21st October 2020

Item	Action to be Taken	By Whom	Action Taken
6	<u>Forward Work Programme</u> A Member requested that a report on the 'Business Improvement District' be included for discussion on the Forward Work Programme at the appropriate time.	Moe Forouzan / Sally Jones	A report to be included in the Forward Work Programme in the New Year.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 6

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **2nd December 2020**
Report Subject: **Transport Strategy and Review Task and Finish Group**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Written by: **Owen Ashton, Service Manager Business & Regeneration**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
11.11.20	12.11.20	17.11.20			02.12.20			

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek Members endorsement and nominations to form a 'Transport Strategy and Review' Task and Finish Group.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1. From providing access to employment, services, facilities and enabling residents to attend medical appointments and education; transport has and will continue to play a key role in creating viable and sustainable communities within Blaenau Gwent.
- 2.2. Covid-19 has posed many challenges, placing increased pressure on businesses and the commercial viability of such entities across all sectors including transport. With reductions in passenger numbers using bus and rail services, there is an increasing need for greater collaboration between operators and Local and Welsh Government (WG).
- 2.3. This presents an opportunity to re-shape how residents use and view transport; from increasing numbers walking and cycling to access services in our Town Centres, to using Ultra Low Emission Vehicles for taxi services to link into improved rail services and trialling new ways of providing bus services, via Integrated Responsive Transport (IRT) with innovative funding such as the Welsh Government's Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) to deliver a more efficient and sustainable service.
- 2.4. Transport needs to evolve to meet new challenges and adapt to changing demands. In order to address these issues, a Strategy and Review is currently being procured to identify a programme of work that will provide a strategic vision and plan for transport within Blaenau Gwent taking account of:

- What our integrated local transport services would look like with 4 trains per hour and 2 trains per hour – including taxis, responsive community transport/IRT etc.
 - How do we assist more people to get to work?
 - The Council's subsidy – should it be for people to access work or access services, or both?
 - How will Council funding for bus services work and how can we maximise opportunities through the BES?
 - How can we improve the wider transport links to other local authority areas?
 - How can we influence service operators' and other partners' e.g. third sector future plans?
 - What are the gaps in the Active Travel network and how can we promote Active Travel as part of an integrated transport provision to improve access to our towns and villages and hubs?
 - How can we embed a low or zero carbon approach into our transport strategy?
- 2.5. Much of this work is already underway for example the Council has been working closely with WG and Transport for Wales (TfW) on an IRT pilot project which is one of only 3 being piloted across Wales. This project will help in getting a better understanding of what transport users want, balancing both existing well used routes with new routes and services outside of the core service hours provided by operators through a semi-scheduled service. Similarly, significant work has already been undertaken in identifying improved access to town centres through Active Travel and work is already underway to increase the coverage of Electric Charging points for Taxis across the County Borough.
- 2.6 Whilst focussed on the needs of Blaenau Gwent and its residents, the Strategy will also take into account a range of strategic and national/regional considerations including:
- The inter-dependencies between local, regional and national transport strategies and Transport for Wales Metro proposals;
 - How transport contributes to broad social, economic and environmental goals;
 - How the local and regional transport underpins the Welsh Government's approach to their strategy delivery with clear allocation and division of responsibilities between WG, other agencies and local authorities;
 - Links to other policy frameworks like spatial planning and economic development; clear identification of the transport problems and issues facing the local citizens both currently and in the future;
 - How technology including data analytics can be used to understand how transport demand and conditions might change in the future and to appraise/prioritise components of the strategy, especially with reference to Covid-19;
 - Engagement and co-production through working with a range of stakeholders.

- 2.7 Given the breadth of issues which need to be looked at as part of the Review and Strategy, there is a clear need for member representation to support the work and oversee its development and implementation via a Task and Finish Group.
- 2.8 Members of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee are therefore being asked to nominate up to five members to sit on this group which will be made up of officers and members, and where necessary representatives of other organisations.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Option 1 – progress with the establishment of the Task and Finish Group

That we establish the Task and Finish group and nominate up to five members to sit on the Group

3.2 Option 2 – to not progress with the establishment of the Task and Finish Group

That we do not progress with the Task and Finish Group.

Preferred Option

Option 1 – to proceed with the pilot project for BG.

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

- 4.1. The project supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-22 Outcome Statements:
- Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities;
 - Support a fairer sustainable economy and community;
 - To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities.

5. Implications Against Each Option

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

A budget of £25,000 has been identified to undertake this work. As WG funding via Local Transport Fund is unable to support Local Authority strategic transport plans, it is proposed that this work is funded from the Regeneration Department's Tech Valleys Capital Fund as the study will be used to inform a number of capital projects funded via Welsh Government through its Local Transport and Active Travel Funds.

5.2. *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has neither the capacity nor specialist skills to undertake work of this nature especially at this time. It is therefore proposed that an independent contractor is commissioned to undertake the work on the Council's behalf.

- 5.3. **Legal**
Prior to procuring the project, a contract will be drawn up in consultation with colleagues in Procurement of the work provided.
- 5.4. **Human Resources**
As well as the support and input from Members, it is proposed that the Task and Finish Group is made up from Officers across various departments within the Council meeting every quarter, with a maximum of 4 meetings held to complete the work.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1. **Performance Information and Data**
N/A
- 6.2. **Expected outcome for the public**
The project aims to establish a vision and a series of actions that provide a 'road map' to a more sustainable and integrated transport offer for residents of Blaenau Gwent.
- 6.3. **Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)**
The project presents an opportunity to address some of the challenges facing residents in accessing employment and services via public transport. The project will work with a range of partners to establish a longer-term solution as we move towards a low carbon economy and a post Covid-19 economy.
- 6.4. **Collaboration / partnership working**
The success of the project is predicated on successful collaboration and partnership working with a range of partners and stakeholders. By working closely with Transport for Wales, the project will draw on a wide range of experience.
- 6.5. **Integration (across service areas)**
The project will work with officers across a number of directorates including Community Services, Social Services and Corporate Services and has the potential to re-scope how transport supports these service areas.
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be integrated into the project including gateway reviews at key stages. The project will review baseline data and information

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Template

Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Template

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

Scrutiny Committee	Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Title of Working Group	Transport Strategy and Review Task and Finish Group
Is a Council Policy currently in place? If so, please state which one	There is no Blaenau Gwent Strategic Transport Strategy currently in place
Which Council Priority would the Working Group Support?	<p>The project supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-22 Outcome Statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities; • Support a fairer sustainable economy and community; • To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities.
Why is there a need to set up a Working Group?	To ensure effective oversight of the project and geographic coverage to understand issues and opportunities.
What is the Scope of the Working Group? What will be considered and what will not?	The Task and Finish Group will oversee the work of the consultants and provide input on their respective areas.
How will the aim of Working Group support the Sustainable Development Principles?	<p><u>Expected outcome for the public</u> The project aims to establish a vision and a series of actions that provide a 'road map' to a more sustainable and integrated transport offer for residents of Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p><u>Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)</u> The project presents an opportunity to address some of the challenges facing residents in accessing employment and services via public transport. The project will work with a range of partners to establish a longer-term solution as we move towards a low carbon economy and a post Covid-19 economy.</p> <p><u>Collaboration / partnership working</u> The success of the project is predicated on successful collaboration and partnership working with a range of partners and stakeholders. By working closely with Transport for Wales, the project will draw on a wide range of experience.</p>

	<p><u>Integration (across service areas)</u> The project will work with officers across a number of directorates including Community Services, Social Services and Corporate Services and has the potential to re-scope how transport supports these service areas.</p>
What outcome are you seeking from holding a Working Group?	It is hoped that the Task and Finish Group will provide strategic oversight and user input into the work being commissioned and ensure suitable geographic coverage
Which Officers will support the Working Group?	Officers from a number of Service Area will be support the Group and we anticipate a maximum number of five
Suggested Member Representation, e.g. Ward specific*	Each of the 5 towns
How many meetings will be held and how often?	It is proposed that meetings are held every quarter with a maximum of 4 meetings held to complete the work
What is the anticipated timescale for completion?	It is anticipated that the work should be completed within a year
How often will you report back to committee?	Annually

***Members of the Group will be agreed by the appropriate committee.**

Agenda Item 7

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **2nd December 2020**

Report Subject: **Destination Management Plan Update**

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

Report Submitted by: **Alyson Tippings, Destination Management Officer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
07.10.20	08.10.20	17.11.20			02.12.20	13.01.21		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Members consideration of the draft Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan (BGDMP) for 2020-2.
 - 1.2 The report provides a summary of the BGDMP content and the Themes around which the Plan is based.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Destination Management Plan is a strategic document that sets out priorities for tourism development in Blaenau Gwent over the period 2020-2025 and complements the new Visit Wales Tourism Action Plan over the same period.
 - 2.2 The BGDMP aims to ensure that people, businesses and organisations work together in a coordinated way to deliver agreed targets and priorities for investment. The Plan contains eight chapters including an Introduction to Destination Management, the Strategic Context, a SWOT analysis, a review of the 2016-19 BGDMP, Covid-19 implications, Strategic Priorities, Action Plan and Tourism Product.
 - 2.3 The plan identifies six Cross Cutting Themes and five main themes and priority areas. The cross cutting themes are Business development, Challenging and changing perceptions, Partnership working, Research and Analysis, Skills and Transport. The main themes are Business Tourism; Culture, Heritage (including the Home of the NHS) and Genealogy; Events and Green/Eco Tourism (including Outdoor Activity, Trails and Town Centres).
 - 2.4 The BGDMP and associated Action Plan have taken account of national, strategic and local trends and priorities. The Plan and Action Plan have been developed by the Destination Partnership which comprises representatives from the Private, Public and Third sectors.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 Option one – The BGDMP 2020-25 is endorsed and recommended for approval by the Executive Committee.
- 3.2 Option two – The BGDMP 2020-25 is endorsed with amendments requested prior to approval by the Executive Committee.

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

- 4.1 Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board: Established in April 2016, and is currently working towards preparing a Well-being Plan for the area. Tourism will offer an opportunity in Blaenau Gwent to help the area contribute towards the long-term future of the area.
- 4.2 The Blaenau Gwent Local Plan 2018-2022
The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Section 15), places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. As part of this, the Council is required to develop a Corporate Plan. The priorities developed for the Corporate Plan incorporate the previous Council Well-being Objectives and also represent our Improvement Objectives, as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure.
 - Our core vision - Proud Heritage, Strong Communities, Brighter Future.
 - Our core values – Prod & Ambitious, Trust & Integrity, Working Together, Raising Aspiration and Fair & Equitable.
- 4.3 Our Council priorities are an Efficient Council delivered through Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities, Economic Development & Regeneration, Social Services and Education.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

- 5.1.1 The proposed BGDMP 2020-25 has been developed by the Authority with the involvement of local stakeholders and partners.
- 5.1.2 The Action Plan will be delivered collaboratively with the identified partners, who will also have responsibility for sourcing the necessary funding, with support from the DMP Officer as appropriate. Where the Authority is the identified lead, the project will be funded via internal budgets e.g. Destination Management and where necessary external funding opportunities will be explored.

- 5.1.3 The Plan will support the Authority in making funding applications to external funding bodies including Welsh Government, Visit Wales and others, to deliver projects.
- 5.1.4 Any priorities identified within the action plan requiring additional funding will be reported as appropriate, identifying any potential impact on BGCBC resources.
- 5.1.5 Retention of the Destination Management budget is essential to supporting the five-year delivery of the Blaenau Gwent DMP.

5.2 Risk including Mitigating Actions

- 5.2.1 The DMP is Blaenau Gwent's strategic document to support destination related activity. Without such a plan there is a risk to the Authority and other stakeholders in terms of securing funding to deliver projects.
- 5.2.2 Reduction in available staff resources will impact upon the Council's ability to implement activity contained within the action plan.
- 5.2.3 There is a risk of partner organisations not prioritising agreed actions which will negatively impact upon the implementation of the overall plan.
- 5.2.4 Failure of local tourism stakeholders to engage in the Destination Management Partnership will result in a weak monitoring of the Plan. The Destination Management Officer will dedicate time to strengthening the partnership membership.

5.3 Legal

- 5.3.1 There are no legal implications to the development of the BGDMP. Any activities arising as a result of the plan will be delivered within existing legal governance arrangements.

5.4 Human Resources

- 5.4.1 Destination Management related activity will be undertaken and co-ordinated through the Council's Destination Management Officer.
- 5.4.2 The Destination Management Officer is a critical role to ensuring the effective co-ordination and implementation of the plan.

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data

- 6.1.1 Nationally - The plan referenced Welsh Government's / Visit Wales new tourism framework and The Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

6.1.2 Regionally – South Wales Tourism Forum, South East Wales Destination Management Group and South East Wales Destination Implementation Group

6.1.3 Locally - Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board, the Blaenau Gwent Local Plan 2018-2022 and the Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan.

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

6.2.1 The BGDMP could benefit local businesses, residents and visitors alike through developing a more prosperous economy, pleasant environment and inspiring pride in our heritage.

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

6.3.1 The Destination Management Partnership meet quarterly at various venues across the County Borough. The group has increased membership and is a strong and cohesive voice for local tourism.

6.3.2 The Destination Management Officer regularly engages with stakeholders and the community to ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon.

6.3.3 This Plan was developed by the Partnership and consultation has been undertaken with the BGCBC and wider tourism stakeholders. There has not been the opportunity to undertake a public consultation due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

6.3.4 All views have been considered by the Partnership and based on this, the plan has been amended accordingly.

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

6.4.1 The BGDMP lifetime has been extended from 3 years to 5 years to allow the partnership to take a long term vision for tourism.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

6.5.1 Without a Destination Management Plan for Blaenau Gwent there will be no focus and monitoring of tourism delivery in the area. Regular business and community engagement addresses issues at an early stage or prevents them occurring in the first place.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.6.1 The Local Authority works collaboratively with Welsh Government, other local authorities, local businesses, trusts, public bodies and the voluntary sector in delivering the Destination Management Plan. In Blaenau Gwent we are working together to deliver the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan through the community, stakeholders and the Destination Management Partnership.

6.6.2 Officers of the Council are represented on the South Wales Tourism Forum, South East Wales Destination Management Group and South East Wales Destination Implementation Group who link to the City Region board.

6.7 *Integration (across service areas)*

6.7.1 Prosperous - The Destination Management Plan aims to improve the profitability of business performance through building the capacity of the industry.

6.7.2 Healthier - walking and activities in the outdoors through the development of walking and cycling routes will benefit the physical and mental wellbeing of the community and visitors.

6.7.3 Equal- By making recreational activities accessible to all.

6.7.4 Culture & Language - Through the use of the Welsh language in all our promotional materials and on line and celebrating our heritage and culture.

6.7.5 Globally Responsible - By protecting and promoting our unique natural and built environment, encouraging use of sustainable transport and supporting businesses in securing the Green Dragon environmental standard awarded to organisations that are taking action to control their impacts on the environment.

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

6.8.1 The BGDMP embraces all residents and visitors. It has no adverse impact on people or groups from the nine protected characteristics.

7. *Monitoring Arrangements*

7.1 The BGDMP is monitored quarterly through the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Partnership which receives updates on the progress made and forward planning.

7.2 Annual updates are provided to Scrutiny Committee and Executive every and on request.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - The Draft Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan 2020-25

This page is intentionally left blank

Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Plan 2020-2025

Index	2
Foreword	4
Introduction to Destination Management	6
Strategic context	8
SWOT	10
Review of BGDMP 2016-9	12
Strategic priorities	16
Covid	21
Action Plan	22
Tourism Product	26

Foreword

As a keen naturalist and photographer I spend a great deal of my spare time in the beautiful countryside of Blaenau Gwent, over the past 40 years I have seen a dramatic change as the wildlife has reclaimed the mountains and rivers following the demise of our once flourishing heavy industry.

Red Kites now circle high above the Borough's oldest standing building St Illtyd's Church, whilst the formerly extinct native of Britain the Goshawk has re-established itself within our coniferous forests and its chilling call can be heard once again.

Dippers can be seen bobbing on the rocks of both the Ebbw Fach and Ebbw Fawr rivers and a keen eye will pick up the elusive Otter as it glides effortlessly through the watercourses, the transition has been considerable and there are now endless opportunities to capture wonderful images on my door step.

The whole of Blaenau Gwent is just a short walk from mountain tops with acres of wilderness to explore. It isn't just the wildlife, there are great walking trails, cycling routes, fabulous places to stay and amazing heritage sites to visit.

In the Eighteenth Century, we became the focus of the industrial revolution, people flocked here to make their living in the ironworks and pits and this migration made Wales the world's first industrial nation. Hundreds of years later, whilst our ironworks and colliers have long gone, the roots they put down then are now sending us visitors researching their family history. Gwent Archives receives visitors from all over the world researching their ancestors with Australia, New Zealand and North America topping the list.

Our last Destination Management Plan delivered a rise in visitors, more bed spaces in our guest accommodation and a huge increase in cottages, flats and rooms to rent. We saw many new tourism businesses setting up locally, capitalising on the location and all it has to offer. We also have a wealth of businesses tourism opportunities with unique conference and meeting venues that are growing in their potential and profitability. We are challenging and changing their perceptions of the area and in doing so, attracting more visitors. More films were shot here recently than ever before and we achieved this by linking up our services and knowledge to make it easier for film makers to shoot in Blaenau Gwent. The continued investment in local infrastructure with the developments to the Heads of the Valleys road, the Ebbw Valley rail link and cycle routes make it easier to get here and to enjoy what we have to offer. The future plans for The Metro will bring exciting new opportunities and we look to maximise these connections with our tourism product.

In closing I would like to thank the Destination Management Partnership for steering us through the last 3 years. With their guidance and the input from stakeholders we have put together a new plan that plots the course for the next 5 years. We know from feedback that when visitors spend time in Blaenau Gwent that they have a wonderful time, we have delivered so much through our previous Destination Management Plan and it is now time to ensure that

even more visitors enjoy what we have to offer. It is crucial that we all work together to deliver the plan to make Blaenau Gwent a better place to live and visit.

Councillor Lee Parsons

Chair of the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Partnership

INTRODUCTION TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Destination Management is co-ordinating and delivering all the many facets that enhance the visitor experience. It looks at things from the visitor's viewpoint and ensures that residents, businesses, and our environment are well positioned to deliver the best possible experience in our destination. Ensuring a destination works effectively from a visitor perspective is the essential ingredient of successful Destination Management.

Destination Management Plan

The Destination Management Plan is the strategic document that sets out our vision for a visitor-focussed way forward for tourism development in the area. Its main output is a Destination Action Plan which sets out practical steps that if taken forward jointly by all stakeholders, can make a positive difference; improving the quality of the visitor experience and growing the visitor economy in Blaenau Gwent. Some steps will be small and immediate, whilst others may be far reaching and ambitious.

Destination Management Partnership

The success of Destination Management will be dependent on key stakeholder engagement and strong collaborative working in meeting the priorities set out within the plan. The Destination Management Plan will be monitored and reviewed quarterly by the Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Partnership consisting of tourism stakeholders, Blaenau Gwent members and the relevant officers, all of whom have a good working knowledge of the sector and bring their skills, expertise and enthusiasm to the partnership. The Destination Management Partnership membership is reviewed annually and welcomes new members to bring fresh ideas and dynamics to the group.

Review of the Destination Management Plan

An effective partnership is intrinsic to the success of the Destination Management Plan and as such its ongoing monitoring, challenging and delivery will be a key to success. The partnership has reviewed our last plan and based on progress made and changes to the visitor economy and has developed new directions for a sustainable and successful way forward.

Strategic Context

National Context

Visit Wales / Welsh Government are currently reviewing their policy and have developed a 'Plan on a Page' that summarises their new framework. There is no set growth target as in previous policies.

OUR AMBITION			
To grow tourism for the good of Wales.			
OUR GOALS			
Economic Growth			
Environmental Wellbeing	Cultural Wellbeing	Health Wellbeing	
OUR APPROACH			
High-quality experiences – that are good for visitors and host communities.			
Inherently Welsh – with a global outlook			
<i>Welsh and local – BRO</i>		<i>Global - BYD</i>	
— Experiences with a Welsh sense of place	— Friendly, welcoming communities	— A showcase for Welsh food and drink	— Thriving music and cultural experiences
— Driving local economies/supply-chains	— Accessible and inclusive – value for money	— Open year-round, across all parts of Wales	— Growing home-grown businesses
— Celebrating the Welsh language			
— A respected destination brand	— Attracting new international business	— Driving value over volume	— World-class experiences & events
— Meeting international quality standards	— Relevant, innovative and contemporary	— Harnessing data and insight for decisions	— Multi-lingual and culturally aware
— Minimising its environmental impact			
OUR OFFER			
Outstanding Natural Landscapes	Creative Culture	Epic Adventure	
Croeso: unique accommodation and local food and drink			
The Wales Way			
OUR TARGET VISITORS			
Values over Volume			
New staycation markets <i>UK cities, Ireland, Wales</i>		International visitors that are new to Wales <i>Near European, USA: targeted elsewhere</i>	
Lifetime relations			
Leisure	Operators	Business Travel	Niche
OUR KEY PRIORITIES			

<i>Great products and places</i>	<i>Quality visitor experiences</i>	<i>An innovative Cymru Wales brand</i>	<i>An engaged and vibrant sector</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visit Wales-led projects - Industry-led capital investment - Integrated place-making - International and home grown events inc. Business Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brilliant basics - Great hospitality through grading - Food and Drink - Skilled people - Product-led Teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A stronger nation brand - Adaptive flag-carrier marketing with off-peak focus - One campaign, two themed years - Digital-first industry - Marketing Centre of Excellence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective industry engagement one industry voice - Improved data and insights based on industry need - Strengthened strategy and policy function inc. Transport focus - An agile and responsive Visit Wales 	
COMMERCIAL PRIORITIES				
Improved routes to market	A focus on special interest products	Commercial partnerships		
BRAND OBJECTIVES				
Elevate our Status	Surprise and inspire	Change perceptions	Do good things	Be unmistakably Wales
IMPLEMENTATION				
Restructured internal team	Refreshed governance structures	Streamlined business support		
Review of delivery at local level		New approach to partnership delivery		
MEASURING SUCCESS				
Economic Growth				
Environmental Sustainability: TBC	Cultural Wellbeing: TBC	Health Benefits: TBC		
Local engagement with tourism	Visitor satisfaction	Business confidence		

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

The law is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It places statutory duties on public service bodies to work together towards seven national well-being goals (appendix). Tourism is key in Wales, contributing to the seven national well-being goals. Tourism can bring sustainable economic growth, showcase and celebrate Wales’ social and cultural assets, and protect and promote our unique natural and built environment.

1. A Prosperous Wales 2. A Resilient Wales 3. A Healthier Wales 4. A More Equal Wales 5. A Wales of Cohesive Communities 6. A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language 7. A Globally Responsible Wales

Regional Context

Since the last Destination Management Plan was written there have been changes in the delivery of tourism regionally. The in house Regional Engagement Team for S E Wales has been reduced to one manager responsible for engaging on a one to one basis with local authorities. The Regional Team also act as secretariat for the South Wales Tourism Forum.

South Wales Tourism Forum: The forum is made up of private sector and local authority representatives from each area along with other key stakeholders. The remit of the South Wales Tourism Forum includes the exchange of relevant views and ideas on tourism issues, and a mechanism for effective collaboration between Welsh Government and key stakeholders in the region.

South East Wales Destination Management Group: The group is made up of local authority senior managers and heads of service whose primary aim is to provide strategic and professional support and advice to the South East Wales Regional Partnership Board and Cardiff Capital Region Board, the South East Wales Tourism Forum and Visit Wales on Destination Management issues affecting the Region.

South East Wales Destination Implementation Group: The group is comprised of Tourism Officers who ensure that the tasks identified by South East Wales Destination Management Group are researched and delivered and are directly linked to local Destination Management Partnerships.

Valleys Regional Park is a partnership established by Welsh Government to inspire positive changes in the way we care for our Valleys landscape, connect people with a wide range of outdoor activities for health and wellbeing and to support communities to explore new ideas and enterprises. Parc Bryn Bach is one of 12 Discovery Gateways that act as nodes to encourage visitors to explore the local area and region.

Local Context

Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board: Established in April 2016, and is currently working towards preparing a Well-being Plan for the area. Tourism will offer an opportunity in Blaenau Gwent to help the area contribute towards the long-term future of the area.

The Blaenau Gwent Local Plan 2018-2022

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Section 15), places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. As part of this, the Council is required to develop a Corporate Plan. The priorities developed for the Corporate Plan

incorporate the previous Council Well-being Objectives and also represent our Improvement Objectives, as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure.

Our core vision - Proud Heritage, Strong Communities, Brighter Future.

Our core values – Proud & Ambitious, Trust & Integrity, Working Together, Raising Aspiration and Fair & Equitable.

Our Council priorities are an Efficient Council delivered through Strong & Environmentally Smart Communities, Economic Development & Regeneration, Social Services and Education.

Destination Management sits within the Business & Innovation Team of the Business & Regeneration Service within the Regeneration & Development Division of the Environment and Regeneration Directorate of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

The previous Blaenau Gwent Destination Management Strategy ran from 2016-19. It had 10 priority areas of Business Development, Business Tourism, Challenging and Changing Perceptions, Transport and Trail Development, Culture & Heritage, Research and Analysis, Events, Partnership Working, and Town Centres

Blaenau Gwent Destination – SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Unique valley landscape - everything from woodlands to open moorlands amazing views	Reluctance of some businesses to market and invest in their product.
Proud history and heritage with Heritage sites and features, Museums and a chronicle of steel working, mining, Chartism and the Home of the NHS	Negative perceptions –landscape scarred by industrial past and media portrayals especially post Brexit vote.
Transport - Good public transport links including X4 bus service, rail links into Ebbw Vale town and Llanhilleth and a road network – A465 dualling is nearing completion with good links to Midlands, M4 and West Wales.	Limited distribution and range of restaurants/hospitality across the area. No chain and few quality restaurants.
Growing accommodation and restaurant sector with some new high quality additions.	Limited stock of group accommodation.
Ultimate destination for the outdoors - Walking, cycling and running. A wide variety of walking routes, mountain biking and off road cycling, and strong local Park runs. Events including Junior Tour of Wales and Triathlons.	No Tourism Association or network.
Family history tourism fully exploiting the links to Gwent Archives.	Decline of town centres.
The warmth of the welcome and sense of community	Limited range of accommodation (self-catering sector is mainly Airbnb).
	Litter and Fly tipping
	Antisocial behaviour especially in town centres and evenings

	Digital exploitation – by businesses and access to town centre Wi-Fi
--	----------------------------------------------------------------------

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Tourism is one of the nine key sectors for growth recognised by Welsh Government. External investment e.g. Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative, Town Centre Regeneration Initiative, Valleys Task Force and Tech Valleys funding	Perceptions of the destination.
Development of South Wales Metro. New station in Abertillery and increased services	Lack of private sector confidence in the economy/lack of investment and increased uncertainty following Brexit and Covid 19.
New trends including Glamping Wellness retreats Music venues Festivals Wellbeing Climate change leading to staying local, local food etc.	Available public funding opportunities. Changes in Welsh Government's Tourism Investment Support Scheme from grant to loan. Future funding sources (no EU funds available) – replacement Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) availability is unclear
Increased opportunities following Brexit if the pound weakens (overseas visitors & staycations)	Digital and eco networks - Lack of Wi-Fi availability in town centres and Eco cars – availability of charging points
NHS – dedicated National Museum of Health. Circuit of Blaenau Gwent marathon linked to NHS	Labour and skills - Post Brexit labour threat and chef shortages along with perceptions that tourism is a low pay low skill employment opportunity

Cultural Tourism, Artworks, film & TV locations, artists and galleries.	Off peak public transport (evenings and weekends).
-------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------

Review of BGDMP 2016-9

Business Development

- Worked with 39 accommodation developers. Key developments include the opening of The Tredegar Arms – 4 Star , The Castle Lodge apartments, Nantyglo Roundhouses Holiday lets. There are now 18 self-catering businesses offering 138 bed spaces; 1 campsite offering 60 camping pitches, 16 serviced accommodation businesses providing 138 rooms 426 beds
- New hospitality businesses have opened including The Henrison, The Railway, The Looking Glass and Seren cafe.
- Award winners – Seren Business Growth 2020 winner Welsh in Business, Highly Commended Food, Drink and Hospitality. Bedwellty House Welsh Café Awards 2019 winner of **Best Café Food** and runner up in Best Café Visitor Experience
- Secured location for mobile food businesses in layby at the Highest Point A465.
- Development of BG Business hub 105 businesses linked with 386 contacts.
- Businesses entering the BG Business Awards with Tourism and hospitality class launched in 2019/20

Business Tourism

- Working with venues on developing their offer on MEET Cardiff Capital Region. Acting and Conference Bureau to link customers to venues.
- New brochure for The General Offices. New room naming to add sense of place to venue
- Secured funding for new Business Tourism project across SE Wales
- Tabor, Brynmawr opened and promoted as a business tourism venue.

Challenging and changing perceptions

- Major events – Hosting the Man Engine visit at Parc Bryn Bach received huge influx of visitors and wide UK and international media coverage. Steelhouse video features on Visit Wales new marketing.
- Worked on securing locations for TV and film these include Who Do You Think You Are? – BBC, The Widow ITV/Amazon, Requiem BBC and the feature films and His Dark Materials. Jewellery for BBC series Dracula made by Gemtime.
- Filmed Weatherman Walking which was broadcast autumn 2018
- UK Blogger/Vlogger visits mainly focusing on outdoor, activities, families, food and events. Sites featured included Tudor brewery, Soar Chapel Guest House, Bedwellty House, Guardian, Owl Sanctuary, Parc Bryn Bach and local walking trails.

- Three Blaenau Gwent locations feature in the 29 epic Welsh backdrops to Hollywood films – Wrath of the Titans, Arabesque and Transformers: the Last Knight <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/whats-on/film-news/welsh-hollywood-films-movie-tourists-12837385>
- There are 7 Green Flag Parks in Blaenau Gwent – Beaufort Hill Woodlands, Bedwellty Park, Garden Festival Parklands, Parc Bryn Bach, Parc Nant y Waun, Terence Garden at Brynmawr Welfare Park, Trevor Rowson Park.

Transport

- A465 dualling Brynmawr to Gilwern including the new Jack Williams Gateway bridge
- Ebbw Valley line. As part of the new rail partnership, Welsh Government and Transport for Wales Rail Services are developing the delivery plan for a second hourly service (to Newport) to be in place by 2021.

Trail Development

- Worked with Cwm a Mynydd Local Action Group to develop trails that link to the train and Halls Tramroad with Bryn Oer Tramroad. Delivered consultant report, path upgrades, way marking, website and leaflet.
- New cycling link between Llanhilleth and Cwm open.
- Mapping of Ebbw Fach Trail complete. Ebbw Fawr Trail developed with complimentary logo and sculptures along the trail.
- Clydach Gorge Project with BBNP and MCC at an advanced stage.

Culture and Heritage

- Continued to work with *The Valleys That Changed the World*, developing and promoting Industrial Heritage Product.
- Worked with Blaenau Gwent Heritage forum helped to establish new Facebook site and marketing.
- Delivered the Man Engine event. Highly successful on all fronts especially in telling our story. The theatre group told the story of life before the NHS. The narrator included Six Bells disaster, naming all the victims to tell of the true price of coal and the role of Tredegar Workingmen's Medical Aid Society and Aneurin Bevan in delivering the NHS. Ebbw Valley Brass, Beaufort Male Voice Choir, Ad Hoc Theatre Company and Head 4 Arts Gamelan group all involved in delivering the musical soundtrack of commissioned music for Man Engine. Tredegar Orpheus Male Voice Choir were involved in the Blaenafon event.
- Aberystroth history and Archaeological Society project that has explored and uncovered the history of the Cwm Celyn valley.
- Consultation report to maximise the tourism potential of BG as the Home of the NHS and Aneurin Bevan.

Research & Analysis

- Expanded locations and installed people counters.
- Collation of footfall data
- Took part in the VW biannual visitor surveys in 2017 and 2019.
- New bed stock report compiled.
- STEAM report produced that analyses volume and value of tourism in Blaenau Gwent.

Events

- Local Events - Production and distribution, on and off line of event posters - 16 posters with 519 events covering all of Blaenau Gwent for Spring, Easter, Summer, Autumn, Remembrance and Christmas. Promotion of Blaenau Gwent events on The Valleys website.
- Delivered the Man Engine event. Highly successful on all fronts especially in telling our story. The theatre group told the story of life before the NHS. The narrator included Six Bells disaster, naming all the victims to tell of the true price of coal and the role of Tredegar Workingmen's Medical Aid Society and Aneurin Bevan in delivering the NHS. Ebbw Valley Brass, Beaufort Male Voice Choir, Ad Hoc Theatre Company and Head 4 Arts Gamelan group all involved in delivering the musical soundtrack of commissioned music for Man Engine. Tredegar Orpheus Male Voice Choir were involved in the Blaenafon event.
- Steelhouse video features on Visit Wales new marketing.

Partnership working

- Continued membership of The Valleys. Successfully secured WG funding for 2017-19. Produced series of brochures including event led seasonal brochures, great outdoors and Valleys Gateway sites. Website updates and full Welsh translation completed, PR campaign, regional competitions. Hosted series of blogger visits.
- Continued membership of Southern Wales – attendance at trade shows, Familiarisation visits, BG Travel Trade Brochure. Secured WG funding to encompass Consumer, Business and Travel Trade Tourism.
- Continued membership of TVTCTW – networking events across south Wales.
- Continued to organise and deliver Wales Valleys Walking Festival.
- Working with Coalfields Regeneration Trust to develop work around 10 The Circle, Bevan Trail and other significant product.
- Development of NHS/Nye Bevan project.

Town Centres

- Local Events - Production and distribution, on and off line of event posters - 16 posters with 519 events covering all of Blaenau Gwent for Spring, Easter, Summer, Autumn, Remembrance and Christmas.
- Working with Business Forums.
- Delivery of Small Business Saturday. In 2018 our media campaign comprised of a series of animated posts developed by our in house communications team. Twitter – 52 posts, 33125 tweet impressions, 1102 media views and 346 engagements. Facebook – 51 posts, 38191 reach, 1127 clicks, 3779 video views, 149 shares and comments.
- Promoted membership of discount cards that can increase business e.g. Defence Card, Blue Light Card.
- Working with new Ebbw Vale Business Group to establish regular events throughout the town centre
- There has been an agreement to re-establish a Task & Finish group to consider the report and make recommendations
They will review the draft strategy with specific consideration to:
 - a. Generating a new strategy, focus and direction
 - b. Common principles that should underpin the strategy, action plan and associated delivery across all towns.
 - c. Complementarity of offer across the Authority and associated town centres.
 - d. Key strategic projects for town centre delivery, Blaenau Gwent wide.
 - e. Partnership and delivery mechanisms to support implementation of priorities contained within the strategy.
 The work will be concluded by end of Feb.

Volunteers

- Blaenau Gwent employs 24 Litter pickers who on average remove over 600 tonnes of litter a year. They also have 53 individual volunteers registered as Litter Champions.
- In Blaenau Gwent Keep Wales Tidy annually supports 1445 volunteers who spent around 6877 hours a year working on environmental projects including removing 67.5 tonnes of waste and recycling or reusing 3631 bags of waste. The types of projects included 225 clean ups, 28 protected species, 115 biodiversity, 30 access, 14 allotment/food growing, 39 community Gardens and 217 measures to prevent fly tipping.

Destination Vision

The Blaenau Gwent Destination Vision - "Visitors will be attracted to a destination where vibrant businesses work together to provide a warm welcome to everyone exploring the rich heritage, dramatic landscape, captivating towns and wide range of events and activities that Blaenau Gwent has to offer".

Priority Areas

On reviewing the priority areas in the previous Destination Management Plan, it was decided to divide them into 6 Cross Cutting Themes that underpin the plan and 5 Main Themes for specific tourism areas.

Cross Cutting Themes	Main Themes
Business Development	Business Tourism
Challenging & Changing Perceptions	Culture & Heritage Including NHS Genealogy
Partnership Working	Events
Research & Analysis	Green/Eco Tourism Including

	Outdoor Activities Trails
Skills	Town Centres
Transport	

CROSS CUTTING THEMES

Business Development

To ensure a thriving and vibrant tourist economy, it is essential that we work with individual businesses to maximise their potential. Blaenau Gwent, along with other agencies, has a key role to play in business development to support those who want to grow and increase their profitability. In addition to the specific development needs of each business, there are many ways that we can work together to improve our individual performance and that of the destination. Sharing knowledge, gaining new skills and teaming up to form a cohesive way forward is important and enhances the destination offer.

Challenging and Changing Perceptions

The perception of our area is often dominated by historical industrial portrayals and the subsequent decline through the post-industrial passage of time, yet when visitors arrive they are captivated by our heritage, impressed by the beauty of and the welcome received in the valleys.

Changing these perceptions will not be immediate but we must continue to build on the positives and unite to inform new audiences of why they should visit the Valleys, capitalising on our proximity to the Brecon Beacons.

Partnership Working

Blaenau Gwent is one of the smallest Local Authorities in Wales and the UK. Whilst this has some disadvantages, it also has many advantages. It is broadly recognised that we achieve more by working together than working in isolation. A better knowledge of the sector, developing local supply chains and forming cohesive and clear partnerships can maximise our return from visitors.

Research and Analysis

In order to improve our performance, it is essential that we continually measure and monitor our achievements. To do this, ongoing data collection is essential for accurate quantitative information. It is also important to find out what our customers feel, as this is the best way to improve our service and in turn results. A new Tourism Strategy is essential for the strategic development of the destination.

Skills

In order for our visitors to have the best experience possible, it is essential that our workforce maximises the opportunities available to them through formal and informal training options. This can be achieved by raising awareness and encouraging take up of training and development opportunities and ensuring accessibility for potential learners

Transport

There is a need to continue with improvements to our connectivity, with works to increase rail services on the Ebbw Valley rail link and completion of the A465 dualling. Regional and local bus services are also an essential part of the network especially in the north and west of the area. With moves towards increased sustainability the importance of linking these to walking and cycling trails is important.

MAIN THEMES

Business Tourism

Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events. For several years there has been an embryonic business tourism sector in Blaenau Gwent the potential of which has not been realised. Recent development has brought together a number of facilities who have a better understanding of the market and a desire to capitalise on the income it can generate. Improvements to the transport network give the ideal platform to fully embrace the opportunities that exist.

Culture & Heritage Including Genealogy and (the home of) the NHS

The heritage and culture of the area is probably the stand out reason for visitors coming to the area. We have a special and proud history, a landscape that tells of the earliest settlers in the area and a wealth of historical sites, museums and archives that draw in visitors on a daily basis. It is essential that we protect, maintain and capitalise on this valuable asset. Two areas that are particularly suitable for development are genealogy with the proximity of Gwent Archives, registry office and several local museums and Blaenau Gwent as the home of the National Health Service.

Events

The value of events to the tourism sector is increasingly evident. Large annual events give a huge boost to the local economy while many smaller local events are growing as is the support needed to run them safely and successfully. To maximise the benefits, a clear way forward for marketing, training, development and financial sustainability is required.

Green/Eco Tourism Including Outdoor Activities & Trails

The mining and ironmaking industries left an indelible mark on the landscape however years of land reclamation and reforestation has restored the beauty and the biodiversity of the area. Tourists are much more aware of sustainability and the need to respect our environment and it is therefore incumbent on our industry to address environmental issues and promote a sustainable way forward.

The desire to be outdoors and active continues to grow with the markets for walking, cycling and adventure activities increasing. We must ensure we are at the forefront of developing and reacting to existing and emerging trends. The existing trails on offer continue to be well received however it is essential that we look at new opportunities to enhance the offer to niche markets and to increase accessibility, through developing new and longer trails.

The Development of the Valleys Regional Park across what is geographically known as the South Wales Coalfield will develop, enhance and promote the unique landscape of the area.

Town Centres

Addressing the difficulties faced by our town centres, is a far broader task than can be delivered by this Destination Management Plan however we must strive to maintain a thriving and vibrant welcome for residents and visitors alike. This will not be done by relying on traditional town centre business mixes and approaches, we will have to accept change and embrace digital opportunities.

Covid 19

Since this document has been compiled the Covid 19 pandemic has decimated the economy and in particular the tourism sector worldwide. Government at all levels have concentrated efforts on the health and wellbeing of our communities. The ebb and flow of the virus spread has led to the introduction of measures and restrictions that can change daily and our businesses have had to react instantly to keep their visitors and staff safe.

Throughout the pandemic, Blaenau Gwent officers have worked closely with Welsh Government to keep our businesses informed, operational, supported and safe. The financial support from Welsh Government, given to local businesses and organisations, has helped most of them survive. We have fed back to Welsh Government the thoughts and feelings of the sector, they have listened and in reacted.

A survey of tourism stakeholder showed that 85% fully closed following national lockdown on 23 March 2020 and 88% lost 100% of their income. All had kept in touch with their customers and 88% were going to reopen as soon as they were allowed to or it was safe to reopen. Most had received government funding and there was an increase in the sign up of industry newsletters to keep on top of announcements – 76%.

This close co-operation within the sector will continue and ongoing engagement will safeguard the future of tourism locally.

Action Plan

Theme	Description	Activity	Lead / Partners	Priority	Timescale
Business Development	Business engagement and support	1.1 Undertake proactive business engagement with the tourism sector, including inward investment, to encourage growth and development of businesses through raising awareness of the opportunities available.	BGCBC (DM) , Aneurin Leisure, Visit Wales, Business Wales, Federation of Small Businesses, Social Business Wales, Big Ideas Wales, Superfast Business Wales	High	Ongoing
Challenging & Changing Perceptions	Awareness	2.1 Realise a comprehensive awareness of the destination, on and off line, through media, marketing, vivid imagery, websites and hosting familiarisation visits, vloggers and bloggers.	BGCBC (DM & Comms) Stakeholders	High	Ongoing
	Regeneration	2.2 Develop and deliver regeneration initiatives to strengthen the business, physical and social environment of the destination e.g. Tredegar THI, VVP, RDP, TRI.	BGCBC (Regeneration) , Stakeholders	Med	Ongoing
Partnership Working	Group membership	3.1 Secure membership and affiliation to regional and national groups/ bodies, as appropriate to ensure the Authority and local business are represented appropriately.	BGCBC (DM) ,	Med	Ongoing
	Cross promotion	3.2 Encourage collaborative working and cross promotion opportunities amongst business clusters e.g. town centres, business tourism, tourist attractions.	BGCBC (DM & Comms) , Stakeholders	Med	Ongoing

Research & Analysis	Performance data	4.1 Ensure appropriate measures and arrangements are in place to capture, record and monitor footfall data for STEAM, Visit Wales Occupancy reports and	BGCBC (DM) , Stakeholders	High	Ongoing
Skills	Training	5.1 Audit and encourage businesses to take up accredited and non-accredited training opportunities to developed a better skilled and payed economy.			
	Guides	5.2 Ensure Ambassadors and Blue/Green Badge guides are up to date and involved in the area, recruiting additional volunteers as necessary. Consideration to be given to specialist module for 'Home of the NHS	BGCBC , WOTGA,	Med	ongoing
Transport	Connectivity	6.1 Improve connectivity across the local authority through the completion of the A465 HoV dualling through Blaenau Gwent and the Delivery of the Metro infrastructure including new station in Abertillery and increased services to Cardiff (and Newport).			
	Public Transport	6.2 Improving public transport connectivity to and across the Local Authority, improving ease and range of access to destination attractions.	Welsh Government , BGCBC (Transport), TfW, Local services.	Med	Ongoing
Business Tourism	Collaborative approach	7.1 Encourage all stakeholders to work collaboratively to establish and strengthen the Business Tourism offer within the Local Authority and to promote offer locally, regionally and nationally.	BGCBC (DM) Stakeholders	Med	2021

	Performance	7.2 Undertake reciprocal visits with key MICE locations and develop surveys to monitor and improve performance.	BGCBC (DM) Stakeholders	Med	2021
Culture & Heritage Including NHS Genealogy	Heritage	8.1 Celebrate and promote our local history and heritage through accessible trails, museums, archives, genealogy and research opportunities	BGCBC (DM), Heritage and walking groups	Med	Ongoing
	Home of the NHS	8.2 Implement the proposals of the Nye Bevan /NHS report that celebrates Blaenau Gwent as the Home of the NHS.	BGCBC (DM), WG, Aneurin Leisure and other stakeholders.	High	Ongoing
Events	Development	9.1 Develop and enhance the event provision across the borough, including annual events and festivals and promote to a local and national audience.	Stakeholders	Med	Ongoing
	Event Stewards	9.3 Develop a volunteer steward resource to support event delivery in Blaenau Gwent.	GAVO, Event organisers, Aneurin Leisure, BGCBC (Env Health)	Low	2022
Green/Eco Tourism Including Outdoor Activities Trails	Clean environment	10.1 Maintain clean and litter free environment across the destination.	BGCBC(DLO), Volunteers	High	Ongoing
	Valleys Regional Park	10.2 Work with the VRP partnership and Discovery Gateways to deliver their goals and ambitions across the valleys	Valleys Regional Park Partnership BGCBC Aneurin Leisure		

	Trails	10.3 Develop and market walking, running, cycling and longer cross border trails	BGCBC (DM) Other LAs, volunteers, Community groups	High	2021
	Adventure activities	10.4 Develop easily accessible adventure activities for individuals and groups.	Aneurin Leisure BGCBC (DM)	High	2021
Town Centres	Appearance	11.1 Maintain a clean, litter free and visually appealing environment in Town Centres with key facilities, infrastructure and events to attract visitors.	BGCBC (Environment)	High	Ongoing
	Wi Fi	11.2 Introduce Town Centre Wi Fi into our towns	BGCBC (Regeneration) Business Forums, Town Partnerships, Town Councils, Community organisations	Med	Ongoing

List of Consultees

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Departments

Blaenau Gwent Destination Partnership

Aneurin Leisure

Blaenau Gwent Business Forums

Social Business Wales

Visit Wales

Blaenau Gwent Tourism Businesses listed below;

List of accommodation providers

No.	Business	Town	Designation	Rooms / Units(beds) / Pitches
1	Tredeggar Arms	Tredeggar	Hotel	10
2	Premier Inn Ebbw Vale	Ebbw Vale	Budget Hotel	44
3	Ebbw Vale Guest House	Ebbw Vale	Guest House	11
4	Soar Chapel Guest House & Annex 1&2	Ebbw Vale	Guest House	13
5	Roseland	Tredeggar	Bed and Breakfast	4
6	The Belle Vue Inn	Tredeggar	Inn with rooms	3
7	The Cambrian	Tredeggar	Inn with rooms	6
8	The Castle Inn	Ebbw Vale	Inn with rooms	3
9	The Coach and Horses	Tredeggar	Inn with rooms	3
10	The Kings Arms	Ebbw Vale	Inn with rooms	5
11	The Llanhilleth Hotel	Abertillery	Inn with rooms	2
12	The Nags Head	Tredeggar	Inn with rooms	2
13	The Park Hotel	Ebbw Vale	Inn with Rooms	9
14	The Red Lion	Tredeggar	Inn with rooms	10
15	The Royal Exchange	Brynmawr	Inn with rooms	5
16	Top House	Tredeggar	Inn with rooms	2
17	Aderyn Bach Cottage	Nantyglo	Self Catering	1/2

18	Aderyn Mawr Cottage	Blaina	Self Catering	1/6
19	The Castle Lodge	Tredegar	Self Catering	3/27
20	Cosy Dragon 1&2	Blaina	Self Catering	2/10
21	Quarryman's Cottage	Tredegar	Self Catering	2/3
22	Ruby's Cottage	Abertillery	Self Catering	2/3
23	Russinda	Blaina	Self Catering	1/2
24	10 Double Beds	Tredegar	Self Catering	4/16
25	Parc Bryn Bach	Tredegar	Bunkhouse	30
26	Parc Bryn Bach	Tredegar	Camp site	60

List of Activities

No.	Site	Town	Description
1	Abertillery Sports Centre	Abertillery	Sports Centre
2	Cragfit	Ebbw Vale	Indoor climbing centre
3	Dizzy Kidz	Tredegar	Indoor soft play area
4	Ebbw Vale Sports Centre	Ebbw Vale	Sports Centre
5	Eden Centre	Abertillery	Indoor soft play area
6	Egni	Tredegar	Indoor children's obstacle course
7	Parc Bryn Bach	Tredegar	Adventure Activity Centre
8	Parc Bryn Bach	Tredegar	Cycling – BMX, MBX, Leisure and road circuit
9	Parc Bryn Bach	Tredegar	Golf/foot golf
10	Supertubing	Ebbw Vale	Toboggan run
11	Tredegar and Rhymney	Tredegar	Golf
12	Tredegar Sports Centre	Tredegar	Sports Centre
13	West Mon Golf Club	Nantyglo	Golf

List of Attractions

No.	Site	Town	Description
1	Aneurin Bevan Memorial Stones	Ebbw Vale	Heritage
2	Bedwelty House & Park	Tredegar	Heritage
3	Festival Park Owl Sanctuary	Ebbw Vale	Animals
4	Festival Park Shopping	Ebbw Vale	Retail
5	Guardian and Ty Ebbw Fach	Abertillery	Heritage

List of Business Tourism Venues

No.	Site	Town	Description
1	Beaufort Theatre	Ebbw Vale	Theatre
2	Bedwelty House	Tredegar	Heritage site
3	Ebbw Vale Institute	Ebbw Vale	Institute
4	General Offices	Ebbw Vale	Heritage site
5	Kids r Us	Tredegar	Theatre
6	Llanhilleth Institute	Abertillery	Institute
7	The Met	Abertillery	Theatre
8	Parc Bryn Bach	Tredegar	Team building
9	Tabor	Brynmawr	Chapel
10	Tredegar Arms	Tredegar	Hotel

List of Heritage sites

No.	Site	Town	Description
1	Cefn Golau Cholera Cemetery	Tredegar	Scheduled Ancient Monument
2	Nantyglo Roundhouses	Nantyglo	Grade II* listed

3	Sirhowy Ironworks	Tredegar	Scheduled Ancient Monument
4	St Illtyds Church	Abertillery	Grade II* listed
5	Tredegar Town Clock	Tredegar	Grade II* listed

List of Museums and Archives

No.	Site	Town	Description
1	Abertillery and District Local History Museum	Abertillery	Museum
2	Blaina Chartist Visitor Centre	Blaina	Heritage Centre
3	Blaina Heritage Action Group Museum	Blaina	Museum
4	Brynmawr and District Local History Museum	Brynmawr	Museum
5	Ebbw Vale Works Museum	Ebbw Vale	Museum
6	Gwent Archives	Ebbw Vale	Archive
7	Tredegar and District Local History Museum	Tredegar	Museum

List of Parks and Countryside Sites

No.	Site	Town	Description
1	Bedwellty Park	Tredegar	Park
2	Cwmcelyn Pond	Blaina	Lake
3	Cwmtillery Lakes	Abertillery	Lake
4	Festival Park	Ebbw Vale	Park
5	Park Bryn Bach	Tredegar	Country Park
6	Silent Valley Nature Reserve	Ebbw Vale	Nature Reserve
7	St James Pond	Tredegar	Lake

List of Theatres and Cinemas

No.	Site	Town	Description
1	Beaufort Theatre & Ballroom	Ebbw Vale	Theatre
2	Market Hall Cinema	Brynmawr	Cinema
3	The Metropole	Abertillery	Theatre
4	Tredegar Little Theatre	Tredegar	Theatre

Agenda Item 8

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **2nd December 2020**

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

Portfolio Holder: **Leader / Corporate Services**

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

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
04.11.20	05.11.20	17.11.20			02.12.20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

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

2. Background and Context

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

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

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

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

The CCR Regional Cabinet has signed off the £335,000.00 expenditure as of Q1 2020/21 against an original budget of £12,945,056. Review of the current pipeline of projects and an analysis of the likely timescales of expenditure indicates that the level of Local Authority capital funding included in the Annual Business Plan is significantly lower level than anticipated in 2020/21. Expenditure at this level can be managed within existing funds held by City Deal, so no call on Local Authorities is likely during 2020/21, but will be subject to the timing of expenditure and any new approvals agreed by Cabinet during the remainder of the year.

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

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

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

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

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

2.10 **Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Transformation Fund**

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

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

2.15 Cardiff City Region Challenge Fund Launched

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

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

2.17 The benefits for public sector getting involved include:

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

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

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

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

Cardiff Capital Region Energy Strategy

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

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

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

- 2.22 To be on track for net zero by 2050, Cardiff Capital Region needs to reduce emissions from its energy system by 55% by 2035, split by sector as follows:
- 51% reduction in domestic heat and power emissions;
 - 54% reduction in commercial and industrial emissions; and
 - 60% reduction in road transport emissions.

The strategy will be considered by the CCR Regional Cabinet in December.

Framework and principles agreed for Strategic Development Plan (SDP)

- 2.23 The previous framework agreed for the SDP has been overtaken by the Government's Local Government Election Bill. This creates Corporate Joint Committees (CJC's) at a regional level to deliver SDP's, a Transport Plan and promote economic well-being. The proposal is that the CJC will replace the formerly proposed Strategic Planning Panel which was to have led the work on the SDP and has been the subject of previous reports to Council.
- 2.24 Welsh Government are currently consulting on the regulations and it is intended to hold a Members Seminar before the year on this subject and to inform a response from the Council.

Graduate Scheme (Pilot)

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

Aspire Roll-Out across the City Region

- 2.26 CCR Investment panel have received a proposal from Aspire BG to roll out the offer across the Region to provide support for Industries of the Future. The Investment panel have requested a review to be undertaken of the existing apprenticeship landscape across SE Wales, specifically focussing on Shared Apprenticeship Programme aspect and Industries of the Future. The review work will identify gaps in service delivery and business needs.
- 2.27 Following this the Aspire proposal will be reviewed to ensure it meets the required needs/gaps and there may be some recommendations for change. A Green Book Treasury assessment will also have to be undertaken for the project and some assistance with the development of this will be provided to

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

CCR Engagement within the Western Gateway Initiative

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

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

3. Recommendations for Consideration

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

Option 1

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

Option 2

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

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

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

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

Corporate Plan 2020/22 Outcome Statements:

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

5. Implications

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

6. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *N/A*

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: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **2nd December 2020**
Report Subject: **Energy Prospectus Annual Review**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr D Davies, Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**
Report Submitted by: **Amy Taylor, Team Manager Regeneration Opportunities**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
11.11.20	12.11.20	17.11.20			02.12.20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

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

2. Scope and Background

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

Review of Activity 2019-20

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

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

Emerging Opportunities

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

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

3. Options for Recommendation

Option 1 – Do Nothing

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

Option 2 – Continue to support the Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus

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

Preferred Option

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

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

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

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

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

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

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

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

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

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

5.3. **Legal**

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

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

5.4. **Human Resources**

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

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1. **Performance Information and Data**

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

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

6.2. **Expected outcome for the public**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

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

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Energy Prospectus Annual Review

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

Blaenau Gwent Energy Prospectus

Annual Review 2019-2020

Page 69

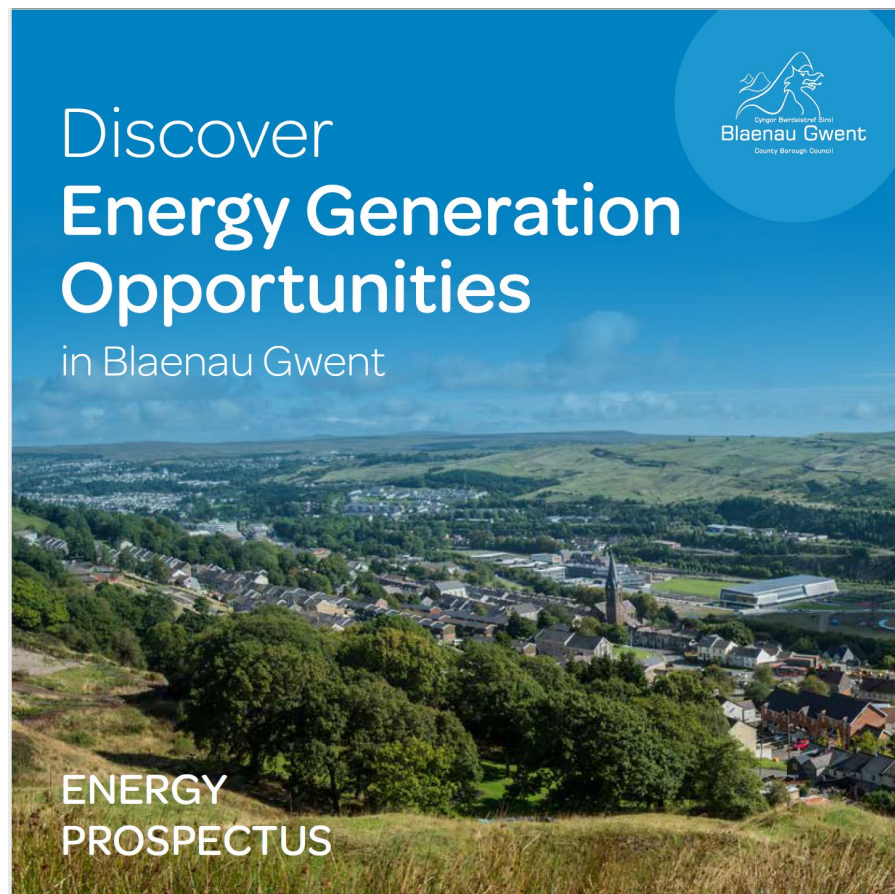


1. Introduction

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

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

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



1. Introduction

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Decarbonisation Plan



2020 to 2030



Transition Pathway

Challenges in reaching Carbon Neutrality

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

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

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

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

2. Projects Overview

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

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

3. Energy Efficiency – Re:Fit Programme

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Energy Efficiency – Corporate Buildings

Corporate Buildings

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

The range of ECMS being installed across the buildings included:

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

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

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

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



Solar PV Installation at Silent Valley Waste Transfer Station

3. Energy Efficiency - Schools

Schools

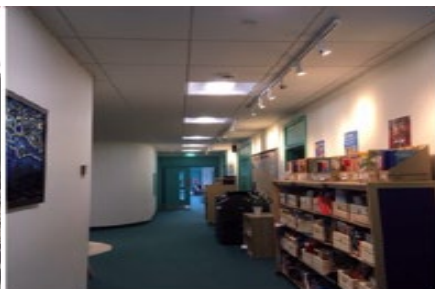
A range of Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) have been installed across three Schools within Blaenau Gwent. The ECMS being installed across the buildings included:

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

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

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

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



3. Energy Efficiency – Leisure Trust Buildings

Leisure Trust Buildings

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

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

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

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



Solar PV Installation at Ebbw Vale Sports Centre

3. Energy Efficiency – Street Lighting

Street Lighting

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

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

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

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



Street Lighting Installation Before and After

4. District Energy Networks

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

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

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

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

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



Energy Centre at 'The Works'



'The Works'

5. Renewable Energy Generation – Wind Power

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

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

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

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

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



6. Renewable Energy Generation – Hydro power

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

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

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

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

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



7. Research and Innovation - PENTAGON

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

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

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


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



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

Plantroom Space Temp: 25 °C
Amenity Area Space Temp: 18.5 °C

25 °C
29 %RH



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

7. Research and Innovation - DRivE

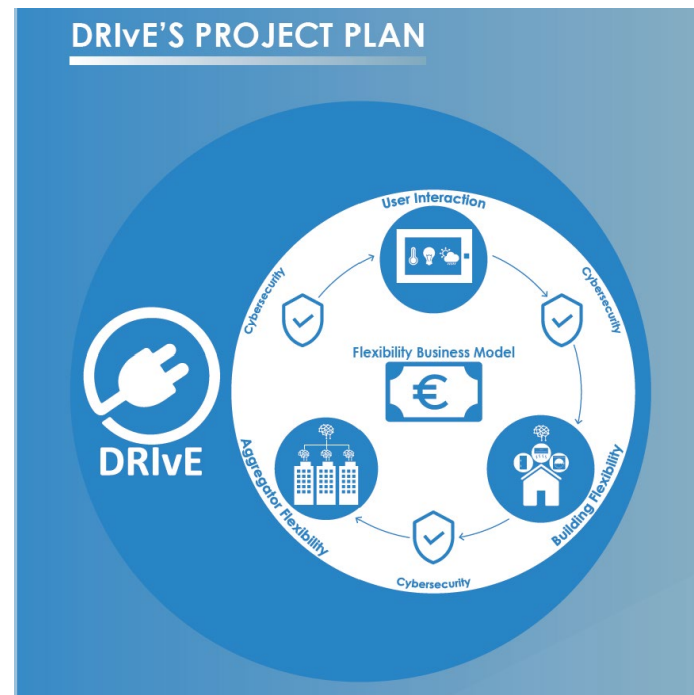
DRivE is an Horizon 2020 funded Project with a consortium of 8 partners representing 7 EU Countries. It is the second project we have secured through the Horizon 2020 Programme.

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

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

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

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



7. Research and Innovation – Smart Living

Catalysing Local Energy Blaenau Gwent CBC

Introduction

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

The aim of Smart Living is to catalyse ambitions and help progress them to the point where they are able to progress independently of the initiative. To-date over 85% of initial schemes have achieved this

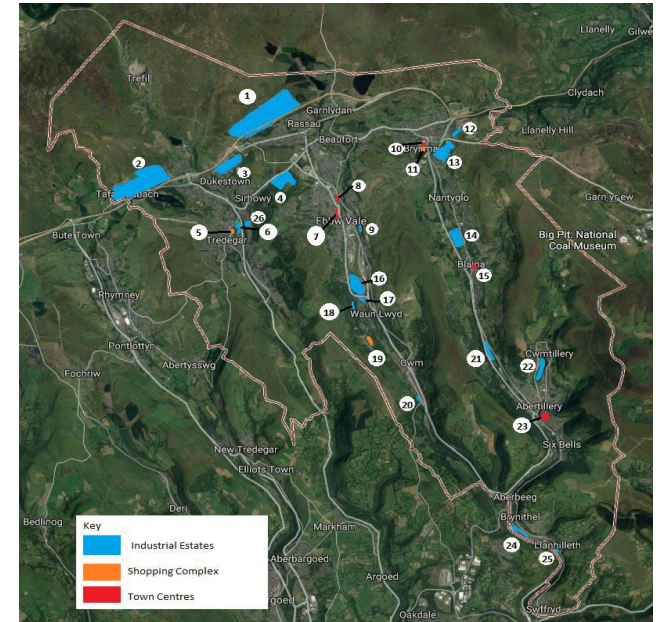
and for £1m Smart Living facilitation support, schemes have attracted over £47m of investment of which nearly £20m was from the private sector.

Page 83

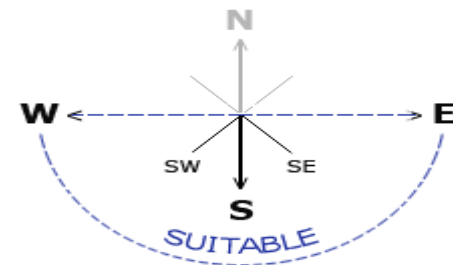
Background

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

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



Industrial Estates Across BG



7. Research and Innovation – Smart Living

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

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

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

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

8. Collaborative Project – EV Charging Infrastructure

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

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

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

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



9. Collaborative Project – Low Emission Fleet

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

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

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

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

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



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



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: **Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **2nd December 2020**

Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme: 6th January 2021**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr David Davies, Deputy Leader and Executive Member Regeneration and Economic Development**

Report Submitted by: **Cllr John Hill, Chair of the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	17.11.20			02.12.20			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 6th 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 6th 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 6th January 2021, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme – Meeting on 6th January 2021.

Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

Dates / Deadlines	Topic	Purpose	Lead	Executive / Council
<p>Wednesday 14th January 2021 Deadline: 14th December 2020</p>	1. Targeted Regeneration Funding (TRI) Update	Performance Monitoring Members to receive an update on TRI funding.	Amy Taylor / Nick Landers	Executive
	2. Aneurin Bevan report	Pre-Decision To consider the Nye Bevan report findings and action plan moving forward.	Alyson Tippings/Moe Forouzan	Executive
	3. Lime Avenue Employment Park	Performance Monitoring To provide an update on progress of current development site.	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	Executive
	4. Joint CCCRD Scrutiny Committee Update	Chair's Update To provide an update to Committee on the work of the Joint Scrutiny Committee.	Chair	
	Tredegar Townscape Heritage Initiative Project Closure Report	Information To provide members with details of the final outputs and outcomes of the THI project	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	
	Lime Avenue Business Park and Boxworks	Information To provide members with details of the delivery of the developments	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	
	RE:FIT	Information To provide members with an update on the RE:FIT Project and progress to install energy efficiency measures in public sector buildings	Amy Taylor	
	Trinity Chapel Update	Information To receive a progress update on Trinity Chapel, Abertillery	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	
	Progress Report on Repayable Town Centre Loan Funds	Information To provide members with information to update them on the progress of the Repayable Town Centre Loan Funds	Nick Landers / Amy Taylor	
	GovTech Catalyst Project	Information To provide members with an update on the GovTech Catalyst Project	Amy Taylor	
	Visit to Turkish Glass Bottle Factory	Information	Ellie Fry	
	Test Facility, Rassau	Information To update Members on the work that has been undertaken on the project to date and next steps	Ellie Fry	

This page is intentionally left blank