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Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services



**THIS IS A MEETING WHICH THE PUBLIC ARE ENTITLED TO ATTEND**

7th April 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

**COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee will be held in Virtually via Microsoft Teams - if you would like to attend this meeting live via Microsoft Teams please contact committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk on Monday, 12th April, 2021 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. **COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 5 - 14

To receive the minutes of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2021.

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

5. **ACTION SHEET - 1ST MARCH 2021** 15 - 16

To receive the Action Sheet.

6. **ADOPTION OF LITTER AND FLY-TIPPING STRATEGY** 17 - 40

To consider the report of the Team Manager Street Scene.

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

All other Members (for information)  
Manager Director



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**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

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

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
1ST MARCH, 2021**

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

**PRESENT: COUNCILLOR M. MOORE (CHAIR)**

Councillors C. Meredith  
M. Cook  
P. Baldwin  
M. Day  
P. Edwards  
S. Healy  
W. Hodgins  
J. Holt  
J.C. Morgan  
G. Paulsen  
B. Summers  
L. Winnett

**WITH:** Corporate Director Regeneration & Community Services  
Head of Community Services  
Team Leader Neighbourhood Services  
Team Manager Street Scene  
Team Manager Environmental Protection  
Team Manager Estates & Strategic Asset Management  
Engineering Manager  
Marketing Projects Officer  
Scrutiny & Democratic Officer/Advisor

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

<p><b>No. 2</b></p>	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b></p> <p>No apologies for absence were reported.</p>	
<p><b>No. 3</b></p>	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.</p>	
<p><b>No. 4</b></p>	<p><b><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p><b>No. 5</b></p>	<p><b><u>ACTION SHEET</u></b></p> <p>The Action Sheet arising from the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 was submitted, whereupon:-</p> <p><u>Activities Report – Littering and Dog Control Order Enforcement for Financial Year 2019/20</u></p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member the Service Manager Public Protection confirmed that the litter and dog control enforcement service was still suspended due to the Covid pandemic, and Officers had been redeployed to undertake duties in response to Covid. This work would continue for the foreseeable future, subject to funding.</p> <p>A Member requested figures on the number of fines issued in relation to dog fouling and also for litter and fly tipping.</p> <p>The Officer explained that the report submitted to the previous meeting provided data for 2019/20. There had been no activity during the current financial year, since March 2020, as the service had been suspended. However, he confirmed that a report on fly tipping would be submitted to Scrutiny later in the year.</p> <p><u>Civil Parking Enforcement</u></p>	

	<p>A Member referred to his comments made at the previous meeting and reiterated that the Council should consider the approach taken by a neighbouring Authority in relation to resident parking permits, and allow the option for a second permit for a charge per annum.</p> <p>He also expressed concern that Enforcement Officers were moving from Town Centres into wider residential areas, and requested that a review of 'yellow lines' be undertaken subject to funding being available within the budget.</p> <p>Another Member asked whether Civil Parking Enforcement Officers undertook checks of blue badge holders were complying with the criteria.</p> <p>Another Member asked whether the Civil Parking Enforcement Officers checked that the conditions of blue badges were being complied with, in terms of the length of parking time and whether the eligible person was in the vehicle.</p> <p>In response the Engineering Manager said he was not aware that these checks were being done, but undertook to liaise with the Enforcement Officers regarding this matter.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, that the Action Sheet be noted.</p>	
<p><b>No. 6</b></p>	<p><b><u>DISUSED SPOIL TIPS UPDATE</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Engineering Manager presented the report which provided an update on the current position in relation to disused spoil tips within Blaenau Gwent, and detailed the implementation of key actions and tasks in line with Coal Tip Safety Policy Taskforce. The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A discussion ensued regarding the landslide incident in the Rhondda last year and the Officer explained that in Blaenau Gwent there was a number of small tips, and many had been reclaimed or built upon. He was unaware that there</p>	

	<p>were any tips in Blaenau Gwent on a mountainside or on the side of a river, and nothing significant like the type seen in the Rhondda.</p> <p>A Member said an Officer should be assigned to inspect the tips in the Borough on a regular basis.</p> <p>In response the Officer said there was new legislation coming into force in May/June 2021 that may require that work to be undertaken.</p> <p>A Member asked how it was intended to categorise tips on unstable land, and the Officer pointed out that unstable ground was different from coal tips and identified on a different register.</p> <p>A Member said following the Aberfan disaster the NCB undertook extensive inspections of all the tips throughout South Wales, and he expressed concern that over time those records had been lost, and he felt that LA's were now being asked to pick up that task. He said there were also a number of tips in the area as a result of iron ore mining and asked whether the new legislation would be extended to cover those.</p> <p>In response the Officer explained that any mining adits were still the responsibility of the Coal Authority. However, in terms of the new legislation he was unaware of the content until it was received for comment.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the key actions and tasks set out in paragraphs 2.8 to 2.9 be noted (Option 1).</p>	
<p><b>No. 7</b></p>	<p><b><u>UPDATE CEMETERY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL WORKS</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Streetscene.</p> <p>The Team Manager Streetscene presented the report which Provided an update on the current and future expenditure related to the capital funding (c£200,000) available to</p>	



undertake some cemetery infrastructure works in financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein. He was pleased to report that the Council was currently out to tender for all works associated with the pathways infrastructure within the cemeteries. It was likely that those works would come under budget, which would enable the Priority 2 works to be progressed.

A Member referred to the list of works highlighted in Appendix 1 and said he would have expected 'cut back vegetation' to be undertaken as part of normal day-to-day maintenance.

He said he had made visits to all the Borough's cemeteries and questioned why the following had not been included within the report:

- Blaina – remedial works or removal of the shelter.
- Brynmawr – removal of the canopy attached to the old Chapel of Rest.
- Ebbw Vale – removal or remedial works to the shelter. He also questioned the need for a cattlegrid and felt that money would be better spent on drainage.
- Brynithel – sought clarity on whether the shelter would be removed or repainted.

In response the Officer said he would be happy to meet with local Members on site to discuss the works to be undertaken. In terms of the Member's comment regarding 'cut back vegetation' he agreed that this was 'good housekeeping' and confirmed that discussions had been held with the Team regarding this.

In relation to Brynmawr cemetery, the Officer confirmed that the old chapel of rest building was subject to a separate piece of work, and a report would be submitted on this in due course.

The Member pointed out that there had been a vast improvement in the maintenance of cemeteries in the Borough.

	<p>In response to a question raised by a Member regarding benches, the Officer confirmed that a review was being undertaken to identify any that needed replacing etc. He also confirmed that as a result of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Task &amp; Finish Group a policy was adopted to include certain specifications and a maintenance period for anyone wishing to donate a bench.</p> <p>A Member enquired as to the timescale for the Priority 1 works and the Officer said hopefully within 3 months the infrastructure works would be completed.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the information contained in Appendix 1, (cemetery maintenance priorities) be noted.</p>	
<p><b>No. 8</b></p>	<p><b><u>POSITION REPORT FLY GRAZING HORSES</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Team Manager Environmental Protection.</p> <p>The Team Manager Environmental Protection presented the report which provided an overview on the issue of fly grazing horses within the County Borough. The report outlined the scale of the issue, including identifying geographical locations where the problem was often reported, and set out the legislative and policy framework used to resolve incidents.</p> <p>The Officer went through the report and highlighted points contained therein.</p> <p>A Member reported that the green area in West Side, Blaina was subject to numerous reports of fly grazing, but had been omitted from the report. She also said the figures seemed quite low and questioned how they were recorded, as complaints were reported through various routes, i.e. environmental health, animal welfare and also estates.</p> <p>The Member also referred to the legislation and said there was concern that the Council would be responsible for any welfare issues of horses fly grazing on Council owned land. She then referred to section 2.6 of the report and asked what costs the Council had incurred for the joint operation.</p>	

In terms of the proposals outlined within the report, she felt that the investment in taking action would hopefully prevent repeat offenders.

In response the Officer undertook to liaise with the Member regarding the green area in West Side, Blaina. However, in relation to the legislation and concerns regarding responsibility for landowners, the Officer confirmed that the horse owner would be ultimately responsible for their welfare. He said if the report was approved it would enable Officers to progress with instant removal of horses from land, in the case of long term persistent offenders; and assured the welfare of horses in this action.

The Officer then referred to the costs for the joint operation undertaken in 2013/14, and confirmed that this was approximately £3k and fully funded by Welsh Government. He said the joint operation was achieved through the co-operation and support of horse charities and animal welfare rights groups, and was very successful. No significant issues had arisen since that date.

In relation to the Member's comments regarding the figures, the Officer confirmed that all complaints of fly grazing on Council owned land was logged with the Estates Section.

The Team Manager Estates & Strategic Asset Management said the data was compiled from records within the Department and knowledge of Officers dealing with complaints of illicit grazing. More accurate records were now being kept, and there seemed to be a number of instances of illicit grazing per year and repeat offenders.

A discussion ensued when a Member suggested that discussions also take place with Tai Calon regarding the possibility of a partnership approach to the problem of straying animals.

Another Member said straying animals had been a problem for many years, and said a review of the Council's contract with Powys CC was needed.

A Member proposed the following addendum to Option 1 of the report:

	<p>‘And recommend that the Council look to work with partners, and be granted permission to pursue enforcement with regard to the Control of Horses Act in prolific areas in line with the Wellbeing Plan Objective 2’.</p> <p>The proposal was seconded.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Members support the existing process for the removal of horses set out in the report with the use of contractors and the costs associated with this (Option 1); and</li> <li>ii. Recommend that the Council look to work with partners, and be granted permission pursue enforcement with regard to the Control of Horses Act in prolific areas in line with the Wellbeing Plan Objective 2.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>No. 9</b></p>	<p><b><u>USE OF CONSULTANTS</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to report of the Corporate Director Regeneration &amp; Community Services and the Head of Community Services.</p> <p>The Corporate Director Regeneration &amp; Community Services presented the report which provided information requested in relation to the expenditure incurred during 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 on the use of consultants to support, supplement and complement the work of Officers across the Council.</p> <p>He said the advantage of engaging Consultants was also that they are only required for a shorter period of time which enabled the Council to pay for a particular skill on demand and only when needed. This was often an effective use of Council resources and avoided the need to employ additional staff, with specialist knowledge and skills, on a permanent basis.</p>	

During 2018/19 and 2019/20 the Council spent a total of £0.7m & £1.1m on consultants across all services, and the Appendix attached to the report identified those consultants, the costs and the reason for engaging consultants in relation to the Environment portfolio.

A Member asked how often the engagement of consultants had resulted in projects being taken forward.

In response the Corporate Director said the Appendix identified a number of areas where the use of consultants had led to additional external funding being secured.

The Member said a breakdown of the figures would be beneficial in terms of the amount spent on consultants compared to projects taken forward.

The Corporate Director undertook to provide a breakdown of the figures in relation to the Environment Portfolio to the next meeting of the Committee.

A brief discussion ensued when the Corporate Director explained that where external funding was secured, this may be part of a larger project that the Council may also be contributing to.

A Member referred to the Appendix and sought clarification on the Waste Project. He also expressed concern regarding the risk in using earmarked reserves for a test track facility.

In response the Corporate Director said the Waste Project was a joint project with Torfaen CBC and Monmouthshire CC. He said the cost was a one-off spend in relation to specialist legal advice required in setting up the joint arrangement and was funded by WG. In relation to the test track project, he felt that the specialist advice had been useful and necessary to deliver a project of that scale, and Members also felt it was the right approach to identify any opportunities for the Council. The spend was from earmarked reserves not to the detriment of any other projects.

	<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the use of consultants be noted (Option1).</p>	
<p><b>No. 10</b></p>	<p><b><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2021</u></b></p> <p>The forward work programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 was submitted.</p> <p>The Chair reported the following requests had been made by Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the Council’s current disused coal tips register.</li> <li>• Information on the number of fines issued in relation to fly tipping.</li> <li>• Review of traffic orders (yellow lines) in residential areas.</li> <li>• Review of the Council’s contract with Powys CC in relation to straying animals etc.</li> <li>• Information on enforcement of Covid Regulations.</li> <li>• Information on illegal racetrack in Georgetown, Tredegar.</li> <li>• Update on Silent Valley Business Case.</li> </ul> <p>A Member pointed out that the Portfolio Holder should be amended to read Joanna Wilkins.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the report be accepted (Option 1).</p>	

**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

**Action Sheet**

**Community Services Scrutiny Committee – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action to be Taken</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
9	<b><u>Use of Consultants</u></b> A Member requested information on the percentages of spend on the use of consultants which had led to successful outcomes, in relation to the Community Services portfolio.	Richard Crook / Clive Rogers	Information to be circulated to Members.
10	<b><u>Forward Work Programme</u></b> Items requested for future meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of Disused Spoil Tips Register</li><li>• Flying Tipping - Monitoring report on fines issued during 2021/22</li><li>• Review of arrangements with Powys County Council and it works</li><li>• Review of Double Yellow Lines</li><li>• Progress Update on Silent Valley</li></ul>	Richard Crook / Clive Rogers / Dave Thompson	All items to be scheduled in the Forward Work Programme 2021/22.

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# Agenda Item 6

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

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

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**  
Date of meeting: **12<sup>th</sup> April 2021**  
Report Subject: **Adoption of Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Joanna Wilkins / Executive Member Environment**  
Report Submitted by: **David Watkins – Team Manager - Street Scene**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
23/03/2021	25/03/2021	31.03.21			12.04.21	FWP 2021/22		

## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The report is to seek support from scrutiny committee for the adoption of a new Council Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy for 2021-2026.

## 2. Scope and Background

### 2.1 Scope

- 2.1.1 This report provides information on the rationale, relevance and benefit that a Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy would have to support the Council in the effective and efficient management of litter and fly-tipping across the County borough.

### 2.2 Background

- 2.2.1 Keep Wales Tidy's (KWT) Caru Cymru received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

- 2.2.2 A successful application was made to Caru Cymru for £30,000pa over a three-year period commencing 2019/20. The project aim is to improve the quality of the environment for everyone. The project emphasis is on long term behavioural change rather than continuing to rely on just cleaning up.

- 2.2.3 The Caru Cymru scheme supports projects that make environmental improvements within residential areas by developing benefits for people, businesses and their communities.

- 2.2.4 The funding application was to include the appointment of a Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) Officer who would work with existing Litter champions and groups along with engaging with schools and community groups to raise awareness, educate and promote Local Environmental Quality issues within the borough, raise awareness and support long term behaviour change, unfortunately this has been delayed due to the Covid pandemic.

- 2.2.5 It was identified that for the Council to have a more effective and positive impact on the scheme, a relevant strategy and supporting policies would be required to support the management of the project's aim. Therefore, included in the funding application was for a specialist LEQ consultant to be appointed to review the Street Cleansing Service and draft a Blaenau Gwent Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy.
- 2.2.6 A tender process was commenced in November 2019, with the contract being awarded to Red & White Resource Ltd.
- 2.2.7 The consultant commenced work in January 2020, which involved:
- Spending time in Blaenau Gwent to get an understanding of the area, its communities and issues.
  - Collation of all litter data, demography, and operational processes
  - Meeting and interviewing all relevant stakeholders such as Keep Wales Tidy, Blaenau Gwent Litter Champions, Volunteer Groups, Officers and Frontline Street Cleansing staff.
- 2.2.8 A thorough review and analysis of the cleansing service and the feedback from stakeholder meetings and interviews allowed the consultant to draft an independent and objective Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy for Council consideration and adoption.
- 2.2.9 Unfortunately, the commencement of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020 prevented additional site visits and follow up stakeholder workshops, however it was felt that the information and data obtained to that point (20<sup>th</sup> March 2021) was sufficient in order to complete a draft Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy for adoption by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

## 2.3 **The Strategy (Appendix 1)**

- 2.3.1 From the information ascertained from the consultation process with stakeholders, a shared vision and a number of key objectives have been established for the new Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy 2021-2026 that will deliver recognised environmental improvements to ensure Blaenau Gwent realises the shared vision, these are;

### **The Vision**

- 2.3.2 *“To radically reduce litter and fly-tipping so we can improve our natural habitats as well as our wild and urban landscapes, increasing pride and awareness of our local heritage and desire to keep it litter free.”*

### 2.3.3 **Key Objectives**

1. To have a strategy that provides a framework for action.
2. To reduce litter and fly-tipping in Blaenau Gwent over the next five years.
3. To build on success of our litter champions and have a strong connection within the local communities on litter and fly-tipping issues.
4. To deliver an effective communication and engagement plan for the prevention of litter and fly-tipping.
5. To have an improved understanding within the local community of issues around litter and fly-tipping.

6. To provide effective and efficient council services that make the best use of the resources available to tackle litter and fly-tipping, including enforcement.

#### 2.3.4 **Action Plan (appendix 2)**

2.3.4.1 The strategy action plan (five years) sets out key actions to be undertaken during the lifespan of the strategy 2021-2026, these are set out under four themes, as follows:

1. Influence
2. Engage
3. Adopt Best Practice
4. Empower

2.3.4.2 The timelines associated with the key actions within the action plan are set out as follows:

- short-term – One to two years
- medium-term – two to three years, and,
- long-term – three to five years

2.3.5 The full strategy document is attached at appendix 1 with the action plan attached at appendix 2.

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

#### 3.1 **Option 1 (preferred)**

3.1.1 To support the adoption of the draft Blaenau Gwent Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy 2021-2026

#### 3.2 **Option 2**

3.2.1 Not to support the adoption of a new Blaenau Gwent Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy 2021-2026.

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

4.1 The Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy 2021-2026 links into the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan 2018-2022 'Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities': to re-invest in environmental services to address the issues created by fly-tipping, dog fouling, littering, grass cutting, street cleansing and pest control.

### 5. **Implications**

#### 5.1 **Benefits**

- Adoption of a Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy will see Blaenau Gwent as one of only two Local Authorities in Wales to have a specific litter and fly-tipping strategy

providing a strategic direction that supports its aim to improve the local environment quality to the benefit of the community.

- The Strategy will raise awareness, educate and promote Local Environmental Quality issues in Blaenau Gwent.
- The Strategy will identify ways to communicate the impact of litter and assist behavioural change projects.
- The Strategy will provide a route to establishing other supporting policies i.e. a litter and dog bin protocol.
- The strategy and action plan will support the council with the submission of bids/applications to external funding providers.

## 5.2 **Dis-benefits**

5.2.1 Increased service standard expectation from the community.

## 5.3 **Risks**

### 5.3.1 Risks Option 1

- Service standards may not improve if the Strategy is not adopted.
- The action plan may be more challenging than anticipated.
- The strategy may be required to be delivered over a longer period.
- Should the strategy not be adopted then the Council will have no strategic direction for dealing with litter and fly-tipping matters.

### 5.3.2 Risks Option 2

- Should the strategy not be adopted then the council will have no clear strategic plan for dealing with litter and fly-tipping going forward.
- Key partners may withdraw their support.
- Service change opportunities may be lost.
- The council would have no strategic document to use as a basis for securing external funding opportunities.

## 5.4 **Budget**

5.4.1 The service reviews and subsequent Strategy provision has been funded by Welsh Government.

5.4.2 The three-year funding programme of £30,000 per year from 2019/20 will assist with the implementation costs of the strategy objectives and policies with the council continuing to support the ongoing associated revenue costs for the services provided.

5.4.5 It is anticipated that the strategy action plan will be delivered within existing revenue resources.

## 5.5 **Legal**

5.5.1 Enforcement is a key area of work within the new Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy and will require ongoing legal support from the Council's Environment, Legal and Estates teams.

## 5.6 **Human Resources**

5.6.1 There will be a need to appoint an LEQ officer on a fixed term basis, this will be funded by Welsh Government through the grant already awarded.

## 6. **Supporting Evidence**

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

6.1.1 Littering across all local authorities in Wales is monitored through the Welsh Government's Local Environment Audit and Management System (LEAMS). LEAMS records two issues in the street scene environment. Firstly, street cleanliness and Secondly it records Adverse Environmental Quality Indicators (AEQI) - this would include fly-posting, graffiti, dog fouling, vandalism, weeds and detritus. Audits have been published on an annual basis since 2007.

6.1.2 The Cleanliness Indicator in Blaenau Gwent has continued to increase in recent years and have shown that the percentage of highway that is of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness has consistently been over 90% in the last three years with figures reaching 100% by the end of 2019/20. In addition, whilst fly-tipping continues to be a problem in Blaenau Gwent, the time taken to collect the waste has reduced over the past year.

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

6.2.1 Public consultations and litter champion surveys, have identified that the impact of litter has a detrimental impact of the perception of the local environment. Therefore, the strategy outcomes and policies will put systems in place to improve the environment to the benefit of the whole community.

6.2.2 Strategy implementation will allow for engagement with schools and community groups to raise awareness, educate and promote Local Environmental Quality issues within the borough.

6.2.3 Engagement with other key stakeholders such as the business community, KWT and LHB to holistically achieve the ownership of improving the Local Environment for residents.

6.2.4 The Council will have a document that sets out the strategic direction for dealing with litter and fly-tipping matters, resulting in protecting the local environment and tackling the problem of litter and fly-tipping through partnerships.

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

6.3.1 Extensive consultation was undertaken through a Street Cleansing review to provide the necessary information needed in the drafting of this Strategy, this included engagement with the following:

- Blaenau Gwent Member Engagement

- Keep Wales Tidy
- Litter Champions
- External partners/Community Groups
- Welsh Government
- Departmental officers

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

6.4.1 A five year action plan has been developed identifying key actions to be undertaken on a short-term, medium-term and long-term basis over the next five years 2021-2026.

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

The consultant has undertaken a fundamental review of the Street Cleansing service.

The findings of the review formed the basis of the strategy and identified the Key Objectives, and actions to improve the Local Environmental quality for the future.

There will be a need both corporately and operationally to adopt some service changes to ensure it is fit for purpose for residents, visitors and sustainable going forward.

#### 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.6.1 There are opportunities to work with housing associations, community groups, individual volunteers, trusts and local businesses to secure ways to raise awareness, change behaviour and share responsibility.

6.6.2 The consultant reported that the engagement process had been successful with participation and involvement particularly from the volunteers being very high and positive and will benefit the wider community.

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

6.7.1 The content of this report has been considered across a number of services including; Education, Environmental Services, Community Services, and Community Safety.

#### 6.8 ***EqlA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*** ***N/A***

### 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The five-year action plan will be monitored through Scrutiny and the Executive with quarterly update performance reports being submitted together with an annual LEAMS report being submitted.

#### **Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- Appendix 1 - Litter Strategy 2021-2026
- Appendix 2 – Litter Strategy Action Plan 2021-2026



# LITTER & FLY-TIPPING STRATEGY 2021-2026





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to extend thanks to all those that have helped contribute towards this Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy during what has been a truly unusual year. The commitment, enthusiasm, friendliness and offers of support from the Council and volunteer Litter Champions alike left us feeling welcomed and part of the local fight against litter.

Input from Council staff, Keep Wales Tidy, volunteers, local schools, businesses and the public we met in Blaenau Gwent proved invaluable and insightful in developing this pioneering Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy. As one of the first in Wales to make this commitment we feel honoured to have made a positive contribution in bringing these views together to form a platform for change.

**Red** & White Resource

## FOREWORD

I am delighted to present the first ever Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy for Blaenau Gwent. This five-year Strategy is a bespoke document for Blaenau Gwent and has been developed to focus on litter and fly-tipping, bring together our existing resources and enable them to work cohesively to reduce the impact across our area.

***Litter and fly-tipping remains an avoidable problem, we all have a responsibility to help tackle it!***

Litter and fly tipping affects us all! A clean, litter-free, healthy environment has an important role to play in our overall well-being, in our economy, on tourism to the area and also has a deep impact upon the local wildlife and our ecosystems. The results are that litter and fly-tipping detracts from the beauty of Blaenau Gwent and leaves a lasting negative impression on both residents and visitors.

Blaenau Gwent is an area of outstanding beauty which I am immensely proud of. However, currently litter and fly-tipping remains a persistent everyday issue, as well as a long-standing environmental challenge that needs addressing now!

This Strategy sets out the policies that have been designed to specifically tackle the causes of litter and fly-tipping, help prevent it, and manage the collection and disposal more effectively. It frames and prioritises operational delivery going forward with a clear recognition of the need for better communication, more education and improved public awareness as well as embracing enforcement action where needed.

In order for prevention to prevail long term, significant support from and for local communities is critical. It is important to pay tribute to an already highly active and valuable body of litter champions and community groups working across Blaenau Gwent in the continued war on litter and fly-tipping. The litter champion scheme is a success story that has been instrumental in reducing litter. The dedicated individuals and the impact they have are a true example to other areas across Wales. As a litter champion myself, I am passionate about my role and the positive impact we can make collectively.

Tackling the problem of litter and fly-tipping can only be done in partnership. This document outlines how each group of key stakeholders fit into the big picture by doing their part to support the strategy and the new shared vision. We hope that people will take it upon themselves to make the difference by disposing of litter and rubbish responsibly and encourage others to do the same.

***At the heart of this ambitious and vital Strategy is the need to change behaviour around litter and fly-tipping. We want to create a culture here in Blaenau Gwent where littering and fly-tipping is socially unacceptable.***

I acknowledge we have significant work to do, but I believe that collectively we have the experience, desire and expertise to change behaviours and make Blaenau Gwent a cleaner place to live, work and visit.



*Joanna Wilkins*

Executive Member - Environment - Councillor Joanna Wilkins



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# VISION

*'To radically reduce litter and fly-tipping so we can improve our natural habitats as well as our wild and urban landscapes, increase pride and awareness of our local heritage and the desire to keep it litter free.'*



## INTRODUCTION

Litter and fly-tipping is an issue that affects us all. We have all seen litter on street corners, on the side of highways and footpaths and in town centres. Similarly, fly-tipping is a common blight recognised by most in our many natural beauty spots in the countryside. Litter and fly-tipping will always have a negative impact on the local environment, looking unsightly, attracting further degradation of the area, and costing the local council thousands to clean up every year.

*Litter such as crisp packets, fast food wrappers, chewing gum, drinks containers, cigarette butts and dog fouling also includes detritus (including fallen leaves and blossom fall). Fly-tipping is removing waste from where it was produced with the deliberate intention of disposing of it unlawfully on public or private land.* The scale of fly-tipping ranges from a bag of rubbish, to a boot full of garden waste and large scale dumping of construction or demolition waste.

From extensive conversations across residents, staff, schools, businesses and litter champions it is an accepted view that litter and fly-tipping currently have a significant and far-reaching social, health & well-being, environmental, and economic impact on Blaenau Gwent as a place to live, work and visit.

Significant resources are employed across the country collecting litter and fly-tipping dropped or dumped by local people and visitors alike. Regular cleaning is resource intensive and does not stem the flow. There is a need therefore to include preventative measures such as education, awareness and enforcement in the fight against litter and fly-tipping.

Bringing all these issues together and acting as a call to arms for stakeholders requires a strategy. Wales is currently the only nation in the UK not to have a litter strategy even though it is the most talked about 'on the doorstep' issue.

This Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy has been developed in the absence of a National Strategy, but recognises the Welsh Government's commitment and early work in developing a plan for Wales.

## POLICY CONTEXT



613  
REPORTS  
OF LITTER  
IN BLAENAU  
GWENT  
IN 2019

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is a principal litter authority as defined by Section 86 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Section 89 of the same Act requires the Council to keep land and highways, as far as is practicable, free of litter and refuse. Most public open space and highways are covered by the legislation which also provides powers for the litter authority to take a range of enforcement action including community protection notices and fixed penalty notices to help tackle the problem of litter and fly-tipping.

Whilst at the moment nationally across Wales household recycling rates have exceeded current targets, there has been little focus on waste prevention. It is time for bold and ambitious targets for waste reduction overall, including plans and investment for the transition to a circular economy. Whilst these targets are largely embedded within the waste and recycling service, street cleansing cannot escape the reality that litter is closely related to the products we buy, how they are packaged and sold, and how we discard what is not needed.

A circular economy that 'closes the loop' is about recognising the value of products and seeing them differently. Waste is a valuable resource that if not handled and captured correctly, will cause problems for future generations. Now is the time for action.

The Council supports the Government's view on producer responsibility and the need for a move towards a more sustainable circular economy. In particular, the Council would welcome the move towards improving the recyclability and recycling of the many different elements of litter, as well as realigning the responsibility for the clean-up cost of litter and fly-tipping.





# WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015, was founded on a desire to fundamentally deliver on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It is worth noting that Wales was one of the first countries to introduce a ground breaking law of this nature. The Act was at the forefront of modern thinking when it comes to supporting communities. It goes as far as saying that a total of 44 public bodies, including Local Authorities, the NHS, Fire and Rescue and a number of other public servicing organisations, are required by law to deliver upon seven well-being goals.

Of these goals, the 'Globally Responsible Wales' has particular bearing on this Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy. It takes into consideration ownership of environmental crime and the need for each generation and organisations to maintain high environmental quality standards for the generations that follow.

Fundamentally we know that putting a stop to litter and fly-tipping is an integral part of achieving our goal of becoming a zero-waste nation by 2050. This however will require huge behavioural change on a global scale, meaning each little corner of the planet must do their bit. In this Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy it is intended that we can do our bit here in Blaenau Gwent.



## THE COST OF LITTERING AND FLY-TIPPING

Littering is an offence that costs the people of Wales in excess of £70 million per annum<sup>2</sup>. Litter, fly-tipping, dog fouling and fly-posting blight the local environment to such an extent that it can influence people's choice of where to live, affect their health and well-being and have a severe impact on the local wildlife and environment.

The environmental policy landscape is however, changing. At the time of writing, a consultation is imminent on new EPR legislation for the UK and a Deposit Return Scheme which could have a transformational affect for covering the costs and impacts of litter but may also generate the required cultural change to recycling outside of the home.



## MEASURING LITTER

The issue of litter in Wales is dealt with as a partnership between Welsh Government, Keep Wales Tidy, Natural Resources Wales and the 22 Welsh Local Authorities. The Welsh Government provides funding to enable Keep Wales Tidy to deliver cleanliness assessments across Wales, using the Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS). LEAMS records two issues in the street scene environment. Firstly, a street's cleanliness is measured using the amount of litter found within a 50 metre space of any given street at a point in time. Secondly, it records Adverse Environmental Quality Indicators (AEQI). This would normally include: fly-posting; graffiti; dog fouling; vandalism; weeds; and detritus. Once the data is collected the country wide audits are published in annual surveys by Keep Wales Tidy, dating back to 2007.

<sup>2</sup>Welsh Government, Litter, May 2013, [accessed 7 June 2017]



# 02 VISION & OBJECTIVES

## CORE VALUES OF THE COUNCIL

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has a vision for **“Proud Heritage - Strong Communities - Brighter Future”** The Corporate Plan<sup>3</sup> has taken this vision and created five core values that inform this Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy.



## VISION

This Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy has been developed as a result of the Council’s desire to tackle litter in Blaenau Gwent. With external funding to help provide additional resource and expertise the Council has taken an in-depth look at the way in which local people feel about litter and fly-tipping, the impact on the local communities and environment, together with how the Council deals with the issue on a day-to-day basis. With a changing National policy landscape, the Council will seize this opportunity to create a platform for change.

This time to reflect has resulted in some new and pioneering ideas being brought forward to bring about the necessary change. This Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy needs to bring together partners, co-ordinate activities and put communication at the heart to ensure we can challenge the status quo and change current practices, attitudes and behaviours.

<sup>3</sup>Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan Priorities 2020-22

*'To radically reduce litter and fly-tipping so we can improve our natural habitats as well as our wild and urban landscapes, increase pride and awareness of our local heritage and the desire to keep it litter free.'*

## KEY OBJECTIVES

The following key objectives will deliver recognisable improvements to ensure Blaenau Gwent realises the shared vision.

- 01 To have a strategy that provides a framework for action.
- 02 To reduce litter and fly-tipping in Blaenau Gwent over the next five years.
- 03 To build on the success of our litter champions and have a strong connection within the local communities on litter and fly-tipping issues.
- 04 To develop an effective communication and engagement plan for the prevention of litter and fly-tipping.
- 05 To have an improved understanding within the local community of the issues around litter and fly-tipping.
- 06 To provide effective and efficient council services that make best use of the resources available to tackle litter and fly-tipping, including enforcement.





## DEMOGRAPHY & POPULATION

Blaenau Gwent in South Wales with its majestic valleys is undoubtedly an area of beauty, standing on the fringes of the Brecon Beacon National Park. The area is steeped in history, rich in culture and heritage stemming from its industrial past and roots in coal mining, iron and steel works.

The five towns of Abertillery, Blaina, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar have easy access to road and rail links to the City of Cardiff, offering increasing levels of economic regeneration to the area. Of the 32,000 dwellings over half are terraced properties (52%).

With 2.2% of the Welsh population, Blaenau Gwent has almost 69,000 residents. Almost three quarters of the working-age population of Blaenau Gwent are economically active. The economy of the area is driven by the service industry<sup>4</sup> however, significant investment, a framework for regeneration and support from the Welsh Government<sup>5</sup> will provide a platform for the area to develop a greater skilled workforce that can compete in the current climate.

<sup>4</sup>PMP Recruitment, Regional Profile for Ebbw Vale and Blaenau Gwent

<sup>5</sup>[www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/story/news/the-economic-future-of-blaenau-gwent-first-minister-confirms-support/](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/story/news/the-economic-future-of-blaenau-gwent-first-minister-confirms-support/), June 2020

## IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT



Notwithstanding the natural beauty of the County, Blaenau Gwent is not exempt from the blight of litter and fly-tipping. The demography of the area reflecting some areas struggling with economic regeneration, the nature of the landscape also lends itself to litter and fly-tipping problems. The Valleys of Blaenau Gwent provide a natural 'tunnel' for wind-blown litter which is evident in the major towns and villages.

The refuse and recycling services provided by the Council utilise a combination of wheeled bins and boxes with the residual waste element collected every three weeks. Whilst driving higher recycling rates the 'stacked' boxes can also contribute to wind-blown litter. In high winds precariously stacked or overfull boxes can result in recycling being scattered on local streets

The town centres in Blaenau Gwent suffer the usual night-time economy litter problems together with occasional substantial blights of litter such as chewing gum. Whilst not unusual, they do reflect a lack of pride and a sense of neglect if left unmanaged. The open landscape and quiet country lanes of Blaenau Gwent unfortunately lend themselves to extensive incidents of fly-tipping.





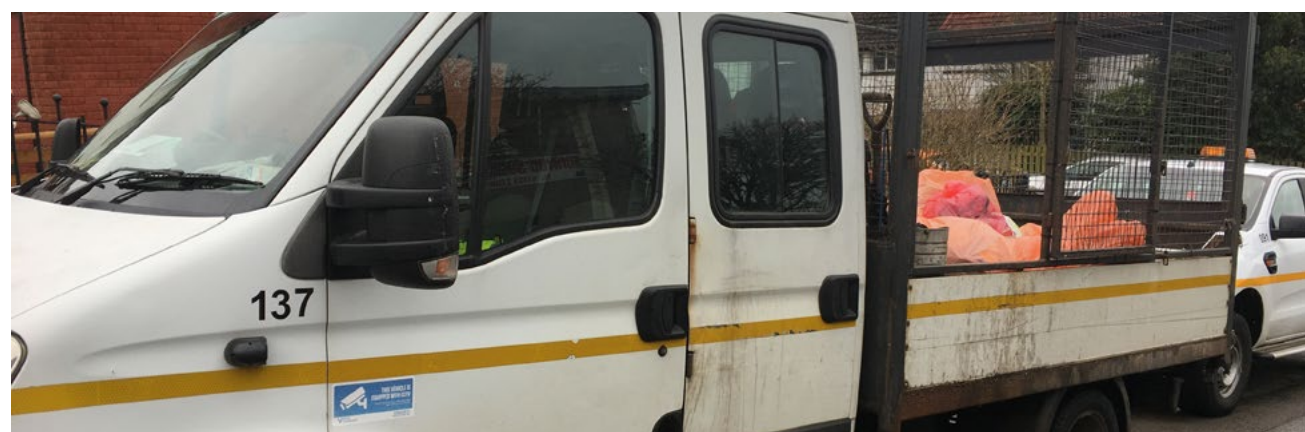
# 04 CURRENT SERVICES & STANDARDS

## RESOURCES EMPLOYED

The street cleansing service in Blaenau Gwent is delivered through the Council's own direct workforce. The teams delivering the service utilise mechanical sweepers and caged vehicles to maintain cleanliness standards across the County. The teams are nominally allocated individual areas and litter is collected from the streets and the many litter bins situated in each area.

The service has been subject to the cost pressures associated with the recent public sector austerity although the Council has sought to invest where possible in the service as one of the corporate priorities. The action plan sets out how the Council can best use the resources available to achieve our ambitions set out in the strategy and allow the Council to move towards a more planned and less reactive approach as part of managing the daily volume of call and reports received from the community.

The strategy sets out how the council maintains and improves standards of cleanliness across Blaenau Gwent with the available resources. In addition, whilst large amounts of litter and fly-tipping is collected, very little is currently recycled, despite the fact almost half of the Litter Champions surveyed reported they do regularly recycle some of the litter they collect<sup>6</sup>.



<sup>6</sup>Blaenau Gwent CBC Litter Champion Survey, February 2020

<sup>7</sup>Code of Practice on Litter & Refuse (2006)

<sup>8</sup>How Clean are Our Streets? All Wales Local Environmental Audit and Management System Report 2018-19

<sup>9</sup>Blaenau Gwent CBC, Cleanliness Survey Databases 2016-2019 & Blaenau Gwent Assessment of Performance 2019-20

## MONITORING & PERFORMANCE



100%  
OF STREETS  
INSPECTED OF  
AN ACCEPTABLE  
LEAMS  
STANDARD

Each year the Council, together with Keep Wales Tidy carry out surveys of their area to measure street cleanliness standards. This is replicated across the whole of Wales using a standard methodology known as LEAMS (Local Environmental Audit and Management System) and therefore allows comparative statistical measures of how each local authority is performing.

The surveys are conducted across all zones as defined by the Code of Practice<sup>7</sup> and adapted by the Council.

The National picture in Wales shows the All Wales Cleanliness Indicator Score continuing to improve year-on-year (surveys began in 2007). However, common everyday items such as fast food and smoking related litter continue to be found on many streets in Wales<sup>8</sup>, and Blaenau Gwent is no exception.

### ZONE 01

Town centres, shopping streets, transport centres and busy public places.

### ZONE 02

Terraced housing and flats.

### ZONE 03

Detached and semi-detached housing and industrial estates.

The Cleanliness Indicator in Blaenau Gwent has continued to increase in recent years and have shown that the percentage of highway that is of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness has consistently been over 90% in the last three years with figures reaching 100% by the end of 2019-20<sup>9</sup>. In addition, whilst fly-tipping continues to be a problem in Blaenau Gwent, the time taken to collect the waste has reduced over the last year.

These results appear to mask operational issues that reflect an overall lack of resilience within the service, with resources being unavailable on a regular basis. This causes variances in performance on a day-to-day basis and frustrations within the workforce. The excellent results should not deflect from the amount of litter that is generated and reported. Evidence gathered during the development of this Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy including those of Litter Champions, staff, local business and local news reports suggest that whilst standards are relatively high as reported by the LEAMS, they are not consistently high enough for the communities in Blaenau Gwent.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Council has recruited over 200 Litter Champions enrolled to provide a considerable and valuable additional resource. A recent survey suggests that for every 6-8 active Litter Champions could equate to an additional Street Cleansing Team Member. Whilst Litter Champions are supported through some equipment from the Council, there is a demand for more effective and widespread communication and awareness raising within the community.



**DAYS PER MONTH  
LITTER CHAMPIONS  
ARE COLLECTING**

## LITTER BINS

Litter bins are part of the everyday street scene that we all recognise. The many guises of bins ranging in purpose, size, ease of access and construction mean there are a myriad of combinations for Authorities to consider. This Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy is not concerned with the choice or corporate design to be adopted – this is clearly an issue for the Council to consider. The number, purpose and type of bin is an operational and strategic decision that will impact on usage, public buy-in to the anti-litter message and cost.

Considerable experience tells us that the more litter bins that are present in an area does not necessarily correlate with less litter. In addition, unsightly damaged or unusable bins attract further accumulation of litter and even fly-tipping. Litter bins have all-too-often expanded in numbers with little regard for their impact on the local street scene or environment. In addition, whilst the cost of a litter bin may be relatively small, it's continual maintenance and servicing costs can easily and quickly become unmanageable.

The introduction of a protocol to cover how decisions are made for the introduction or removal of litter bins would not only streamline the process but would capture all the necessary factors needed to make an informed judgement.

Whilst recycling-on-the-go is relatively new in the UK and results are variable with respect to quality of materials collected via dual purpose litter bins, the Welsh Government is currently considering the introduction of a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers. A further consultation has recently ended in 2020 on the reform of the extended producer responsibility (EPR) that would see producers of items commonly found in litter being made responsible for its collection and recycling, including costs.

A recent study looking at the composition of litter in Wales suggests up to 15% of litter could be captured by a DRS with around a third likely to fall within the EPR reforms<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Composition analysis of litter waste in Wales, Welsh Government, June 2019

**OS  
TACKLING  
& FLY-TIPPING  
LITTER**

Abertillery



## CLEANING PRACTICES

A small fleet of mechanical sweepers and caged tippers provide the mechanical resource to support the street cleaning staff. The mechanical sweepers operate on roads and pavements predominantly concentrating on the removal of detritus and biodegradable waste. The Council employs the common practice seen across Wales of collecting mixed loads of litter (litter bin waste, dog bin waste and collected litter) and fly-tipped material in small caged tippers.

**622** TONNES OF LITTER COLLECTED ANNUALLY IN BLAENAU GWENT 

The Authority operates a frequency-based approach to cleaning, a commonly used approach to ensure areas of historical high littering are cleaned more frequently than others that are less littered. Whilst this approach seems logical, it takes no account of variables inherent in the management of litter. Local events, seasonality, weather, time of day, availability of resources and efficiency of practice employed to clear up litter are all variables that have a direct and profound impact on litter.

With reduced budgets in recent years and high levels of competition for the valuable resources left, many Authorities have moved to a more efficient and intelligent mode of operation. Using up-to-date zoning information resources are deployed in area teams to concentrate efforts in the parts of greatest need. By adopting an area-based approach the teams take local responsibility for an area centered around a high usage area such as a town. Each team has access to mechanical sweeping capabilities as well as caged tippers (the vehicle of choice for all street cleansing operations) and a small team of individuals that take responsibility and build a sense of pride in their area. Linking these to local volunteer groups and Litter Champions adds to the development of community cohesion and inevitably higher standards of cleanliness.

## SERVICE EFFICIENCY

It is clear from historical information that resource utilisation is an issue for the Council. Workforce resilience is sometimes interrupted with drivers in particular being drawn to other service areas at short notice. The result is that not only is the service difficult to plan, but that cleanliness standards peak and trough markedly. Importantly, the efficiency of the resources utilised in street cleaning services is reduced during periods of interruption.

A service review of all resources and policies that impact upon service delivery would provide an opportunity to reflect upon utilisation and service efficiency. A stable workforce that has the right tools, plant, equipment and fleet will result in a more effective and efficient service.



## EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Keep Wales Tidy provides an excellent resource platform for schools across Wales. Recognising the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals agreed by World Leaders in 2015, the Eco-schools Wales programme includes an informative and innovative package on litter for Key Stage 2 children<sup>11</sup>. Getting the message across to children of school age is an investment in time for future generations.

To change adult behaviour is more challenging. Numerous studies on behaviour change suggest that campaigns at all levels using different media types will be needed to achieve long-term sustainable change in behaviour. Despite numerous high-profile campaigns and media coverage littering continues in all walks of life. The challenge for Blaenau Gwent will be how to get the most from limited resources but great ambitions. Joint projects such as the Smoke Related Litter campaign with Keep Wales Tidy, and sourcing additional support for stakeholders and schools in Blaenau Gwent will be key to delivering the strategic objectives of this Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy.

**14**  
ECO-SCHOOLS  
IN BLAENAU  
GWENT 

<sup>11</sup>Keep Wales Tidy Eco-Schools Wales Topics, [www.keepwalestidy.cymru](http://www.keepwalestidy.cymru)



# ENFORCEMENT

The enforcement of the law on litter and fly-tipping varies enormously across the country. The powers available to Litter Authorities provide a good foundation in acting as an important deterrent in the fight against litter and fly-tipping. With the public offering regular reports of litter and fly-tipping local authorities have a responsibility to investigate and uphold the law on littering. When combined with education and awareness campaigns effective enforcement can help reduce the incidents of litter and fly-tipping significantly. Joint agency approaches with the Police, National Resource Wales and local media groups have proved very successful in raising awareness to littering and also reducing the incidence of litter through direct campaigns that help highlight environmental crime.



We recognise the importance and need for enforcement as a complementary tool in the fight against litter. Prevention of litter and fly-tipping is more effective and desirable than cleaning up after it has been discarded. The costs associated with collecting litter and fly-tipping run into the millions across Wales and as a Country we have recognised the need for a coordinated approach to prevention by the investment in Keep Wales Tidy. This approach is also needed for enforcement.

This Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy recognises the need for the Council to lead from the front. As the Statutory Litter Authority, it has a duty to tackle litter and fly-tipping and their effects head on. But this does not have to be action taken alone. It also does not mean the Council has to identify large budgets to tackle these issues. Partnership working and innovation are key to achieving the Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy's objectives. Setting clear goals and providing a framework for change and action is an important part of any Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy.

The Council has a range of resources available to it. Clearly, there is a need to get the most out of the dedicated teams that collect litter and fly-tipped material every day. The efficiency of these services is paramount and a review of operating practices to take account of best practice regionally and internationally will help deliver this goal. The Council recognises however, that there are key stakeholders in Blaenau Gwent that given the right tools and support, can help make a real difference. The Council has an excellent history of working with the community to harness the energy and desire of local people to help retain the beauty of Blaenau Gwent as a place to live, work and visit.

Finally, any Strategy needs to maintain a balance between incentives and consequences. The Council will ensure that whilst enforcement action will be taken against litter and fly-tipping offenders, this is complemented with an investment in education and awareness raising.

06 CALL FOR ACTION



## POLICY STATEMENTS

### 01. DEMONSTRATE STRONG COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- Blaenau Gwent CBC will use its powers, influence and position in the local community to help promote the reduction of litter and fly-tipping within the County.
- The Council will strive to lead by example and be an exemplar Council in the fight against litter and fly-tipping across Wales.

### 02. INTRODUCE A LITTER BIN PROTOCOL

- Blaenau Gwent CBC will develop a document that identifies a fair and equitable system for managing litter bins, ensuring they are sited appropriately, effectively and efficiently across the County.
- The protocol will recognise that litter bins form part of a package of proposals to tackle litter, including community engagement, and that in some circumstances litter bins are not the right solution.

### 03. PRIORITISE THE PREVENTION AND COLLECTION OF LITTER AND FLY-TIPPING & USE OUR RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

- Provide and manage our in-house street cleansing resources to maximum capacity making best use of new and innovative methods, equipment and fleet.
- Ensure all staff have effective and appropriate levels of training.

### 04. USE TECHNOLOGY TO HELP IDENTIFY AND TACKLE LITTER MORE EFFICIENTLY

- Use digital mapping expertise within the Council to identify litter and fly-tipping hotspots and target resources more effectively.
- Improve the digital process for street cleansing from notification to completion.

### 05. USE OUR ENFORCEMENT POWERS TO DISCOURAGE ANTI-SOCIAL ENVIRO-CRIME

- The Council will promote effective enforcement of the law on litter and fly-tipping and use all powers at their disposal to bring those responsible for enviro-crime to account.
- The Council will work in partnership to ensure our enforcement work attains maximum publicity and actively promotes the 'Keep Wales Clean' message.

### 06. PROMOTE GOOD PRACTICE THROUGH EFFECTIVE 'LITTER PREVENTION' COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMUNITIES WITHIN BLAENAU GWENT

- The Council will develop a communications plan for promoting the key messages concerning litter and fly-tipping shared across a wide range of on and offline channels for adoption of appropriate campaigns throughout the year.
- Work with other agencies such as the Welsh Assembly, Natural Resources Wales and other authorities in the Region to ensure a coordinated response to anti-litter and litter prevention are promoted in Blaenau Gwent.





## 07. WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR STAKEHOLDERS

- Work with the business community to 'adopt' areas around their premises, either individually or as a group and help report incidents and maintain cleanliness standards e.g. volunteer days for staff.
- Adopt a multi-agency approach with the Police, Natural Resources Wales Agency and business community to help identify and enforce those responsible for enviro-crime; such as fly-tipping incidents.
- Work with neighbouring authorities to pool resources where there is potential to introduce efficiencies e.g. joint campaigns, joint purchasing of equipment such as specialist mechanical sweepers or covert monitoring equipment.

## 08. PROMOTE AND SUPPORT LITTER CHAMPIONS

- Introduce a 'hub' support scheme (online and physically) for Litter Champions which provides appropriate tools, technical/health and safety packs through a 'library of resources' style system e.g. litter pickers, vests, hoops, downloadable PDFs, etc.
- Promote good communication practice within the groups and celebrate successes through an award scheme and annual event.



## NEXT STEPS

This Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy provides the Council, for the first time, the opportunity to move forward in the fight against litter and fly-tipping. In adopting the Strategy, the Council can lead on a pioneering plan to reduce the impact of litter and fly-tipping on the communities in Blaenau Gwent. The accompanying Action Plan identifies key actions over the next five years that will deliver the four themes of: Influence; Engage; Adopt Best Practice; and Empower.

The Council will demonstrate its commitment to this Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy by adopting the Policy Statements and seeking to implement these through the Action Plan. This Action Plan will provide transparent and robust actions that are realistic and deliverable throughout the life of this Strategy.

### INFLUENCE

Develop robust relationships within the local community to help the adoption of the shared vision of the strategy and encourage it to be embraced and supported in the communities everyday behaviour. Use every opportunity to bring the fight against litter and fly-tipping on to the agenda wherever possible.

### ENGAGE

Reaching out to the communities of Blaenau Gwent to gain buy-in to this Strategy is crucial to its success. The Council has a rich and valuable community engagement tool in over 200 Litter Champions. For this resource to work effectively throughout the key stakeholder chain, and to reach out to the wider communities, regular investment and quality communication is required.

### ADOPT BEST PRACTICE

Consider well researched best practice examples of communication, messaging, protocols, operational efficiency, and innovation that could be successfully introduced into Blaenau Gwent and improve our prevention, collection and enforcement of litter and fly-tipping.

### EMPOWER

Create the right environment for individuals including staff, volunteers and the community, to communicate and act in the best interests of the Council. To provide an arena in which the street cleansing service can develop and grow with the aim of increasing efficiency and improving our performance.

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## ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT POLICY STATEMENTS

The Policy Statements developed as part of the Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy are designed to demonstrate a clear commitment by the Council to focus on litter and fly-tipping and take decisive action within the resources available to it.

This Action Plan has been developed to identify key areas of activity that the Council can lead upon to help demonstrate commitment to the policies individually, as well as collectively to lead key stakeholders in delivering the Strategy over the next five years.

The actions developed have been grouped into short-term (one to two years), medium-term (two to three years) and long-term (three to five years). This overlap allows flexibility in adopting the actions within a work programme of an already busy service area. The Action Plan is presented according to the four themes identified within the Strategy.



## LEADERSHIP

Blaenau Gwent Council is the Principal Litter Authority and arguably has the greatest responsibility for maintaining a clean local environment. The statutory powers afforded the Council mean local residents, businesses and visitors look to them for decisive action to tackle enviro-crime. It is therefore imperative the Council demonstrates strong leadership within the community and set the standards for others to follow.

In this role it is proposed that the Council identifies a lead officer and member to champion the fight against litter and fly-tipping. This is likely to be the Executive Member for the Environment as the portfolio for street cleansing currently rests in this area. The senior officer identified together with the Executive Member for the Environment will provide leadership and focus for the Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy, taking ownership of the Action Plan and the work programme contained within it.

The timetable for delivering the key actions identified in this Action Plan reflect the Litter & Fly-tipping Strategy period 2021-2026. In adopting the Action Plan the Council commits to developing a detailed annual work programme that delivers these key actions within the four identified themes.



# INFLUENCE



## SHORT-TERM

- Identify a lead officer and member to champion the fight against litter and fly-tipping.
- Develop a five-year work programme for the implementation of the Action Plan.
- Identify key stakeholders for a Focus Group on litter and fly-tipping and agree terms of reference and frequency of meetings, that takes a multi-agency approach to litter prevention, management and enforcement.
- Develop proposals for an Environmental Charter that recognises a community-led approach to identifying litter problems and a route for volunteering as well as taking pride in the local area (<https://www.litterwatch.org.uk/about-us>).
- Develop and adopt a communication plan to promote litter prevention.



## MEDIUM-TERM

- Work with the Focus Group to apply for funding for key projects that will help deliver the terms of reference of the Group.



## LONG-TERM

- Secure long-term commitment from local business leaders to support key litter prevention and management initiatives via an Environmental Charter and display on the premise.

# ENGAGE



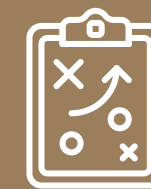
## SHORT-TERM

- Identify a budget for supporting the work of the Litter Champions using a hub-based approach.
- Using the newly identified Focus Group, identify key funding opportunities for projects that tackle litter and fly-tipping e.g. Welsh Government, Keep Wales Tidy and Wrap Cymru.
- Identify methodology for capturing public satisfaction with cleanliness standards across Blaenau Gwent.
- Work with Keep Wales Tidy to build strong educational anti-litter package in Blaenau Gwent and promote within schools across the Council area.



## MEDIUM-TERM

- Identify key stakeholders within the business community to champion the Environmental Charter and strengthen links between existing business forums.
- Implement communication plan recommendations.



## LONG-TERM

- Preparation for Strategy review in 2025 for new strategy to commence in April 2026.

# ADOPT BEST PRACTICE



## SHORT-TERM

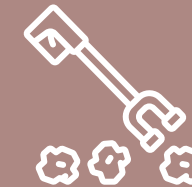
- Develop and adopt a litter bin protocol that uses a fair and equitable scoring system for ensuring the right number of litter bins are in the most appropriate places.
- Investigate the use of technology for asset management i.e. QR codes on litter bins.
- Work with Keep Wales Tidy on ensuring accurate data provisions for LEAMS surveys and collation of survey results achieved .
- Work with the Council's enforcement team to identify key activities and partner authorities for joint initiatives. e.g. purchase of remote covert CCTV cameras.
- Create an inter-departmental working group to review and build a closed-loop approach to the use of existing technology (i.e. web-based reporting and digital mapping) within service delivery with the aim to improve efficiency.



## MEDIUM-TERM

- Identify up to ten key improvement projects across Blaenau Gwent e.g. providing a co-ordinated approach to 'deep-cleaning' an area of concern for local communities.
- Review zoning (Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse) for Blaenau Gwent using key personnel and stakeholders.
- Implement technology solutions such as QR codes on litter bins
- Make use of the jet wash machine to support the marketing campaigns (e.g. jet washed messages on pavements).

# EMPOWER



## SHORT-TERM

- Review the Street Cleansing resources to identify resource requirements, including training, to deliver an effective and efficient service
- Conduct a workshop with the Litter Champions to identify a more partnership-based approach
- Create a 'hub' support scheme (online and physically) to enable Litter Champions
- Provide the foundations for good communication practice within the groups and celebrate successes through an award scheme and annual event
- Provide LEAMS training to a wider audience including staff and volunteers



## MEDIUM-TERM

- Secure budget and implement any service changes from resource review
- Compile lessons learnt and closed loop from the LEAMS survey to ensure the results are taken into account in annual service planning



## LONG-TERM

- Commence strategy evaluation process to identify successes and lessons learnt for the next strategy including monitoring through the scrutiny process

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