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Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Democratic Services



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

19th February 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

**PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee will be held Virtually via Microsoft Teams on Thursday, 25th February, 2021 at 10.00 am (if you would like to attend this meeting live via Microsoft Teams please contact [committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)).

***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

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

**Municipal Offices**  
Civic Centre  
Ebbw Vale  
NP23 6XB

**Swyddfeydd Bwrdeisiol**  
Canolfan Dinesig  
Glyn Ebwy  
NP23 6XB

*a better place to live and work*  
*(le gwell i fyw a gweithio)*

**1. SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION**

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

**2. APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies for absence.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**

To receive any declarations of interest and dispensations made.

**4. PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 - 16**

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2020.

**5. BLAENAU GWENT PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2019/20 17 - 90**

To consider the report of the Managing Director.

**6. WELSH GOVERNMENT EARLY YEARS INTEGRATION TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME PILOT CHILDCARE OFFER – JOINT WORKING PILOT – BLAENAU GWENT PATHFINDER 91 - 100**

To consider the report of the Chief Executive Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

**7. BLAENAU GWENT CLIMATE MITIGATION STEERING GROUP 101 - 108**

To consider the report of the Managing Director.

**8. PSB SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE 109 - 112**

To consider the report of the Chief Executive Tai Calon.

To: Councillor S. Healy (Chair)  
Councillor M. Cook (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor P. Baldwin  
Councillor M. Cross  
Councillor G. A. Davies  
Councillor C. Meredith  
Councillor J. Millard  
Councillor M. Moore  
Councillor J. P. Morgan  
Councillor G. Paulsen  
Councillor S. Thomas  
Councillor H. Trollope  
Councillor J. Holt  
Councillor J. Hill  
Councillor J. C. Morgan

All other Members (for information)  
Manager Director  
Chief Officers

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**COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT**

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

**SUBJECT:** **PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 6<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2020**

**REPORT OF:** **LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER**

**PRESENT:** COUNCILLOR S. HEALY (CHAIR)

Councillors P. Edwards  
J. Hill  
C. Meredith  
M. Moore  
L. Parsons

**WITH:** Managing Director  
Service Manager – Policy and Partnerships  
Will Beer, Public Health Consultant / Strategic Lead  
Kath Cross, Service Lead Integrated Wellbeing Networks  
Chief Inspector Thomas, Gwent Police  
Fen Turner, Senior Natural Resources Planning Officer  
Rhian Bowen-Davies,  
Partnership Lead, Early Action Together Programme  
Chief Inspector Tucker, Gwent Police  
Helena Hunt, Professional Lead for Community Safety

<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.	
<b>No. 2</b>	<b><u>APOLOGIES</u></b>  Apologies for absence were received from:-  Councillors G. Paulsen, M. Cook, S. Thomas and H. Trollope.	

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
<b>No. 3</b>	<p><b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<b>No. 4</b>	<p><b><u>PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2019.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<p><b><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Public Services Board Scrutiny Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2020.</p> <p>The Chair reported that Option 1 and Option 2 should read 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 and not 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 as noted in the report.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly</p> <p>The Committee AGREED, subject to the foregoing, to recommend that the report be accepted and the Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting scheduled to be held on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2020 be approved.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
6.	<p data-bbox="336 327 1126 405"><b><u>INTEGRATED WELL-BEING NETWORK FOR BLAENAU GWENT</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="336 454 1315 577">Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Public Health, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Service Lead Integrated Wellbeing Networks</p> <p data-bbox="336 627 1315 1261">The Service Lead Integrated Wellbeing Network referred to the report which provided an update on the progress made against the implementation of the Regional Integrated Well-Being Network Transformation Programme for Blaenau Gwent. The Service Lead gave a detailed overview of the background and scope of the vision and how it had been developed and aligned with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act. It was advised that 'Building a Healthier Gwent' identified many factors which influence our health and well-being which included connections to the community, good housing, financial security and it highlighted the importance of building a wellness system to bring communities together to reduce loneliness and isolation along with providing support with physical and mental health issues.</p> <p data-bbox="336 1310 1315 1603">The Service Lead continued that the concept of the Integrated Well-Being Network transformation programme was to work with assets already available in communities to develop community hubs and ensure GP surgeries, community organisations and groups were all aware of each other and the support which could be provided if services needed to be accessed.</p> <p data-bbox="336 1653 1315 1906">The initial areas of Brynmawr and Tredegar was used in conjunction with recently developed Health Centre Hubs, however the work would be rolled out across Blaenau Gwent. A mapping exercise would be carried out of all assets available to ensure that people are able to access their respective services.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>An online directory was also available as an option to search and find services available and it was hoped that via the Workforce Development initiative a skilled workforce would be formed in order to link people to well-being support in their local area. This provided the opportunity for front line staff in places such as GP surgeries and libraries and many more to direct people in the right direction.</p> <p>The Service Lead advised that the Network would enhance communities, reduce demand on packages of care allowing residents to remain in their own home. It would create friendlier and safe communities which empowered individuals as well as groups to look after their own and others health and well-being.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Service Lead Integrated Wellbeing Networks referred Members to the options for consideration and invited questions at this juncture.</p> <p>A Member referred to collaborative and partnership working and asked if local senior citizens groups had been contacted to participate.</p> <p>In response, the Service Lead Integrated Wellbeing Networks advised that this collaboration was being sought via the 50+ Forum and it was planned that all groups across Blaenau Gwent would be visited. The Public Health Consultant/Strategic Lead, ABUHB added that intelligence on older people was also sought from GP surgeries as if lonely or isolated the individual would visit their local GP and information was welcomed from Elected Members who would also be aware of groups in their respective communities.</p> <p>In terms of roll out for the Integrated Well-Being Network it was reiterated that initially Brynmawr and Tredegar was piloted. The work would be rolled out across Blaenau Gwent, however many people visit events in Brynmawr and Tredegar from other areas. It was advised that funding had been sought to extend the project and once this had been received other areas would be considered.</p>	

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>Another Member noted the benefits of the Service Lead Integrated Wellbeing Networks being present in Town Centres to inform people of the initiative and advised when Macmillan and other organisations are available in Town Centre there was a great deal of interest. The Member thought it would be helpful to speak to these organisations to ascertain their approach.</p> <p>The Service Lead Integrated Wellbeing Networks advised that links had been made respective Town Councils and Rotary Clubs to identify prominent links within the Town. It was also hoped that community champions could be obtained from local businesses, however she welcomed the suggestion and took the suggestion on board.</p> <p>A Member raised concerns in relation to the lack of the initiative in the South of the valley and as an Elected Representative for Llanhilleth Ward he was disappointed it had not been rolled out further.</p> <p>The Service Lead Integrated Wellbeing Networks reiterated the reason behind Brynmawr and Tredegar being pilots and that once further funding had been received other areas would be considered.</p> <p>It was hoped that the outcome of grant funding would be received shortly and it was agreed that once this had been confirmed it be reported to Elected Representatives.</p> <p>RESOLVED accordingly.</p>	

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>A Member referred to people within communities who do not access groups or clubs and asked how these are reached. The Service Lead Integrated Wellbeing Networks advised that a gap in individuals who did not go out socially had been identified via GP surgeries and Community Connectors. She added that Monmouth had established a befriending service and it was hoped that this could be pursued in Blaenau Gwent which would train individuals from within communities to befriend people either via telephone or face to face.</p> <p>Will Beer, Public Health added that isolated residents are normally recognised by GPs as patients would visit showing related issues and a number of factors could be the cause, debt, housing and therefore GPs now use social prescribing rather than medication. These individuals would be referred to Community Connectors and encouraged to make links in communities and be informed of green spaces where walks could be undertaken to improve their mental health and well-being.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and option 1; namely the Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee considered the report and appendices as provided prior to it being submitted to the Public Service Board.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>COMMUNITY SAFETY HUB</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Inspector, Gwent Police and Professional Lead for Community Safety</p> <p>The Chief Inspector, Gwent Police advised that the report outlined the progress made by Blaenau Gwent Community Safety Hub which was set up to assist partners who work in Blaenau Gwent to work together in terms of Community Safety issues which affect the local area.</p>	

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>It was reported that the Hub was located at Ebbw Vale Police Station and was open on Tuesday and Thursdays for partners to meet. A fortnightly partnership meeting was held on local matters and action plans are developed to address issues. The Chief Inspector felt that these meetings were productive and had good results.</p> <p>It was continued that a review was undertaken of all Partnership Hubs across the five regions and surveys was circulated to obtain feedback. The results were benchmarked against each Hub to ensure that there was a consistent approach being undertaken. Also, it was felt that this process also provided an opportunity to share good practices.</p> <p>At this juncture the Chief Inspector gave an overview of the comments received from the survey and outlined case studies of the good work undertaken by the agencies involved in the partnership working.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Chief Inspector for the overview of the work of the Community Safety Hub and welcomed questions from Members.</p> <p>A Member referred to threats made to staff and asked how these threats occurred and the number of threats made. The Professional Lead for Community Safety advised that threats to staff are made in a variety of means including over social media and face to face. A regular update on threats was presented to the Managing Director and the process to address the threats was made available to staff. There was also a process in place for school based staff with the Head of Education Transformation being the Lead Officer on the Corporate Security Group.</p> <p>The Professional Lead for Community Safety advised that the issues relating to Threats to Staff would be reviewed by the new Health and Safety Group.</p>	

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>In response to a question raised in relation to increase CCTV, it was advised that a report would be presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee in February.</p> <p>A Member felt that Elected Members should also be given the same consideration as staff in terms of threats as Councillors are also vulnerable to threats. The Professional Lead for Community Safety advised that he threat to staff protocol could also be used by Elected Members as it provided advice and guidance.</p> <p>The Chair reminded Members that it was important that any threats be reported to the Police and Health and Safety Team.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and the information contained therein be noted.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>CLIMATE READY GWENT</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Service Manager Policy and Partnerships, Policy Officer and Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>It was advised that the report captured case studies in relation to Climate Ready Gwent and outlined lived experiences relating to climate change issues which affect the Gwent Region. The Gwent Strategic Well Being Action Group (GSWAG) commissioned work to carry out the Climate Ready Project across the five regions in Gwent. The project looked to identify ways of working within local communities on climate adaptation and used lived experiences to ensure it was based on actual evidence. There were nine different case studies developed with different communities including the 50+ Forum and Children's Grand Council in Blaenau Gwent. The findings were the case studies outlined in the appendices to the report.</p>	

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>The Natural Resource Wales representative provided an overview of the report and advised that the PSB was due to give consideration to Climate Change as a project at the meeting scheduled on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2020.</p> <p>The representative advised that working regionally with other projects across Gwent she had learned from work being taken forward in Monmouthshire, Torfaen and Newport and she noted the positive involvement from communities who were keen to participate and have their voices heard. During the engagement approach it was important that the project was promoted as what could we do as a community rather than working in isolation.</p> <p>It was added that there was an understanding of the challenges and the risks. The NRW Representative noted that it was exciting to see communities come together to understand the climate change picture and what that meant for our landscapes, wildlife and habitats. This was an issue that could be looked at collectively, not just in local areas but regionally.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Natural Resource Wales Representative and invited questions from Members.</p> <p>In response to a question raised about electric car charges and energy infrastructure it was advised that this was part of the reducing carbon emissions project and was an aspect of the Climate Ready Gwent Partnership which worked across public sectors to reduce carbon omissions and Blaenau Gwent was leading the way on that partnership work. It was added that Blaenau Gwent was leading the procurement on behalf of the region in terms of installation of electric charging points.</p>	

<b><u>ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>SUBJECT</u></b>	<b><u>ACTION</u></b>
	<p>A Member referred to grey water and asked if this was dirty water used within the home.</p> <p>The NRW Representative advised that she believed that grey water was captured rain water which could be used to flush toilets, untreated water which could not be used for drinking. She added that these types of changes could be built into future planning and development decisions.</p> <p>Another Member informed that a new housing development being built by Tai Calon had green roofs and had described similar mechanisms for the development. The NRW Representative felt that this demonstrated how working across Public Services Board with new build projects could be adapted to be sustainable. It was felt that this type of work set precedents for the future.</p> <p>Another Member referred to the involvement of children and ensuring that the materials and information was readily available in schools. An Officer referred to the case study used from Blaenau Gwent Children's Grand Council and advised that children are very aware of Climate Change. The Officer added that these issues are being taken forward in schools at local level in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and options 2 and 3; namely the overview report and supporting case studies were considered and it be recommended to the PSB that the Committee remained actively involved in work to support the PSBs climate change action for 2020.</p>	

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
9.	<p><b><u>ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES</u></b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Partnership Lead, Early Action Together Programme, Gwent.</p> <p>The Partnership Lead, Early Action Together Programme, Gwent noted the report which outlined the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) programme which ensured that PSBs across Gwent was prepared for ACES with the assistance of training for key staff in their respective organisations. The Partnership Lead spoke in detail to the report and outlined the key points contained therein. She pointed out that the funded programme was due to end in March 2020 and training had concluded for Police and Partners in November 2019. In October 2019 the PSB considered a paper around key issues and agreed a project closure. A further paper was due to be presented in 2020 with recommendations to support following the project closure.</p> <p>A Member asked if the training had been provided to coaches in sports clubs as children/young people in sports may feel comfortable talking to a coach. The Partnership Lead, Early Action Together Programme, Gwent advised that this work going forward would be undertaken by ACE Support Hub for roll out to sports clubs and sporting communities.</p> <p>In response to concerns raised around the closure of the project, it was advised that an ACE Awareness Workforce would deliver the training, however a great deal of training had been undertaken. The Managing Director added that the PSB does not have staff therefore a partnership approach on how organisations would continue the work in daily business would be considered.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and Option 1; namely The PSB Scrutiny supported the project closure report to be presented to the Public Service Board.</p>	

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# Agenda Item 5

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board Annual Progress Report 2019/20**

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

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Morris (Managing Director, BGCBC)**

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	14.02.21			X			PSB SSG

1. **Purpose of the Report**  
To present the second annual progress report on 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' Well-being Plan.
2. **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 The Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) was set up under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as a way for public bodies to work together to take a long-term joined-up approach to improving economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.
  - 2.2 The Act requires that the PSB sets out how they will do this through a Well-being Plan. This plan must follow the sustainable development principles; to act in a manner that seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
  - 2.3 The PSB agreed its first Well-being Plan, 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' to cover the period 2018 to 2023, in May 2018. Each year subsequently the PSB is required to report on the steps they have taken to meet the objectives set out in the Well-being Plan through a progress report.
  - 2.4 The 2019/20 Annual Progress Report was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic being published in September 2020. The report details progress made in the second year from April 2019 to March 2020 (see Appendix).
  - 2.5 During the pandemic the PSB has continued to meet and to work together including reflecting as a Board on the impact of the Covid-19 on our communities and the focus of the PSBs work programme. Some detail regarding partners' immediate response to the pandemic from March 2020 to August 2020 has been included at the end of this Progress Report.

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

**Option 1** That the PSB Scrutiny Committee considers the progress made in the second year of delivery against the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan and provides comments.

**Option 2** That the PSB Scrutiny Committee considers the progress made in the second year of delivery against the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan and makes specific recommendations to the PSB for consideration.

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

This report is in-line with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and the requirement to prepare and publish an annual report following each full year of activity.

### 5. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

There are no direct financial implications relating to the Annual Report, other than any associated revenue and translation costs for the Partnerships Team in coordinating the report being put together. The intention set out in the Well-being Plan is to be funded from existing budgets of partner organisations.

#### 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

This Annual Report has been produced and published under the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 taking in consideration the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the local communities and the programme itself. This published document is part of an on-going approach to improve well-being in Blaenau Gwent.

#### 5.3 ***Legal***

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 gives local government scrutiny the predominant role in securing improvement and accountability of the PSB. The committee must send a copy of any report or recommendations it makes to the Welsh Ministers, the Well-being of Future Generations Commissioner and the Auditor General for Wales.

#### 5.4 ***Human Resources***

The Governance and Partnership Division of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council leads on supporting the PSB on delivering their collective duties under the Act, and provides the administrative support to the PSB for the production of the Annual Progress Report. Other partners support the process by providing key information on the PSBs work programme for the relevant time period.

## 6. Supporting Evidence

### 6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

The PSB Annual Report 2019/20 is provided as an Appendix. The report presents the progress made in the second year of the PSBs programme for delivery against the Well-Being Plan under five key sections.

During the second year the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board continued its focus on making progress towards achieving the following well-being objectives:

- Best Start in Life for Everyone (Page 10)
- Safe and Friendly Communities (Page 11)
- To Look After and Protect our Environment (Page 26)
- To Forge New Pathways to Prosperity (Page 31)
- To Encourage and Enable People to make Healthy Lifestyle Choices (Page 39)

Many of the existing programmes initiated in the PSB's current strategic work programme continue to be appropriate, if anything even more so, to mitigate the long-term effects of the pandemic. The PSB continued to focus on:

- Community Safety Hub (page 19)
- Age-Friendly Communities (Page 21)
- Early Years Transformation - First 1000 Days Programme (Page 11)
- Blaenau Gwent on the Move (Page 27)
- Foundation Economy (Page 37)
- Integrated Well-being Network (Page 45)

Additionally, some new themes have been introduced to the PSBs work programme including:

- Climate Change Mitigation (Page 28)
- Climate Change Adaptation (Page 29)
- Sustainable Food Partnership (Page 41)
- Building a Healthier Gwent (Page 50)

The report also includes some additional work and case studies of local initiatives that help support progress towards meeting the well-being objectives, highlighting some of the good work being carried out that will help to make a difference towards progress. Some examples being:

- 50+ Forum International Day of Older Persons 2019 (Page 23)
- Community Cafes (Page 24)
- Blaenau Gwent Children's Grand Council (Page 30)
- STEM Events with Schools (Page 35)
- Ebbw Fawr Trail Launch Event, October 2019 (Page 40)
- Brynmawr Welfare Park (Page 47)

Furthermore, there are Covid-19 related case studies:

- Locality Response Teams (Page 57)
- Tredegar Community Taskforce (Page 59)

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

The public will benefit from the delivery of the Well-being projects outlined in the Annual Report.

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

The Well-being Objectives in the Well-being Plan were identified through 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want, 2018-23' engagement programme. Our plan was the result of a comprehensive programme of involvement and collaborative work to develop a coherent plan for delivering well-being. Key examples of engagement and involvement activities held throughout 2019/20 are provided throughout the annual report. Due to COVID19, most of the public engagement was paused with many activities now only being to take place virtually.

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

In this rapidly changing context the PSB shares the view of the vital role it will need to collectively play in achieving well-being outcomes for our local area. The PSB is taking a proactive approach in looking ahead towards recovery, reconstruction and beyond.

**6.5 *Preventative focus***

The preventative focus of the Well-being Plan is reflected in all projects across the PSB strategic work programme. For example, the Sustainable Food Partnership Programme takes a long-term, preventative approach towards tackling food insecurity that takes into account the social, environmental, cultural, and economic aspects of food and supports the positive aspects of food as well as addressing the needs and challenges to prevent further issues with food poverty and hunger in local communities.

**6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working***

The PSB encourages collaboration through partnership working to achieve progress across the strategic work programme. For example, the introduction of the Climate Mitigation Steering Group as a multi-agency collaborative to develop an area-based mitigation plan to keep territorial emissions (all emissions produced within Blaenau Gwent) within a science based carbon budget calculated on the basis of Blaenau Gwent's fair contribution to international climate reduction targets.

Furthermore, the key partners of the five Public Services Boards (PSBs) in Gwent continue to collaborate through the Gwent Strategic Well-being Action Group (GSWAG) to work collaboratively on regional projects.

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

The Well-being Plan is a key component in establishing and encouraging integration between public bodies, this includes working towards Community Impact Assessment (CIA) approach which will take account of the social, economic, environmental and cultural impact of the pandemic across three population groups. Learning from the pilot will enable us to consider how we can scale up the approach to support local and regional recovering planning.

#### 6.8 ***EqIA***

EQIAs are and will be carried out as required for individual projects as part of the PSB's strategic work programme.

#### 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

The PSB Scrutiny Committee is a statutory recipient under of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 of the Annual Report and has the primary responsibility for providing democratic support and challenge to secure continuous improvement to the work of the PSB through scrutiny.

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

- APPENDIX: 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' - Two Years of Progress 2019/20 Annual Progress Report  
[https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Partnerships/PSB\\_Annual\\_Report\\_19-20\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Partnerships/PSB_Annual_Report_19-20_ENG.pdf)

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BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS  
**Blaenau Gwent**  
PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

# The Blaenau Gwent We Want

Two Years Of Progress

2019/20





# The Blaenau Gwent We Want

Two Years Of Progress  
(2019/20)

**Disclaimer:** This Annual Report has been produced and published under the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This published document is part of an on-going approach to improve well-being in Blaenau Gwent.

The most up to date version of this document is available on the PSB website:

<http://www.blaenaugwentpsb.org.uk/>

**Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**







BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS  
**Blaenau Gwent**  
PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD



This document is available electronically at the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board website and is also available in hard copy upon request.

If you would like to receive a copy of this document in hard copy or in another format, please contact:

### **Policy & Partnerships**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council  
Municipal Offices  
Civic Centre  
Ebbw Vale  
Blaenau Gwent  
NP23 6XB



**Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**

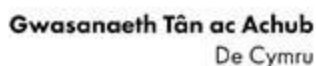
This document is available in Welsh





BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS  
**Blaenau Gwent**  
PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

# Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board Partners



# What is in this document?

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# Foreword

The Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) was formed in 2016 under the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

The PSB brings together public services operating locally and regionally and focuses on improving the well-being of current and future generations in the Blaenau Gwent area. It oversees the delivery of our Well-being Plan 'The Blaenau Gwent We Want' 2018 to 2023. Our work programme for 2019/20 was part of the forward work programme of the Councils Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee.

One of the statutory requirements on us as a PSB is to produce an annual report setting out the progress we have made towards achieving the Well Being Plan objectives.

This year has given us some unique challenges as we responded to, and continue to live with the COVID-19 pandemic. We have continued to work together as a PSB during 2020 including reflecting on the impact of the pandemic on our communities and the focus of our work programme moving forward.

I am pleased to share our annual report for 2020/21 highlighting the work that we have been doing across our communities.

Councillor Nigel Daniels  
**Chair of the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board**  
**Leader of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**



# Introduction

Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) was established in April 2016 as part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 (“the Act”). It is a partnership of key public bodies that by working together have a huge responsibility to create a place we want to live in now and in the future.

The Act is a ground-breaking piece of legislation which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The vision of this legislation is expressed in the [Seven Well-being Goals](#).

The Act places a duty on public bodies to apply the sustainable development principle which states they ‘must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. The sustainable development principle is made up of the following [five ways of working](#), pictured below:



Our Annual Report contains video content to show some of the great work that has been taken forward in the first year of our plan. If you see the ‘video’ icon (left) in this document you can click on it to watch the clips, all of which are hosted on external websites.

## Meeting our requirement under the Act

As a Public Services Board (PSB) we agreed our five-year Well-being Plan in April 2018 and it was published on Friday 4 May 2018, in-line with statutory guidance.

Our plan was the result of a comprehensive programme of involvement and collaborative work to develop a coherent plan for delivering well-being. It prioritises five key well-being objectives set out below to take forward in order to bring about positive changes for local people and communities:

## Our Well-being Objectives

1	Blaenau Gwent wants everyone to have the best start in life...	Ensuring early years of future generations are healthy, happy, free from harm and ready to succeed.
2	Blaenau Gwent wants safe and friendly communities...	Creating safer communities, where people feel safe and have good social connections, are socially responsible and have a good cultural life.
3	Blaenau Gwent wants to look after and protect its natural environments...	Creating a vibrant area that lives in harmony with its natural environments, using resources in a fair and sustainable way.
4	Blaenau Gwent wants to forge new pathways to prosperity...	A place where people thrive and achieve their full learning and lifelong potential.
5	Blaenau Gwent wants to encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play.	A place where people live longer with better health, a place where healthy behaviours is the 'norm'.

Further information on how we developed our plan, along with supporting documents is available within our local well-being plan [‘The Blaenau Gwent We Want, 2018-23’](#).

# Celebrating Our Progress – Annual Conference 2019

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In July 2019 Blaenau Gwent PSB held its first annual stakeholder event at the General Offices in Ebbw Vale. The event was well attended by over 100 representatives from a variety of partner organisations.

The event, hosted by the PSB Chair, was split into 2 distinct parts. The first part, which launched our first annual report, considered the progress made towards our five key well-being objectives in our first year. It included a number of case studies of partnership working delivered on key work such as the Blaenau Gwent on the Move programme, the newly established Community Safety Hub, the First 1,000 day programme and a regional project on the Future of Gwent.

In the second part of the day, the launch event featured speakers from a range of local and national partners focusing on maximising opportunities for prosperity. More information about the themes these speakers focussed on can be found throughout the Forging New Pathways to Prosperity chapter.





**INVOLVEMENT:** Attendees of our Annual Progress Report 2018/19 launch event were able to hear about the progress made towards the well-being objectives during our first year, as well as find out about how they could get involved in developing well-being programmes going forward.

During the last year the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board focussed making progress towards achieving the following well-being objectives:

- Ensuring the **Best Start in Life for Everyone;**
- Fostering **Safe and Friendly Communities** across Blaenau Gwent;
- To **Look After and Protect our Environment;**
- To **Forge New Pathways to Prosperity** for everyone; and
- To Encourage and Enable People to make **Healthy Lifestyle Choices**

Updates on progress against these as well as details of emerging new programmes of work to achieve these objectives can be found in the chapters below.

# The Best Start in Life for Everyone

Early childhood is a critical stage in life that can determine much of a person's future well-being.

Over the course of the **First 1,000 Days** (from conception to the second birthday), a child develops behaviours and the ability to think and reason as part of their cognitive development. This sets the stage for lifelong health, learning and achievement, developing relationships, and what is eventually passed on to future generations.

Details of how we made progress towards ensuring **the best start in life for everyone** across Blaenau Gwent are outlined below.



**PREVENTION:** ensuring that current and future generations have '**the best start in life**' in order to reduce the chances of Adverse Childhood Experiences and improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

## **FIRST 1,000 DAYS**

One of the key steps the PSB said they wished to take forward in order to meet this objective to ensure **the best start in life for everyone** was: “To understand more about Early Years Services including their quality and where the gaps are”.

The First 1,000 (F1000) Days Programme was identified by the PSB as a well-being project for 2018/19 that would fall under this PSB objective. The PSB agreed to undertake the Public Health Wales mapping model with the aim of uncovering detailed information regarding the identification of the services that are available in Blaenau Gwent, and the gaps in those services, as a first step to meeting the overarching objective.

### **Key achievements to-date on F1000 Days**

The new Early Years system has emerged, which is the Early Years Integrated Transformation Project (EYITP), which BG has signed up to be a Pathfinder with Caerphilly and Newport. Each Authority will test a new way of working, which challenges traditional organisational and professional boundaries to ensure effective collaboration for ‘hard to reach families’. That puts families first based on what matters to them, drawing on the principles that were developed during the Vanguard research which conducted in October 2019.

### **The Pilot**

The pilot will explore the scale of need for enhanced services for families outside of Flying Start areas in Blaenau Gwent. The areas which have been approved by PSB as Phase 1 (Cwm) and Phase 2 (Brynmawr and Nantyglo) have undergone intensive community asset mapping. This has involved working closely with the Family Information Services (FIS) to review all services for families with children aged 0-7 years in each of these areas.

Phase 1 of the pilot was ready to go live in March 2020, but Welsh Government put a pause on the programme whilst they prioritised their response to COVID 19. However in May 2020, Welsh Government confirmed that the pause button would be released as some Authorities were too far into recruitment

for the pilot not to continue. Funding until April 2021 was confirmed but it is half of the original funding.

The pilot aims to go live in late 2020, in the previously approved by PSB area of Cwm. It will bring services together in an integrated way, so services operate more like a programme or system rather than separate services.

### **Establish a F1000 Days Community of Practice in for Blaenau Gwent**

Building a joint understanding and local coalition of multi-agency partners who represent the F1000 days' system in Blaenau Gwent, is influencing the re-design of the current Early Years Development Childcare and Play Partnership (EYDCPP), which was created in to cover activities supporting children and families. When the Children and Families (Wales) 2010 Measure took effect, the partnership was expanded to also look at issues relevant to the sufficiency and provision of Play.

The EYDCPP has been successful in bringing together key partners, mainly from umbrella bodies for childcare and play organisations, there has been a lack of representation from Health colleagues, and it is heavily weighted by Local Authority staff.

A proposal is being drafted which will restructure the current format in-line with ensuring that this group has multi-agency partners who represent the F1000 days' systems in Blaenau Gwent. It is suggested that the EYDCPP should remain as a strategic decision-making group, with a number of sub-groups sitting underneath that will act as communities of practice.

Professionals from a wide range of organisations and groups will be invited to be part of these communities/groups to share ideas for developing services, reviewing new practice/best practice and producing reports and materials to support early years' developments ensuring integration and multi-agency working and enable performance data currently collected to be used for continuous improvement purposes.

Learning from the F1,000 days has enabled a new Early Years Integrated Transformation Programme to be developed which will address inequalities between Flying Start families and non-Flying Start families, will change the

current systems and approaches to support families. Each family will have keyworker who supports the whole family in addressing 'What Matters' to them. Pulling other agencies in when and if needed rather than referring on or offering families a menu of services which does not always resolve what matters to them. The asset mapping that was carried out during the F1000 days has been updated, and is now being reviewed in light of COVID-19, with the aim of building on community strengths, skills and interests to reduce the reliance on commissioned services.

### **Other Developments**

As part of the preparation, a number of consultation events have taken place - these have included a workshop held with regional partners to ensure the Directors from Education and Social Services buy-in, support and shape the approach at a Blaenau Gwent level.

Additional preparation and consultation work has taken place during January and February 2020, in the form of a management briefing which included sharing the findings of Vanguard and the new principles for the EYITP and receiving feedback which was fed into the regional steering group. Managers representing Flying Start, Families First, Head Teachers, Early Years providers and leads within health, including; Health Visiting, school nurse and midwifery, attended.

At the heart of this project is the aim of creating an integrated and responsive early years system that is accessible for all families to address 'What Matters' to them, this has driven meetings with third sector organisations to explore how all these services can come together to form this new Early Years System.

### **Learning and Next Steps**

Originally the Pilot was going to take a two phase approach starting in Cwm and then using the learning from Phase 1 to expand the pilot into Phase 2 which is Brynmawr 2 (Bryn Farm) and LSOA Nantyglo 1 (Winchestown) areas.

However due to the pandemic, which resulted in pause in the project, changes in Welsh Government funding and the Early Years core offer having to be reconfigured in-line with Government guidelines around social distancing. The project will be delivered differently from the Pathfinders first aspirations,

starting in Cwm where the new way of working will be tested in-line with the principles and methods developed through the Vanguard process. The main difference is rather than home visiting, the model will rely on virtual delivery which may also provide opportunities around financial sustainability for rolling the EYITP more widely.

Currently Phase 2 which is Brynmawr 2 (Bryn Farm) and LSOA Nantyglo 1 (Winchestown) will remain on pause, but if funding allows and initial findings from Phase 1 are positive, our aspirations are that the project will be expanded beyond 2021 and this would allow the model to be rolled out to Brynmawr 2 (Bryn Farm) and LSOA Nantyglo 1 (Winchestown) areas.

The pilot will test the new way of working with families until April 2021, focusing on:

- No discrimination on who is eligible for support – Flying Start or generic
- The ‘What Matters’ question
- Ensuring consistency in the form of a one keyworker approach
- Enhanced midwife support from 12 weeks’ gestation
- Establishing early intervention to ensure support for early language development is in place from the antenatal period

Work will continue to work with the community to build resilience in the form of parenting support groups led by parents for parents pulling in specialist support if needed, reducing the need for commissioned services.

### **ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES**

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are experiences that occur before the age of 18 and are remembered throughout adulthood. Evidence shows children who experience stressful and poor-quality childhoods are more likely to develop health-harming and anti-social behaviours, more likely to perform poorly in school, more likely to be involved in crime and ultimately less likely to be a productive member of society.

Committed to ensuring ‘everyone has the best start in life’ and ‘creating safe and friendly communities’ we identified tackling ACEs as one of our key priority areas. We recognised that central to the delivery of this well-being objective is improving how public service organisations respond effectively to prevent and mitigate the harms of ACEs, whilst better supporting local people and communities to be able to cope with ACEs that cannot be prevented.

As a board, we took immediate action in ensuring our public sector workforce were ACEs aware and provided Level 1 ACEs and trauma informed practice training for our employees.

The training was made available via the Home Office funded Police and Public Health Wales Early Action Together Programme as well as Welsh Government’s ACEs Support Hub.



**LONG-TERM:** this was a key step towards strengthening our existing early intervention and preventative practices to protect and increase the resilience of the most vulnerable people in our communities over the medium to long-term.

To the end of March 2020, the Early Action Together Programme has provided ACE aware training to nearly 1300 Gwent Police Officers and staff and over 400 staff from partner agencies across Gwent. In Blaenau Gwent this was 102 Police staff and 57 staff from partner agencies.

Blaenau Gwent is also an ACE enquiry pilot site for Health Visitors and Staff have received training.

The ACEs Support Hub has provided the following training in Blaenau Gwent;

- ACE awareness to all schools except 3
- Phase 1 and Phase 2 Train the Trainer to 9 schools
- ACE Friendly Schools Train the Trainer to 9 schools

The Hub has also developed a Skills and Knowledge Framework which describes the knowledge and skills that the Public Service workforce needs to be ACE-Informed, ACE-Skilled and ACE-Influencers.

ACE training is being delivered across different sectors in Blaenau Gwent improving the knowledge, awareness and responses of public services to Adverse Childhood Experiences however, the work to date has highlighted an opportunity to improve the planning, coordination and monitoring of this training to ensure that we continue to develop and sustain our ACE informed public service workforce.

### **Early Intervention Project**

Building on the work to develop an ACE aware workforce, the Early Action Together Programme has also worked with partners in Blaenau Gwent including Gwent Police, Children's Services, Families First and Education to provide an integrated 'one front door' for referrals to Children's Services and a pathway for early intervention and support.

Since May 2019, the Early Intervention Project, funded by Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner, has supported 161 children and their families to access support. The project supports families who would otherwise have been closed with no further action by Children's Services.

The learning from the Early Intervention Project is informing the development of safeguarding, early intervention and prevention models across Gwent.

Further achievements include the implementation of Operation Encompass across the five Local Authorities in Gwent. Operation Encompass is a Police and Education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. Police report to schools prior to the school day when a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident in the previous 24 hours.

The ACEs programme is also working with Ebbw Fawr Learning Community to develop #NXTGEN, a programme which offers young people an opportunity to gain vocational qualifications and think differently about their potential and future aspirations. Our aim is to test this approach with a view that resources

can be shared to enable other schools and education settings to offer this programme to young people.

# Safe and Friendly Communities

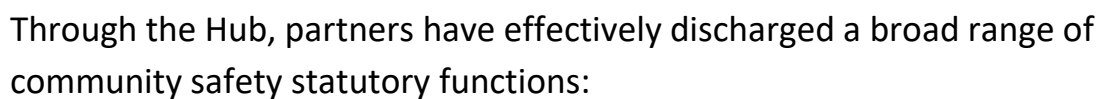
Our Well-being Assessment demonstrated that Blaenau Gwent has strong community assets and our residents are proud of the area's cultural heritage and our sense of community.

Blaenau Gwent PSB wants to build on this strong sense of community by developing safe and friendly communities, using a **place-based approach to support our communities and citizens of all ages**.

During our first two years, this objective has focussed on tackling key community safety issues and ensuring that Blaenau Gwent can be recognised as an area of age-friendly communities. Details of how we've done this are provided in the chapter below.



The Blaenau Gwent Community Safety Hub was established April 2019. The multi-agency partners who regularly attend the Hub have contributed to the delivery of commitments set out in the 'Blaenau Gwent We Want' Well-being Plan 2018-2023 and the Police and Crime Commissioner's Policing Plan for Gwent.



- Prevent crime and reduce offending & reoffending amongst children and adults;
- Tackle anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment; and respond to Community Trigger requests;
- Combat the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances;
- Support victims of crime (including domestic abuse, hate crime and exploitation);
- Supporting children and adults at risk of radicalisation.

An Information Sharing Protocol was implemented to ensure the appropriate, safe and legal sharing of personal information between the multi-agency partners.

Partners have worked together through the Hub to review Planning/Building Control arrangements at particular premises, met with the local Business Community to discuss concerns, maintained positive contact with elected members and key residents, in addition to considering all vulnerabilities and risks of harm to certain victim cohorts.

Members of the Hub have worked with victims from local businesses, the local community, neighbours, visitors to the area, victims known to the offenders etc. to address and prevent organised crime, illicit drug use and drug dealing, robbery, burglary, violence and intimidation, domestic violence, and anti-social behaviour. The Hub has helped to reduce offending amongst twenty identified targeted individuals, known prolific offenders, known petty offenders, offenders in tenuous accommodation arrangements, substance misusers, and rough sleepers.

Joint Police-led, high visibility operation to serve an extensive warrant at a key property. Drugs and stolen property recovered. One individual arrested, charged. Drug paraphernalia and extensive rubbish cleared from building and gardens. Practice review underway relating to houses of multiple occupancy.

Local Business Community and residents pleased with the response / reduction in victimisation, crimes and anti-social behaviour / accommodation manager working more effectively to manage their tenants.

### **Learning and next steps**

The Hub has been operating since April 2019. We are collaborating with our partners across Gwent and undertaking a comparative evaluation of the five Gwent Hubs with the intention of sharing 'what works', 'best practice' and identifying areas for the next development phase.



**COLLABORATION** – The Community Safety Hub is a collaborative multi-agency arrangement aimed at improving community safety across Blaenau Gwent as a collective partnership.

## **AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES**

The concept of Age-Friendly Communities (AFCs) was developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as part of a global initiative to identify the changes needed for cities and communities to adapt to and benefit from ageing populations.

AFCs make life better for all people who live in a community, particularly as they age. They recognise lonely people in the community and encourage activities that people of all ages can participate in. Decisions on what it means to be age-friendly sit closer to local communities; ensuring local people have a voice based on their own lived experiences. Being age-friendly means designing our communities and services *with* older people, not just *for* them.

The eight domains of an AFC identified by the WHO are:-



The purpose of the Age-Friendly Blaenau Gwent programme is to ensure that future generations of older people are well equipped for later life by highlighting the challenges faced by today's older generations and secure a commitment from public service providers and local partners to continue to develop age-friendly communities across the borough.

The previous Blaenau Gwent Local Service Board Strategy for Older People was published before the inception of the PSB and before the development of the Blaenau Gwent We Want Well-being Plan 2018-2023. This document replaces the previous Strategy for Older People to align the Age-Friendly Blaenau Gwent programme with the objective in the local Well-being Plan to create safe and friendly communities across Blaenau Gwent.

It is hoped that the vision for age-friendly communities highlighted throughout the AFC assessment and ongoing programme will enable public service partners to integrate and embed age-friendly practices into strategies and ways of working across all sectors.

**The Blaenau Gwent 50+ Network** brings together local partners from organisations who represent or work with older people. For example, the Network comprises representatives from all PSB partners plus stakeholders like Age Cymru, Alzheimer's Society, Adult Learning Wales, Victim Support, and citizen representatives from the **Blaenau Gwent 50+ Forum**.



The Network has integrated the objectives of the Well-being Plan into its work programme and supporting the development of the Blaenau Gwent Age-Friendly Communities programme. Their age-friendly programme assessment will demonstrate the excellent work that local and regional organisations are already carrying out to encourage safe and friendly communities and promote healthy and active lifestyles amongst people of all ages.



The 50+ Network and 50+ Forum are currently chaired by Blaenau Gwent Council's Older People's Champion. The Network meets regularly to discuss local issues as well as share learning and best practice amongst its members.

The **Blaenau Gwent 50+ Forum** (pictured above) is free and open to anyone in Blaenau Gwent aged 50 and over. It meets several times a year in different venues across the borough to promote the interests of people aged 50+ and provides an opportunity for people to get together, socialise, and discuss the issues that matter most to them.

*"Great mix of talks and demonstrations, very useful to find out what's available in the local area."*

*"Very informative and fun!"*

*"Excellent day. I was unaware that so much is available for the aged. I will certainly attend again!" – Blaenau Gwent 50+ Forum members*

### **CASE STUDY – 50+ Forum International Day of Older Persons 2019**

The Blaenau Gwent 50+ Forum and 50+ Network hosted an **International Day of Older Persons event** each year. In October 2019, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales' Office attended the Blaina Community Centre to talk about the journey to age equality, ending ageism and age discrimination.

Representatives from Groundwork Wales, the Stroke Association, the National Exercise Referral Scheme and the Ebbw Fawr Trail group spoke about health and well-being initiatives available locally that help keep older people fit and active. Attendees were also treated to some sit-down yoga from a local yoga

instructor. *Click on the video link at the top left of the image below to see more!*



### COMMUNITY CASE STUDY – Community Connections Befriending Service

**Community Connections** is a free telephone befriending service that supports older people who have become lonely or isolated in their community. Older people are carefully ‘matched’ with a local volunteer befriender who has a telephone call with them at least once a week to provide company, friendship, and emotional support.



In Blaenau Gwent, the **befriending service** is available in Brynmawr from December 2019. One of the aims of the service is to tackle loneliness and isolation in a preventative way, enabling people to stay in their own homes and live as independently for as long as possible.

### COMMUNITY CASE STUDY – COMMUNITY CAFÉS

Before the start of the Covid19 pandemic in March 2020, a range of **community cafés** and **luncheon clubs** were held regularly across Blaenau

Gwent, open to anyone interested in meeting other people for food and drink and a friendly chat. This included older people, carers, people living with dementia, or anyone looking to get out and about to meet new people.

These are important activities for anyone suffering from loneliness or isolation, enabling them to discover new ways to improve their well-being and share conversations with new people. Examples included:-

- **Gwenu** is a local community group that aims to help support anyone whose life has been impacted by dementia. Gwenu community cafés were held four times a month – once in Tredegar, once in Abertillery, once in Ebbw Vale, and once in Nantyglo – and anyone of any age is welcome to attend.
- **The Happy Café** at Aberbeeg Community Centre met every Tuesday from 10am – 12pm. It was part of the Action for Happiness programme and offers a warm welcome for anyone interested in happiness and well-being, encouraging people of all ages to meet for a drink and a chat.
- A **Carer Café** was held on Tuesdays at 10am – 12pm at Ysbytty Aneurin Bevan in Ebbw Vale. The cafés provided advice, information, support, activities and workshops for carers to help equip them for their caring role, consider their own well-being, be aware of their rights, and share stories with other likeminded carers.



# Looking After and Protecting our Environment

We must address the challenges caused by climate change and loss of natural habitats in order to look after and protect our environment. To do this we need to improve our urban green spaces, walk, cycle, use public transport and recycle more, and look after our land and Blaenau Gwent's fabulous countryside in a more sustainable way.

Read on for more information about how the Blaenau Gwent on the Move project and the PSB's Climate Change programmes are aiming to address these challenges.



## **BLAENAU GWENT ON THE MOVE**

The BG on the Move project was successfully funded in 2018 by Natural Resources Wales Competitive Grants Scheme. The project resulted in the development of the Ebbw Fawr Trail which cuts through three nature reserves and features signage, street art, interactive interpretation boards and street furniture and supports the development of the areas Active Travel Programme.



The project was recognised as being an exemplar pilot project for its innovation and creative approach to partnership working which embodied the five ways of working (involvement, collaboration, prevention, integration and long-term) whilst delivering the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources principles.

Central to the project's success was its continued involvement of local people and communities, which built on the feedback received from Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement programme. Using citizen insight and evidence the project aimed to help people to live healthier and more fulfilled lives by improving access to the natural environment and the outdoors, through increase use of the areas natural assets via walking and cycling whilst unlocking a range of multiple social, health and environmental well-being outcomes.

Some of the highlights of the trail includes a welcoming well-being space at Ebbw Vale Fire Station, art installations (murals and sculptures), the planting of native trees and wild flower meadows for pollinators and community litter

picks and river cleans. The event culminated with an exciting event launch held at Aneurin Sports Centre and a family orientated 5km fun walk 'Treasure Hunt'.



**INTEGRATION** – the Blaenau Gwent on the Move project brought together partners from the local community to help shape the Ebbw Fawr Trail and its impact on social and physical well-being.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

Action against climate change was identified as a priority by the PSB under the 'look after and protect the environment' objective. The Well-being Assessment identified a number of impacts from climate change that could have significant effects on local services and infrastructure, including more frequent and intense rainfall events, wetter warmer winters and hotter drier summers. Our climate actions can also address other well-being issues that are important to residents (such as local natural spaces, health and cost of living).

There are two main forms of climate action. Mitigation actions that prevent the release of CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases that cause climate change (e.g. reducing energy use) and adaptation actions that respond to the changes which are predicted, or are already taking place, due to climate change (e.g. improving flood defences). The PSB will be addressing both types of action through two distinct projects:

### **Climate Mitigation**

There are significant opportunities to enhance prosperity through mitigation actions to decarbonise Blaenau Gwent. For example, the potential for job opportunities associated with retrofitting housing, or to improve access to jobs and education at the same time as decarbonising transport. The climate steering group will facilitate collaboration and identify distinct pathways to decarbonisation in different areas such as housing and transport. The steering group will include: relevant strategic decision makers, climate expertise and community representatives (including young people).

## Climate Adaptation

Blaenau Gwent PSB has worked with other Gwent PSBs through the 'Climate Ready Gwent: Capturing the Lived Experience' project, which developed a community engagement model for climate adaptation. Nature based adaptation actions that would reduce flood risk and enhance biodiversity had broad public support in the Blaenau Gwent We Want consultation.

Few areas have experienced the scope of landscape change that Blaenau Gwent has, as recent deindustrialisation has followed industrialisation. Community engagement with climate adaptation can enable people to take ownership of continuing landscape change in Blaenau Gwent.

### Project Aims for 2020/21

#### Mitigation:-

- Steering group to be set up and decision-making process established, with a clear focus on developing a climate plan for Blaenau Gwent territorial emissions, based on a science based carbon budget.
- Brief given to experts to calculate carbon budget for Blaenau Gwent and suggest possible timescales for achieving carbon neutrality within this carbon budget.
- Identify the most important areas for mitigation action in Blaenau Gwent and carry out public engagement on these issues to inform the borough wide plan.
- Develop in more detail a range of approaches to decarbonisation that tie into wider well-being objectives for public engagement exercise.

#### Adaptation:-

Deliver a Climate Ready Gwent style engagement project across Blaenau Gwent to inform future PSB work with other partners and develop an adaptation plan for the community.



**PREVENTION** – Local Climate Change adaptation and mitigation programmes will help reduce flood risk to protect our residents and preserve biodiversity in the long-term for future generations to enjoy.

## **CASE STUDY – Blaenau Gwent Children’s Grand Council**

In 2019 the Blaenau Gwent Children’s Grand Council, which brings together representatives from all primary schools from across the area, aged 10 to 11, took part in the ‘Climate Ready Gwent –Capturing the Lived Experience’ project. The adaptation project being developed by the PSB will be based on this work, so we went back to the Children’s Grand Council at the Llanhilleth Institute in February 2020 to get their view about local climate adaptation projects.



# Forging New Pathways to Prosperity



In 2017, 24% of households in Blaenau Gwent were workless households. This was the second highest percentage of any local authority area in Wales. In 2019, Blaenau Gwent had the highest percentage of areas in the top 50% in Wales, at 80.9%, and also the highest proportion of areas in the most deprived 10% in Wales for the employment domain (23.4%).

The consequences of this can still be seen in our communities and town centres, but we are working hard to help create jobs and mitigate against the effect of de-industrialisation in order to bring about the scale of change required to meet the area's economic development needs.

Over the past year, the following PSB programmes have made progress towards tackling the effects unemployment and maximising economic opportunities for prosperity.

## **UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

In March 2018 The PSB identified mitigating the impact of Universal Credit as being a high priority for the area and that success could only be achieved through public organisations working effectively together in collaboration. It was agreed that this would form part of the PSB Well-being Plan Delivery Programme for 2018-19, with Tai Calon being appointed as the PSB programme sponsor.

### **Summary of Progress during life of programme**

As a starting point a Universal Credit Stakeholder Event' was held in April 2018 at The Beaufort Theatre in Ebbw Vale. The primary aim of the event was to gather intelligence about existing support provision being delivered by partner organisations and identify what the key headline challenges are for the area.

Information from the event was analysed and a number of challenges were identified for local people and communities including:

- Risks that might emerge from the practice of making payments direct to the customer
- Timescales of between 1-2 months for application to receipt of payment by customers created a risk that customers' day to day living could be impacted upon (for example, purchasing food);
- The fact that the service is digital by default, relying on customers to play an active role on maintaining their claim and that this would have an impact on customers with low levels of literacy skills and digital skills.

This it was felt presented a number of key challenges for public services organisations operating in Blaenau Gwent including:

- Increased demand from customers requiring assisted digital support and personal budgeting and support.
- The need to meet complex and multiple needs and circumstances of customers

The PSB's response to these challenges included:

- Tai Calon's introduction of a triage service to identify digital and other support needs
- A collaborative approach between Tai Calon and the Job Centres on the verification process for Universal Credit
- The introduction of drop in surgeries at Tai Calon and elsewhere, including community locations, to assist customers with digital and budgeting support.

### **Outputs & Outcomes during 2019/20**

As at 31 May 2020 there were 1,235 Tai Calon residents claiming UC out of c.3,450 UC claimants across Blaenau Gwent in total. During 2019/20, the council's Assisted Digital and Personal Budgeting services supported over 350 UC and legacy benefit claimants with online administration and applications.

The collaborative approach between local social landlords, the Council, DWP, support providers and the third sector has mitigated the significant risk to income and the risk of growth of debt. Incomes have reduced and debt increased but not at the scale forecasted.

The take up of local support via surgeries and Tai Calon staff working from Job Centres was very low. Feedback was clear from local people that support should either be via telephone or face to face. Tai Calon adjusted services to maximise this service offer.

During the Covid19 pandemic, the Tai Calon income support team have adapted their working procedures in order to maintain a high quality service, continue to provide financial support, and support tenants' well-being. The team are focussing on an additional 220+ tenants who have claimed UC since March 2020, providing tailored advice and preventing arrears by agreeing flexible, affordable payment plans.



**INVOLVEMENT** – The new telephone triage service from Tai Calon was set up following feedback from local people who were unable to attend face-to-face financial support surgeries.

The development of a Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan was identified as mechanism through which to deliver specific interventions to support the Maximising Opportunities to Prosperity work stream.

The development of the Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Plan seeks to enhance the skills and work readiness of individuals in Blaenau Gwent, which is critical to ensuring residents can capitalise on the available employment (including opportunities stemming from current demands, emerging investment and growth occurring locally, regionally and beyond, including initiatives such as the CCRC, Tech Valleys and the Valleys Task Force).

**In the last 12 months the following progress has been made:-**

The PSB Maximising Opportunities for Prosperity event held in July 2019 was used to set the scene relating to projects and initiatives currently operating within this space; and to announce the intention to host an Employment and Skills stakeholder event.

**Employment and Skills Stakeholder Event**

The Employment and Skills Stakeholder event was held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at the General Offices. The event was attended by over 70 individuals with partner representation from businesses, schools, Further and Higher Education and employability partners.

The participatory event introduced the outline priority areas for the Employment and Skills Plan to partners, providing opportunity to test the vision and plan priorities. As a result of the event “Blaenau Gwent Prospers” was agreed as the new vision to underpin the plan.



## **Consultation of the final draft Employment and Skills Plan**

The main plan and supporting action plan was developed, reflective of the comments and observations made at the stakeholder event. Further consultation and endorsement of the plan was sought at the start of 2020 with final observations informing the final plan.

## **Project Development**

Exploration of funding opportunities to progress a number of projects identified within the plan have been pursued within the last 12 months including; STEM Facilitation (Tech Valleys), Future Skills Analysis (Tech Valleys) and Aspire Shared Apprenticeship (Welsh Government and CCR City Deal).

## **Achievements**

Additional to funding being pursued there have been collaborative achievements within this area including the annual inspiration event.

## **Next Steps**

The Employment and Skills Plan will be considered and endorsed by the Tech Valleys Advisory Group (April 2020).

The PSB will consider and approve the plan, providing a strategic and collaborative vision for delivering employability and skills initiatives within Blaenau Gwent.

The plan outlines proposed governance arrangements that will require implementation. This includes the establishment of a Blaenau Gwent Employment and Skills Board comprising of key partners including Tech Valleys Advisory Group, Blaenau Gwent Enterprise Board and colleges, amongst others. Sub/working groups will also be established, if a mechanism is not already in place for each of the priorities set out within the plan.

## **CASE STUDY – STEM Events with Schools**

Throughout 2019, the council in partnership with Aspire Blaenau Gwent, STEM Cymru, Aspire2Be, the Royal Academy of Engineering along with other regional and national partners held a number of STEM events with schoolchildren to

inspire young people and highlight the breadth of employment opportunities and associated pathways both in Blaenau Gwent and nationally.

This engagement with primary school aged children is particularly beneficial as the recent Gwent Futures report identified that two thirds of children starting primary school in 2019 will end up working in jobs that don't even exist yet.

The events highlighted that young people's career aspirations can be influenced by parents, teachers, peers and other students, as well as what they're taught in schools. Enhancing STEM links with local industries as part of school curriculums and promoting alternative routes to employment like apprenticeships can help develop enterprising, creative young people who become ready to play a full part in life and work as they get older.



## **FOUNDATIONAL ECONOMY**

The foundational economy can be described as economic sectors that provide everyday essential goods and services including; infrastructure, utility, retail, food, housing, construction, health, care and education. The associated services and activities are provided by a range of public sector, SME and larger companies.

The foundational economy operates in those areas where there is a continuous, every day demand for services, facilitating the needs of a given community and also serves as an important source of local employment.

Within Wales the foundational economy accounts for around four out of ten jobs. Wholesale, retail and transport industries, for example, make a slightly larger contribution to Wales' GVA than manufacturing. In addition to providing employment and key services, this sector of the economy provides a range of benefits which are not always so easily attributed to other sectors e.g. relatively stable economy and evenly spread.

Despite the potential the Foundational Economy offers, historically there have been challenges, not least;

- Lack of recognition as a priority sector for growth, comparable to sectors such as manufacturing, ICT etc.
- Low skilled/low wage employment; with a tendency for part time opportunities fulfilled by females
- Displacement of local businesses by larger operators

In responding to the known challenges the PSB in January 2020 considered that there was an opportunity to work collaboratively to better understand the sector and consider growth opportunities including, the dynamics between firms of different sizes, behavior of organizations, supply chain and procurement opportunities, support innovation, improving management, fill skills gaps, develop progression routes and explore new business model.

A number of partner stakeholders including BGCBC have been successful in securing funding as part of the challenge fund, looking to support the Foundational Economy through specific interventions, namely;

Pilot Project (s) led by BGCBC and BG operating RSLs, complimentary applications were submitted and approved, to;

- Understand BGCBC and RSL procurement spend and associated voids within the local supply chain (Blaenau Gwent)
- Respond positively to the barriers faced by business in tendering for work (internal and external to the procuring organisations)
- Co-ordinate proactive support to business (range of partners and methods) to position business to tender for work and address voids.

As of March 2020 it was intended that the pilot projects would be operational in Q4 of 19/20 through to the end of March 2021. An early inception meeting was progressed prior to the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic but resources have had to be diverted to respond to more immediate issues. The PSB will be considering the way forward for this programme of work when it has had time to reflect on the impact COVID-19 has on its wider well-being plan.

# Encourage and Enable People to Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Blaenau Gwent has a population that is unhealthier than the rest of Wales on average. The PSB therefore wants to encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places they live, learn, work and play in order to promote good health and reduce levels of disease and poor health.



## **EBBW FAWR TRAIL**

The Ebbw Fawr Trail set up by the Blaenau Gwent on the Move project offers superb opportunities to explore local areas of natural beauty and rich cultural past through walking, running or cycling. It is hoped that the introduction of

this new active travel route will help people live healthier and more fulfilled lives by improving access to the outdoors and our natural environment.



*Click on the video link in the bottom left of this photo to hear more about the health benefits of the Ebbw Fawr Trail!*

Blaenau Gwent is blessed with plenty of other existing accessible walking and active travel routes available to the local community. The Integrated Network of Maps currently being developed as part of the Welsh Government Active Travel programme will also make it easier for people of all ages to get active outdoors across Gwent.



**LONG-TERM** – the introduction of a new active travel route will help people live healthier lives by improving access to the outdoors and our natural environment in the long-term.

### **CASE STUDY –Ebbw Fawr Trail Launch Event, October 2019**

Helping Blaenau Gwent residents become more physically active by getting outdoors to enjoy the natural assets Blaenau Gwent has to offer was central to the delivery of the Blaenau Gwent on the Move Project and the development of the Ebbw Fawr Trail. The involvement of local people and communities, including working in partnership with Ebbw Fach Trail Community Group, was fundamental to the overall design of the trail, including its key features.

The project, funded by Natural Resources Wales, culminated with a 'Pirate' themed launch event to celebrate the official opening of the Ebbw Fawr Trail on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019 held at Ebbw Vale Leisure Centre.

Over 150 attendees and many public and third sector organisations came together to celebrate the official opening of the trail which stretches from Sirhowy Hill Woodlands to the Marine Colliery in Cwm. The event was packed with family fun activities including a bouncy castle, goody bags, a treasure hunt, and characters from TV's PAW Patrol.



Councillor Mandy Moore who officially opened the event said “It was great to see so many families taking part in the fun run and enjoying their time spent together on the new trail and the feedback we’ve received has been fantastic. It’s so encouraging to see initiatives like this really helping to improve people’s well-being”.

### **SUSTAINABLE FOOD PARTNERSHIP**

Dignified access to nutritious and healthy food is a fundamental part of life – a human right. Yet, increasingly, for many people in Blaenau Gwent, providing food for themselves and their families is challenging due to inadequate incomes and the rising cost of living.

Food poverty and food insecurity are terms that are frequently used interchangeably. Food poverty is the inability to afford, or have access to foods which make up a socially and culturally acceptable healthy diet. The causes of food poverty are complex and include the following factors:

- financial – relating to income and to the price of locally available healthy food
- social – relating to cultural norms, skills, social networks, and the impact of marketing of unhealthy foods
- physical – relating to access to shops and cafes selling affordable healthy food, to cooking facilities, to transport.

Food insecurity means having access at all times to enough food that is both sufficiently varied and culturally appropriate to sustain an active and healthy life. Moderate insecurity can mean compromising on the quality and quantity of food, such as eating toast at most meals or choosing cheap, filling foods rather than vegetables. More severe insecurity can involve mothers eating children's leftovers, skipping meals altogether, and filling up on water.

### **The causes of food poverty**

Where budgets are limited, food may be given less priority compared to housing or utilities and people may go with cheaper, less healthy options.

While the affordability of food plays a part in food poverty, so too does the accessibility of food outlets that offer adequate choice of foods. Accessing food of any kind can be difficult in some areas that are devoid of any food outlets (areas known as food deserts). Accessing food in these areas can incur an even greater cost when accounting for the cost of transport, or the difficulty of carrying shopping home, and the choice available to individuals will be restricted to what's on offer at the outlets that are accessible to them.

Food poverty also depends upon whether individuals have the opportunity to develop their nutritional knowledge and cooking skills that help support a healthy diet. Choosing foods of nutritional value may be made more difficult still when individuals lack the education required to inform healthy choices and prepare healthy meals.

### **The consequences of food poverty**

Low-income families have to spend a larger proportion of their incomes on food than other households, and food is the largest item of household expenditure for low-income households after housing, fuel and power costs.

Food poverty has a detrimental impact on both the quality of life, and the length of life. The inability to access a nourishing diet is associated with worse diet and worse health. It can lead to increased dependence on healthcare (with GP visits and hospital admissions becoming more frequent), increased levels of stress and depression, and lower life expectancy.

Without a shift in focus we risk food banks becoming an institutionalised fixture of Blaenau Gwent communities. Food aid should not replace the dignity and choice afforded to those who can afford to buy food.

## **Progress**

On 28 February 2020 the PSB in partnership with **Oxfam and the South Wales Food Poverty Alliance** brought stakeholders together from the public sector, voluntary sector and community groups at this event to explore how partners could work together more effectively in addressing food inequality across Blaenau Gwent and wider South Wales.

**The Chief Executive of Tai Calon Community Housing** welcomed attendees to Tai Calon's offices in Blaina, Blaenau Gwent to highlight why the PSB has identified food insecurity as a key priority for 2020/21.

**Eryl Powell, Public Health Wales**, then provided some background about the work already being carried out locally to address food inequality across Blaenau Gwent, including the development of the Sustainable Food programme through the PSB. This programme was recently agreed as a priority aligned to the well-being objectives for Blaenau Gwent, so all public service partners sit on the PSB.



**COLLABORATION** – Representatives from a wide range of local, regional and national partners attended the event to have their say on how a sustainable food partnership could benefit local communities.

Representatives from **A Menu for Change: Cash, Rights, Food – an innovative partnership between Oxfam, The Poverty Alliance, the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, and Nourish Scotland** – outlined how the Menu for Change project was established in 2017 across three local authority areas to develop preventative models for addressing food insecurity, with a view to replicating these elsewhere if successful.



### Next Steps

During the workshop stakeholders considered a range of questions including what opportunities presented themselves in the coming 12-24 months to improve on the current position.

These included:

- Increased employment opportunities – high spec
- Keeping people (particularly young people) in the area through better employment opportunities
- Develop aspirations amongst young people through the education system
- Develop better partnership working amongst local businesses by encouraging them to create partnerships with other companies

- Businesses could use their entrepreneurial skills to help people facing food poverty through food waste projects and other charitable approaches
- Introducing a service that provides food, training, and employment skills etc. at the point of contact
- Workers in local communities feel more supported
- Greater joined up partnership working between businesses, local authority, Third Sector and community groups
- Reduce the stigma behind free school meals

The PSB is currently considering how to progress this work further throughout its 2020/21 work programme.

### **INTEGRATED WELL-BEING NETWORK**

Blaenau Gwent Integrated Well-being Network (IWN) is a partnership initiative ratified by the PSB in January 2020. Taking a place based approach, it brings together professionals and community members to improving health and well-being in a specific geographical area. The identified areas in Blaenau Gwent are Brynmawr and Tredegar.

There are **four main areas** of focus for each network:

#### **Place-based Collaboration**

Bringing together professionals and community members to build relationships and work together to make the best use of what we have in communities

#### **People who deliver services and support**

Supporting people to work co-productively, building on their strengths to find their own solutions and connecting primary care teams to well-being resources.



## Community-based Hubs

Connecting people with health and well-being resources, activities and other people. Linking community hubs to improve their well-being role and ensuring communities are able to access the right services and support locally.

## Easy Access to Well-being information

Ensuring people have easy access to well-being information through different channels including, family, friends, link workers, community hubs, community champions or through online tools such as [DEWIS Cymru](#).

The Blaenau Gwent IWN began in May 2019. Initial successes includes:

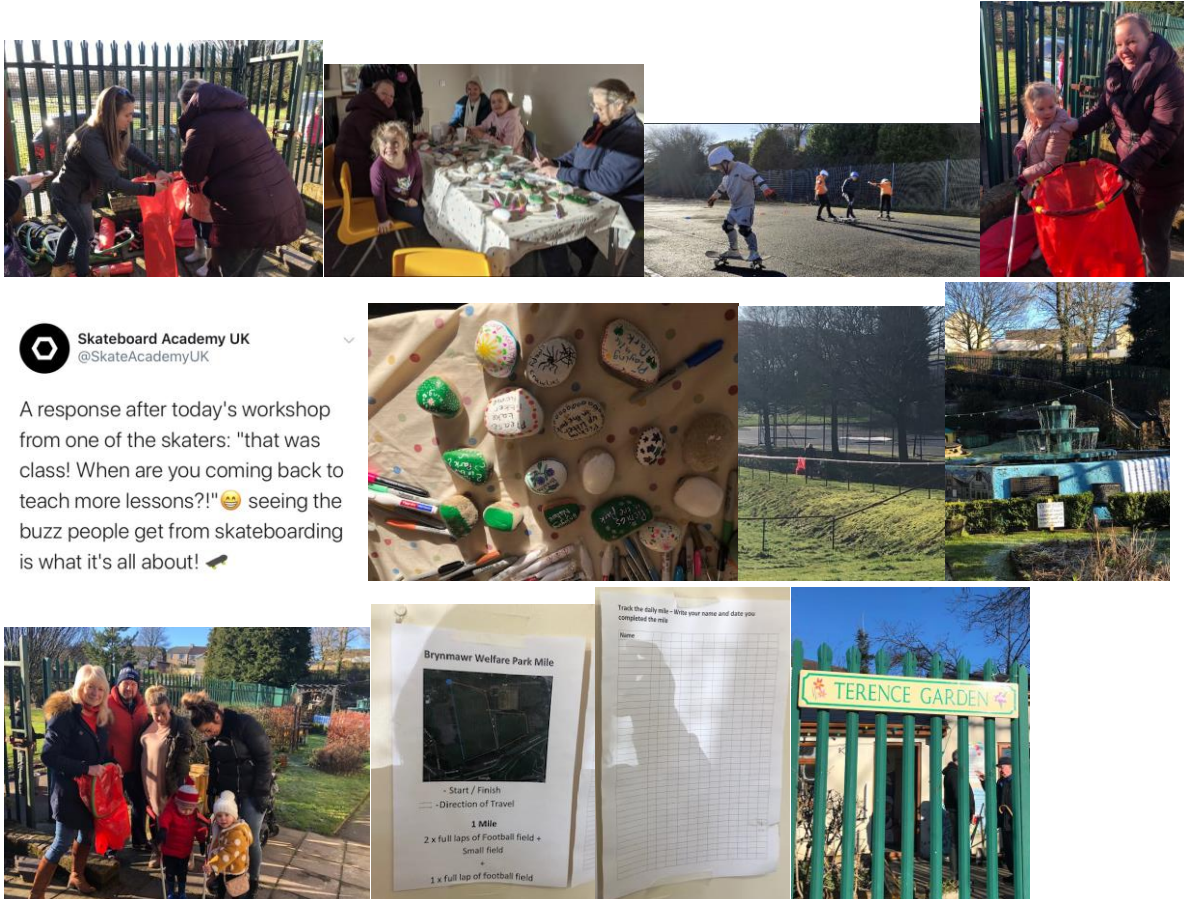
- Establishment of a steering group
- Establishment of networks in Tredegar and Brynmawr engaging approximately 40 partners and a small number of community members
- The mapping of community support across the towns of Tredegar and Brynmawr
- Community engagement activities
- Identification of community hubs
- DEWIS input sessions held in libraries across the borough to support community groups to advertise their community activities
- A community engagement session to begin looking at specific projects that can be taken forward in Brynmawr. (The Tredegar engagement session was cancelled due to the COVID pandemic)
- The recruitment of a number of well-being champions across the Borough



**INTEGRATION** – The Integrated Well-being Network encourages partners to work together better, in a more integrated way to find more effective ways to support community health and well-being.

## CASE STUDY – Brynmawr Welfare Park

Brynmawr Welfare Park is a large area of green space situated just outside Brynmawr town centre. Although the park is used regularly by local people, a consultation event was undertaken in January 2020 to try and understand the types of activities that the local community would like to see in the park.



## Partnership Working

A number of partners were involved in supporting the event including:

- ABUHB – Blaenau Gwent IWN
- Aneurin Leisure – Sports Development
- Head for Arts
- Keep Wales Tidy
- Skate Academy Wales
- Tai Calon
- Terence Tearooms and Gardens

## **The Approach**

An informal approach was taken, based on conversations. A number of activities and refreshments were made available to attendees. Activities included:

- A one mile walk around the park
- Pebble painting
- Litter picking
- Skateboarding tutorials
- Refreshments

The event was advertised using a number of methods including social media, Facebook and Twitter. The posts were shared many times by community groups and organisations. There was also a mail drop to local community. Attendees had heard about the event through all the different methods above.

## **Outcomes**

The event was attended by 23 people, their ages ranged between 1 and 68. There were many suggestions about activities that could happen in the park and tearooms. These included:

- Litter picking
- Afternoon tea in the tearooms for the older generation
- A family walk/jog at the weekend (linking with the mile and back to the tearoom for refreshments)
- Activities that are not physical activity focussed:
  - Picnics
  - Arts & crafts
  - A community festival in the summer
  - Treasure hunts
  - Skateboarding
  - Horse-riding

Three of the attendees expressed interest in becoming run leaders to lead a Sunday mile activity.

### Next Steps

A meeting will be arranged to discuss the outcomes of the consultation and consider the suggestions and put a plan together for implementation.



**INVOLVEMENT** – The Brynmawr Welfare Park consultation event was attended by adults and children aged between one and 68 years old.

# Regional Well-being Programmes

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Blaenau Gwent PSB works in partnership with other local authorities and PSBs across Gwent and wider South Wales to achieve our collective well-being goals, led by the G10, which is a Gwent regional strategic partnership group of Chief Executives and Leaders, supported by the delivery work the Gwent Strategic Well-being Action Group (GSWAG).

## **Gwent Strategic Well-being Action Group**

GSWAG, with Public Health Wales as the lead organisation, has been delivering a project on behalf of G10 to identify the priorities across Gwent which would be best tackled by working collectively at a regional level. This work is based on a piece of work carried out in 2017 by consultants commissioned via GSWAG. GSWAG presented a series of proposals for consideration at G10, against six regional priorities which are:

1. Gwent Green Grid
2. Climate Ready Gwent
3. Reducing the Region's Carbon emissions
4. Regional Transport
5. Cancer and Health inequalities
6. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

## **BUILDING A HEALTHIER GWENT**

Building a Healthier Gwent is a programme led by ABUHB that sets out the actions that, taken together, would achieve the ambition of people that live in Gwent living more of their lives in good health in all our communities.

The ambition is for the places where we live, work, learn and play in 2030 to make it easier for people in our communities to live health, fulfilled lives. There were a number of workshops held across Blaenau Gwent during summer 2019 where ABUHB were able to engage with local people and elected members on

how the Building a Healthier Gwent programme could promote healthier lifestyles.



**COLLABORATION & INVOLVEMENT** – Blaenau Gwent PSB partners worked together with the Health Board to facilitate various engagement events across Blaenau Gwent, workshops with elected members and specific community groups, and were represented at the Building a Healthier Gwent Conference in Newport in November 2019.

### **GWENT REGIONAL TRAVEL CHARTER**

The Gwent Sustainable Travel Group led by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) is taking work forward to develop a Sustainable Travel Charter for Gwent to be considered by GSWAG. The group project plan sets out an ambition to launch the Gwent Travel Charter during 2020/21.

A Gwent sustainable travel charter will support an integrated approach to delivery against carbon reduction, healthy and active lifestyles and sustainable travel priorities for the five Public Services Boards. All PSB partners in Gwent along with a number of other public sector bodies are being given the opportunity to sign up to the Gwent Charter. In Blaenau Gwent, this piece of work sits under the PSB's Climate Change Mitigation programme.

Climate Ready Gwent (*more details below*) has been supporting the development of the charter. This work led by ABUHB aims to support and encourage staff and visitors to the sites of Gwent PSB partners to use healthy and sustainable modes of transport. 4,373 questionnaires were completed by staff from partner organisations across Gwent about how they travel to and from work and during the working day. This survey will be repeated on an annual basis to help measure progress.

### **CLIMATE READY GWENT**

As Climate Change is a concern across Gwent, the decision was made for all Gwent PSBs to work collaboratively through 'Climate Ready Gwent'.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION**

### **Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Point Infrastructure**

The five local authorities in Gwent have been awarded £422,000 by the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) from the On-street Residential Charge-point Fund, to install a total of 65 fast charge points across 34 sites in the region. Match funding is being provided by the five local authority partners.

To support development of this project in 2019 an electric vehicle charging point infrastructure study was completed on behalf of five Gwent local authorities, Gwent Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue, ABUHB and Natural Resources Wales. The Welsh Government Smart Living programme and Natural Resources Wales both contributed funding to support this work.



Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council are the grant recipient on behalf of the regional project and also procured the project supported by a cross-authority working group. The installation is being undertaken by a Welsh company called Silverstone Green Energy. Who will also operate, manage and maintain the charging units until 2025, with the option to extend this to 2028.

### **Electric Vehicle (EV) Fleet**

To assist with pulling together the implementation plan £16,000 funding was secured from Welsh Government to undertake Phase 2 of the Fleet Review work. This includes:

- Identifying progress made by partners following Phase 1 and identifying the support required to move all partners forward with Phase 2.
- More detailed analysis of each partners' fleet – in phase 1 not all mileage and fuel consumption data was readily available.

In February 2020 the officer working group attended a workshop facilitated by Welsh Government's Energy Service to support the development of this project.

### **Hydrogen Fuel Cell (FC) Fleet and Charging Infrastructure**

A regional study was completed exploring the potential for hydrogen powered vehicles and infrastructure across Gwent, building on a hydrogen vehicle trial by Monmouthshire County Council.

### **Carbon Positive –Sharing best practice in decarbonisation across the region.**

Funded by Welsh Government, NRW have developed Carbon Positive, a systemic approach to help organisations to address their carbon impact. The methodology looks at buildings, transport, land, operational assets, and goods and services procured. Using this approach NRW have been able to work out their net carbon status, accounting for both greenhouse gas emissions across operations and the carbon captured annually across the estate, as well as estimating existing stores of carbon on the estate.

To help share the NRW approach and their key lessons learnt, a workshop took place in December with a focus on supporting collaborative activity of public bodies across Gwent. During the workshop Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council shared their Carbon Positive journey providing a local authority perspective. Their low carbon project forms part of their organisational transformation programme.

The workshop also included a session from Welsh Government on the new Greenhouse Gas Reporting requirements and what this will mean for public bodies. NRW's Carbon Positive methodology is consistent in its scope with this approach and can help organisations in the region to start to prepare for these new requirements.

## **WIDER COLLABORATION**

### **Transport for Wales – Strategic EV Charging Infrastructure**

Arup have been appointed to work with Transport for Wales (TfW) on behalf of Welsh Government to develop EV charging infrastructure on the strategic road network and railway station car parks in Wales. Officers from across public

bodies in Gwent have been involved in stakeholder engagement workshops to ensure a joined-up approach is taken in the region.

### **Developing a Cardiff City Region Energy Plan**

Officers have played an active role in workshops funded by the Welsh Government Energy Service to input into the creation of an energy plan for the wider Cardiff City Deal Region.

### **Linking our Landscapes**

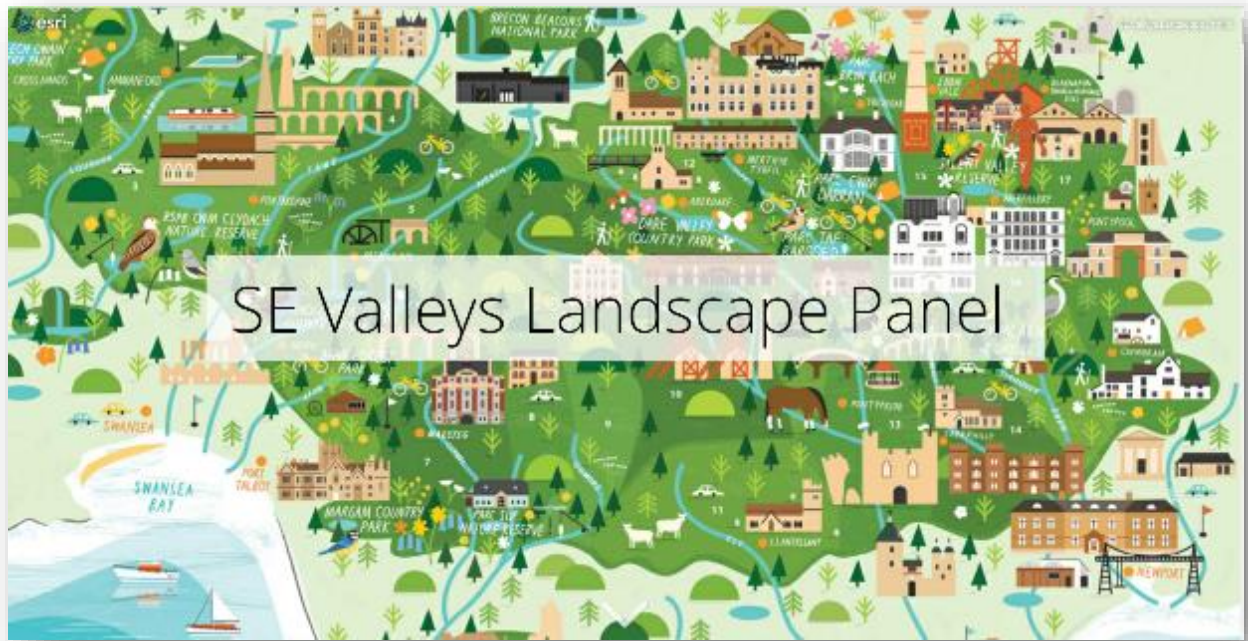
Linking Our Landscapes is about identifying local opportunities for our protected sites, natural and built environments to contribute towards the resilience of wider priority habitat networks in the region, with partners working together to tackle the “nature emergency” in Gwent.

Landscape profiles are a mechanism to ensure that national evidence and grassroots technical knowledge together inform our understanding of ecosystem resilience in South East Wales. They are also a mechanism to influence policy and inform place-based planning and delivery through the [Area Statement](#).

The landscape panel approach drew on the technical and spatial expertise of existing partnerships in South East, including: The Gwent Green Grid Partnership; the Resilient Greater Gwent Partnership (through the State of Nature and Nature Recovery Action Plan for Gwent); the Living Levels Partnership; the South East Wales Resilient Uplands Partnership; and Wye Valley AONB Partnership. Each of the panels worked together to produce a set of landscape profiles, which addressed the following questions:

- What is special or significant about this landscape?
- Where do we want to build resilience within the landscape and why?

Blaenau Gwent is part of **The Eastern Valleys** landscape. For more information, click on this story map below.



## Resilient Greater Gwent Project

The five local authorities in Gwent have been awarded £1.3 million ENRaW (Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being) grant funding from Welsh Government for a Resilient Greater Gwent regional project.

The project is being led by Blaenau Gwent Council, working in partnership with the other Gwent LAs, NRW, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Buglife, SEWBReC (South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre), Technical Ecology, and other Gwent partners.

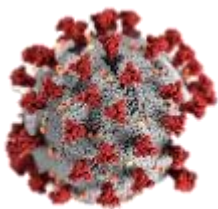
## Gwent Green Grid Partnership

The Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP) is made up of officers working for the five Gwent Public Services Boards. The partnership is designed to facilitate regional collaboration which makes the most of Gwent's natural assets and the wide-ranging benefits they provide to communities.

In November 2019, project partners submitted a combined ENRaW bid to WG to fund a collaborative GGGP Project. The bid has a total value of £2.7M, seeking grant aid of £2.3m (with 20% in kind match funding) over 3 years. The bid includes the following individual project streams:

- Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP)
- Gwent Strategic Access Plan

- Gwent i-Tree Eco Study
- Gwent Green Infrastructure Projects
- Pollinator Friendly Gwent



# Considering the Impact of COVID-19

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The physical, social and mental well-being of all Blaenau Gwent residents has been a key priority for all public services providers during the Covid19 pandemic. Services were adapted immediately and lessons were learned quickly to ensure any household needing help with advice, shopping collections, prescription deliveries, or simply someone to talk to were supported effectively.

Action to support our communities was a collaborative effort between local and regional partners, as well as being preventative in nature through signposting residents to the appropriate help or advice services at such a difficult time many people.

## **CASE STUDY – Locality Response Teams**

In March 2020, Blaenau Gwent Council set up Locality Response Teams to support those Shielding and other vulnerable residents across Blaenau Gwent.

The Teams were set up to respond to requests from vulnerable residents looking for help from within their community for things like shopping, picking up prescriptions, dog-walking, befriending calls, or anything else they were struggling with during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Teams comprised of redeployed council staff from a variety of different service areas, as well as Aneurin Leisure Trust (ALT) staff who were also redeployed in collaboration with the council to assist our communities. Much of the work has been carried out remotely, with council and ALT staff able to safely work from home speaking to residents and community groups via telephone and managing cases online. Some council staff also safely delivered prescriptions and grocery shopping orders to many of our hardest to reach residents.



The Locality Response Teams & the volunteers and community groups they work with have been absolutely vital to the Covid-19 response in ensuring vulnerable people are well supported. So far they have supported over 550 households and the feedback from the residents has been extremely grateful and positive.

Here's what two of the team members had to say about their redeployment to the Locality Response Teams:

*"The work has been very rewarding and eye-opening. It's been a great experience to become a friendly voice and a source of support for some of our most vulnerable residents, and I'll miss some of my regular calls when I return to my usual role."*

*"I have enjoyed working with the Locality Teams so much, it's a totally different role to my usual day to day role. The assistance we have given to vulnerable, elderly and shielding people has been an invaluable service, which they have all been incredibly grateful for. This is something that Blaenau Gwent Council can be truly proud of."*

## COMMUNITY CASE STUDY – Tredegar Community Taskforce

The volunteers of the Tredegar Community Task Force are everyday normal people who stood up in unusual circumstances, putting the well-being of the community before their own. Cymru Creations has led this tremendously outstanding community work in Tredegar (the birth place of Aneurin Bevan who started the NHS) whilst delivering positive outcomes for those most vulnerable across Blaenau Gwent.

Tredegar Community Task Force was established by Cymru Creations in the very early stages of the COVID19 outbreak. Cymru Creations are a small community interest business specialising in film making whilst supporting an extensive over 60s social club and a Youth Film Academy.

This team of film makers, ex-teachers, steel industry workers, local councillors, and those who are self-employed, have all risen to the challenge in a time of uncertainty and crisis, and furthermore, they are succeeding. Every day the staff and volunteers continue to make deliveries and provide support to whoever requires our help, and milestones continue to be surpassed.



On 10th March 2020 a unanimous decision was made by the Taskforce to stand up and support those who needed it the most.

It is remarkable the speed at which Cymru Creations stood up a brand new community service weeks ahead of many official organisations and governing bodies. The Taskforce

offered a range of vital support and quickly became a forerunner in responding to the COVID19 emergency within Blaenau Gwent.

The council's Locality Response Teams have worked closely with the Taskforce throughout the pandemic in order to source local support for shielding residents in need of prescription or shopping deliveries.

Cymru Creations' office based in The Little Theatre, Tredegar, proved invaluable as the Headquarters for the operation. Kevin Phillips from Cymru Creations led on the coordination of local groups in the area to support the community by any means necessary. The theatre was transformed into a fully functioning base of operations, complete with social distancing markers, notice boards, and personal protective equipment for all their volunteers.

It was clear immediately that the Taskforce was very much needed. The project quickly grew from just four volunteers to a group of thirty strong, with the small team taking over 200 calls a day due to the extensive promotional work with the community and referrals from the council's Locality Response Teams. Volunteers were carrying out 50-70 prescription collections per day; 30-60 shopping deliveries per day; and delivering 250 bags of free food parcels per week. The food parcels were sourced from working in partnership with Jesus Cares, Fair Share, McDonalds, Tesco, Braces.

Since March, the Taskforce has supported all members of the community, not just in Tredegar, but other towns in the Blaenau Gwent area as well. First 500 jobs were completed, then 1000, then 2000, 5000, and this now exceeds 7500 and counting. Cymru Creations also distributed educational packs and sanitary products for children and young people unable to attend school during the pandemic.

### **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BLAENAU GWENT PSB, JULY 2020**

The PSB believes that Public Services Boards across Wales collectively play a vital role in achieving well-being outcomes for our local areas during and beyond the Covid19 pandemic. We have taken a proactive approach as a PSB in Blaenau Gwent moving from initial response and now looking ahead towards recovery, reconstruction and beyond.

The special PSB meeting held in July 2020 provided the opportunity for a discussion space focussed on the theme '*Covid-19 – Reflections, lessons learned, where next?*', facilitated by Academi Wales. Providing the Board with a pause and reflect space, the discussion centred around 3 questions;

- What has worked well
- Areas which have not worked so well; and
- What this means in terms of how we reflect and refocus the well-being objectives and priorities within our local Well-being Plan over the next 18 months.

The session identified the importance of partnership working and continuing to support community resilience as key themes, as well as the importance of the use of data and intelligence, digital transformation, community cohesion and the foundational and green economies.

It was acknowledged that many of the existing programmes initiated in the current strategic work programme and outlined throughout this document continued to be appropriate, if anything even more so, to mitigate the long-term effects of the crisis.



**INTEGRATION** – In recognition of the effects Covid-19 has had on communities in Wales and the greater impacts being felt by certain population groups, we are currently supporting the implementation of a Pilot Community Impact Assessment (CIA) approach which will take account of the social, economic, environmental and cultural impact of the pandemic across 3 population groups. Learning from the pilot will enable us to consider how we can scale up the CIA approach to support local and regional recovering planning.

# Next Steps for the PSB Well-being Programme

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## **COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

During July and August 2020 the council has undertaken a Community Impact Assessment to consider the impact of the Covid19 pandemic on three specific community and population groups:-

- Parents with Young Families (children 0-8 years);
- People with Learning Disabilities (all ages); and
- Young People/Young Adults (14-25 years)

The CIA aims to assess the impact of the Covid19 crisis and public services' recovery plans on the identified population groups, as well as identify any actions public services need to take in order to reduce vulnerabilities and increase the resilience of this groups going forward.

A CIA template has been developed which will be used to capture key areas for assessment including issues related to well-being objectives. Consideration of socio-economics will also be referenced where appropriate to support the organisation in meeting the new Socio-economic Duty which is planned to commence in the autumn 2020.

All learning captured during the CIA process will be fed into the PSB's 2020/21 work programme and will be vital in identifying future priorities for the well-being of Blaenau Gwent residents.

## **PSB ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21**

In this rapidly changing context the Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board shares the view of the vital role PSBs will need to collectively play in achieving well-being outcomes for our local area. The BG PSB is taking a proactive approach in looking ahead towards recovery, reconstruction and beyond.

The PSB has identified several key themes for recovery, such as the importance of partnership working and continuing to support community resilience. Key work streams and enablers aligned to our existing well-being plan work programme have also been identified, such as the importance of the use of data and intelligence, digital transformation, community cohesion and the foundational and green economies.

Many of the existing programmes initiated in the PSB's current strategic work programme continue to be appropriate, if anything even more so, to mitigate the long-term effects of the pandemic. The PSB will continue to focus on the following 2020/21 well-being programmes:-

High Level Action	PSB Lead	Timeframe	Delivery Method
<b>Age-Friendly Communities</b>	Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations	2020/21	Embedding the eight age-friendly domains (p.21) into public service delivery and Covid19 recovery
<b>Foundation Economy</b>	Coleg Gwent	2020/21	Investigating the opportunities for prosperity through the Foundational Economy
<b>Climate Change Mitigation</b>	Blaenau Gwent Council	2020/21	Decarbonisation programme
<b>Climate Change Adaptation</b>	Natural Resources Wales	2020/21	Develop an Adaptation Plan for the community
<b>Sustainable Food Partnership</b>	Tai Calon Community Housing	2020/21	Working Together to tackle food poverty and food insecurity
<b>Early Years – First 1,000 Days</b>	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	2020/21	Pathfinder virtual early years' service pilot starting in Cwm

<b>Integrated Well-being Network</b>	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board	2020/21	Implementation of regional project locally in Blaenau Gwent, linking in with ABUHB's Building a Healthier Gwent programme
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The PSB has also agreed to continue the conversation regarding the review and refresh of this 2020/21 well-being programme throughout autumn – winter 2020, taking into account the impact of the Covid19 pandemic and how the well-being programmes can help our communities to respond and recover.



BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS

**Blaenau Gwent**  
PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board

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# Agenda Item 6

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

Report Subject: **Welsh Government Early Years Integration Transformation Programme Pilot Childcare Offer – Joint working Pilot – Blaenau Gwent Pathfinder**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr N Daniels, Leader of the Council**

Report Submitted by: **Glyn Jones, Deputy Chief Executive Aneurin Bevan University Health Board  
Ceri Bird, Service Manager Blaenau Gwent CBC**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
Y	Y	14.02.21			25.02.21			PSB

1. **Purpose of the Report**  
To update Members on the progress made to date on the Welsh Government's new Early Years Integration Transformation Pilot in the Blaenau Gwent Pathfinder area.
- 2 **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 The Early Years Integration Transformation Pilot (EYITP) emerged out of a recognition by Welsh Government that there was need to address the inequalities in early years' services across Wales and develop a fluid, responsive early year's system that will ensure every child in Wales has the best start in life.
  - 2.2 The period of life from pre-birth to the end of the Foundation Phase, or 0-7 years of age, is a critical part of childhood. It is widely agreed that early childhood experiences are crucially important for children's long-term development and their achievements in later life. At these times children and their families have regular contact with a number of different services such as midwifery, health visiting, various family support workers, childcare and early years' education provision etc. These services are currently accountable to different bodies and can work independently without sharing information or coordinating their support to families. Distinctions and boundaries in the ways of working that mean something to professionals can appear complex, unequal, arbitrary and frustrating to the parent or child in need of help.
  - 2.3 Welsh Government and Early Years Professionals across Wales recognise it is vitally important that we develop a more holistic approach to early years' services across Wales. An approach that ensures services delivered before birth and in the early years work together in an integrated, multi-agency way to nurture children, support parents and promote child development in the broadest sense. This will improve the immediate impact for families and develop better longer term outcomes for our children.

- 2.4 Locally in Blaenau Gwent, “The Best Start in Life for Everyone” is one of the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board (PSB) Wellbeing Objectives for 2018-2023. One of the key steps the Public Service Board said they wished to take forward in the Wellbeing Plan in order to meet this objective was: “To understand more about Early Years Services in Blaenau Gwent including their quality and where the gaps are”.
- 2.5 Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board (PSB) agreed to become a pathfinder for the Early Years Integrated Transformation Pilot in June 2019. The Board agreed it would have the main governance and oversight for the Blaenau Gwent element of the pilot through Mr Glyn Jones, Deputy Chief Executive of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB), who is the PSB sponsor for the ‘Best Start in Life’ priority in Blaenau Gwent. Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Leadership Team has accountability for the element of funding awarded to BGCBC through this grant.
- 2.6 The Regional Early Years Transformation Steering Board oversees the regional footprint element of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme and the fluid work between Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly Borough Council and Newport City Council and liaises directly with Welsh Government.
- 2.7 It was agreed by Blaenau Gwent PSB in January 2020 that Phase 1 of the pilot in Blaenau Gwent would be a small pilot to test the model in the self-contained village of Cwm, Ebbw Vale then following a successful pilot in Cwm, Phase 2 would be in the Brynmawr / Nantyglo (Winchestown) area which currently has no Flying Start infrastructure. The size of phase 2 and the number of children that could be accommodated in phase 2 would be dependent on the award of funding from Welsh Government in 21/22.
- 2.8 Following the in-depth work with Vanguard Consulting in October 2019, when we looked at the need for strategic change with a focus on improving services whilst making efficiencies, a new way of working evolved which would focus on:
- No discrimination on who is eligible for support,
  - No Flying Start or generic areas,
  - The family receiving the support they need when they require it,
  - A strengths based model and ‘What Matters to Families’,
  - Ensuring consistency in the form of a one keyworker approach right through the 0-7-year period of a child’s life following the Healthy Child Wales model,
  - Automatic access to a multi-agency team of professionals who are easily accessible and based in the local community without the need for referrals into other teams / services, unless needs escalate;
  - Enhanced midwife support from 12 weeks’ gestation;
  - Enhanced early support for early language development from the antenatal period;
  - Coordinated support from the Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN), Primary and Infant Mental Health Support Team (PIMHS), Clinical Psychology,

Additional Learning Needs Team, Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT), Dads Support Worker all within the team with no referrals needed;

- Complex cases would be brought to the “What Matters Team” for multi-agency discussion and action;
- Fluid sharing of data between agencies to prevent duplication and the family having to repeat their story;
- Development of a digital platform and app that is consistent with parent’s ways of preferring to communicate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### 3.0 **Progress to Date**

- 3.1 Phase 1 of the pilot went live in September 2020. Cwm was chosen by the PSB as it is a self-contained village with a definitive divide between the 2 LSOAs that make up the community. One LSOA is Flying Start and the other non-Flying Start. The new model has brought services together in an integrated way, so they are readily available and accessible to the whole community as they need them without the problem of the Flying Start / non Flying Start geographical divide.
- 3.2 Welcome packs and letters introducing the pilot were hand delivered to the families in Cwm with children under 5 who were not living in Flying Start area through the Summer 2020. Doorstep discussions were held with them explaining they would now be able to access all the services provided by Flying Start and run from the Flying Start Cwm Hub with the exception of childcare.
- 3.3 Feedback from families was extremely positive and evidenced they now felt listened too, not separated from friends and neighbours who lived in Flying Start areas and happy they were now able to access services when they needed them, rather than being dependant on postcode eligibility.
- 3.4 The pilot core team was also established in September 2020 and consists of the Flying Start and Generic Midwives, the Flying Start and Generic Health Visitors, a Family Support Worker, a Clinical Psychologist, the Community Psychiatric Nurse, a Dads Support Worker and the Project Coordinator. Other agencies are invited to attend team discussions when the cases being discussed might necessitate that additional support. Wider support might be in the form of Families First, Supporting People, other housing support, Communities 4 Work, Bridges into Work, various financial support services, ALN support, Speech and Language Therapist, Play Therapy, Parent Infant Mental Health, substance misuse services, domestic abuse support etc.
- 3.5 Despite the pilot needing to be delivered in a different way due to the pandemic, we have still managed to successfully launch the pilot and bring the team together virtually every Monday morning for the “What Matters Meetings”.
- 3.6 The “What Matters Meetings” have been successful in opening up services to all families with children 0-5 years in Cwm regardless of postcode. The meetings bring together services in an integrated way to avoid multiple visits to families by different services and this reduces a delay in support. The pilot has been able to increase local based support for generic families with a named

support worker or dad's worker and ultimately opening up responsive specialist services for all families without the need for waiting lists.

- 3.7 Early feedback from generic staff is that they are feeling more responsive and able to bring in additional support quicker and Flying Start staff are able to focus on what matters to the family rather than being restricted to the 4 core elements of the FS programme.
- 3.8 The one issue that has been problematic is that both Health Visitors have split caseloads so half their caseload is for families in Cwm and the other half in other areas of Blaenau Gwent. Both Health Visitors have stated they have families outside the pilot area that would hugely benefit from being part of the pilot to access the additional support. The Health Visitors felt it was causing an additional barrier to them by having to work inside and outside the model. Both Health Visitors have requested that all their caseload be included in the pilot as soon as possible and both work to one core programme.
- 3.9 To do the above would mean bringing the following numbers into the pilot; -
- 77 extra generic children from the Waunlwyd, Tyllwyn, Victoria/Garden City area with the Generic Health Visitors caseload.
  - 22 Flying Start Children from the Aberbeeg area with the Flying Start Health Visitors caseload.
- 3.10 Discussions were held with Welsh Government and senior leaders responsible for this area within ABUHB and BGCBC Social Services who felt this was a sensible approach and so we are looking for the approval of BGCBC PSB to do this from March 2021. The staffing structure is already in place as those staff working in the pilot already hold these cases.
- 3.11 Other successes to date are; -
- More focus on the Blaenau Gwent Flying Start electronic birth book and ABUHB Responsive Feeding pilot to bring the registration age to 12 weeks after conception to track the child and provide support at the earliest possible stage. This will also enable the accurate planning and allocation of workloads with the aim of ensuring that no family is missed out.
  - A new system called Badger Net is being developed. This new system will have an app which pregnant mums can access. This system will communicate with the current WCCIS system which already enables information to be shared with the wider Children's Services Teams. It has been agreed with ABUHB for Health to test a model and start using WCCIS with a link to Blaenau Gwent to create a one file system; this will be a phased approach starting with antenatal and new births within Cwm in 2021. Blaenau Gwent is in a unique position as will be the first pathfinder to pilot this model as we already use WCCIS for Flying Start.

- Feedback from families throughout the first 4 months of the pilot have shown that families want easy to understand information and the current system of so many different groups and programmes can be difficult for them to navigate. In response to this in Blaenau Gwent we have started designing an easy read road map for the early year's period of a child's life with the important activities, tips and advice that can help ensure that children have the best start in life, this is currently in draft form. We are also exploring the possibility of having this as an app for their phone where they will have interactive models of engagement and alerts to important milestones in the child's life.
- A one page 'What Matters' document has been created in partnership with consultation from the BG core 'What Matters' team and Rhoda Emlyn Jones of ASC Ltd to ensure the programme has a clear outcome based approach and links in to Healthy Child Wales framework and the wider work of BG Children's Services so we are all working to the strengths approach.
- Blaenau Gwent Flying Start programme has proven that social media is an invaluable way of engaging with families with its Facebook page having over 2000 members with 1524 active members this quarter alone. 488 posts have been created by staff. These have attracted 1,032 comments and 2,985 reactions.

Families have told us through the pandemic the page has been a "lifeline" for them and it's been "reassuring" to see their HV and support worker. The page was opened up to non-Flying Start families at the start of the pandemic as part of this pilot to ensure there is no inequality or discrimination and those families who need the support in the early years of their child's life in Blaenau Gwent can access it. Members have increased by 66%. In February 2020 the page had 1,358 members (Flying Start have around 1000 children) and as at January 2021 there were 2060 members this shows so many generic families are now using the page for support.

Public engagement on the page has increased by 17% since September 2020. As families cannot visit our hubs, staff deliver online group interactive sessions, demonstrations of the various care packages, hold virtual coffee mornings, baby and toddler groups, question and answer sessions with midwife, health visitors, support workers etc.

- Each childcare setting has its own page so children can keep in touch with their keyworker and join in with their play. Settings send home Play Packs so they can be used during the interactive sessions.
- The focus of the pilot is also on co-production of community provision, where local groups are developed and run by the community, instead of creating a dependence on an organisation or/ staff team to deliver a group. In partnership with Families First we have established Cwm Parenting Network which will encourage the network members to take up

training to be able to run their own groups and also start developing their own skills and aspirations to create a better future for themselves and their family. This helps the Authorities objective of Building Resilient Communities

- Work has been undertaken to build the community's resilience based on what parents/carers and guardians have told us what matters to them. For expecting women and new mums this has meant the ability to meet others in similar situations. This has resulted in the launch of walking groups (before lockdown) and virtual peer support groups with the first starting on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021.
- To understand more about our Early Years Services in Blaenau Gwent we have signed up to use the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) Maturity Matrix Survey which went out to all strategic and operational stakeholders working in the Early Years 0-7 sector within Blaenau Gwent earlier this month. This will enable us to develop a baseline from which to track progress within the current early year's services. Following the survey, a stakeholder's event was held to explore and vote on topics within the matrix to establish local priorities. These results will be collected and presented to the EIF in the form of an action plans for validation which will feed into the Early Year Transformation Project.

3.12 As we move through the Covid 19 Pandemic, Pediatricians are noting developmental delays as well as the potential for long-term health consequences in children, particularly those from low-income households. Children are not getting the cognitive and social stimulation that they would normally get outside their homes. Health officials inform us that the pandemic has caused young children to miss opportunities for developmental milestones and language development, which has prompted Welsh Government to make available extra funding to local authorities in the form of the Child Development Fund.

3.13 With many parents undergoing financial stress, children face higher rates of housing and food insecurity. And others are subject to rising rates of neglect and household dysfunction – all of which can affect a child's trajectory into adulthood. Numerous studies have shown that early life experience and adverse life events have had a negative impact on the health and development of children. This pilot is more important than ever to be there to support from the earliest possible stage of 12 weeks' gestation and ensure that all families are having the consistent support they need in a coordinated, responsive and jointed up approach.

#### 4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 The Welsh Government confirmed continuation of the roll out of the pilots across Wales for 2021/22 on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 and have asked for more Local Authorities across Wales to become pathfinders and for current pathfinders to expand to include more areas.

- 4.2 The award of £350,000 for 21/ 22 was confirmed to be split between Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Blaenau Gwent CBC, Caerphilly CBC and Newport CC plus and additional £50, 000 for each Project Coordinator role.
- 4.3 The funding will mean that the proposed expansion of the Cwm Pilot to include the full pilot Health Visitors caseloads as detailed above could go ahead. It will also mean that from April 1<sup>st</sup> the previously agreed roll out of Phase 2 into Brynmawr 2 (Bryn Farm) and Nantyglo 1 (Winchestown) could go ahead the size of which is dependent on funding and caseload numbers. Concerns have already been raised to Welsh Government that without further investment this wider roll out may need to be reduced.
- 4.4 Work will continue to explore how the current IT infrastructure can be developed to ensure inter-agency information is accessible so we support the family with 'What Matters' to them, avoiding duplication of visits, duplication of questioning and information gathering and ultimately providing a better service in a more cost-effective way.
- 4.5 Welsh Government have commissioned external company Miller Research to evaluate all the pilots across Wales drawing on the information that is collected through the 'What Matters' meetings, WCCIS and Health Records and from the families themselves. Welsh Government will then evaluate all models across Wales and determine next steps which will also depend on the political landscape and agenda.
- 4.6 As a Gwent group we feel our model is not only empowering families but it's a model that is financially sustainable with the ability to be rolled out throughout Wales so that every family can access the help and support they need regardless of postcode.

## **5. Options for Recommendation**

### **5.1 Option 1**

That the Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee considers the proposed roll-out outlined for 2021 and make comments to the PSB before approval.

### **Option 2**

That the Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee considers the proposed roll-out outlined for 2021 and make specific recommendations to the PSB before approval.

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

This programme supports the Corporate Plan under the Social Services priority “To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities”.

The Blaenau Gwent Well-being plan lists as one of its five objectives ‘The best start in life for everyone’. Key to this priority is aligning services to mitigate equality.

7. **Implications Against Each Option**

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

Funding is allocated from Welsh Government on a Health Board footprint basis and is managed by Caerphilly County Borough Council as the grant recipients. In 20/21 Blaenau Gwent received £50,000 to fund the project coordinators role and £48,000 for staffing infrastructure. Aneurin Bevan University Health Board received regional funding to support the cost of additional health visiting, CPN and midwifery support for Blaenau Gwent.

7.2 The funding for 21/22 has been confirmed as £50,000 for the project coordinators role and an indicative grant allocation up to a maximum of £388,642 has been confirmed for the Gwent Pathfinders. How this will be allocated across Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport and ABUHB has not been agreed by the Regional Steering Board. The additional funding will have to support the current Cwm pilot, the proposed additional cases in Cwm plus the roll out of the pilot into Brynmawr / Nantyglo area so caseload will be based on the allocation and will then be determined by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation and the Lower Super Output Areas in these towns that feature in the highest brackets. Resources are in place to move to the next stage of the pilot.

7.3 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- That synchronising organisations and programmes will be too complex and the pilot will have to be abandoned.
- Funding may limit scope to roll out into the areas that really need it.
- That COVID 19 will have a third wave and the Pilot will be paused or abandoned.

7.4 ***Legal***

Welsh Government provide full terms and Conditions of the grant. The grant will not allow for redundancy costs.

7.5 ***Human Resources***

Fully funded by this Welsh Government grant.

8. ***Supporting Evidence***

8.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Not yet provided as pilot in its infancy

8.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

In the long term a more joined-up, responsive early years system leading to better outcomes for children.

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

Welsh Government has undertaken extensive consultation with stakeholders and aims to involve service providers and parents joining forward.

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

An approach that ensures services delivered before birth and in the early years work together in an integrated, multi-agency way to nurture children, support parents and promote child development in the broadest sense. This will improve the immediate impact for families and develop better longer term outcomes for children.

8.5 ***Preventative focus***

There is compelling evidence, for example from Professor James Heckmann and Professor Sir Michael Marmot, that demonstrates the effectiveness, value and high return on investment in early years intervention programmes in tackling inequalities, giving children the best start in life and improving the development of children and their prospects in adulthood.

The benefits from early intervention are vast, but not exclusive to disadvantaged children and families. Early action can bring cost effective benefits by reducing the knock-on costs of expensive health, social care, criminal justice and welfare support later in life.

8.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

This programme is very much focused on collaboration and partnership working. The three Local Authorities chosen for this pilot, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Newport are working together and we have excellent strong historic working relationships with Swansea and Flintshire who have also been chosen as pilot authorities and were also our colleagues for Childcare Offer pilot.

8.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

We have held the first workshop in Blaenau Gwent and are working alongside the Education Dept, Governance, EAS and Health. To ensure integration between services for children aged 0-7.

9. ***EqlA***  
***NR***

10. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 12.1 Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board will have the main governance and oversight for the local element of the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme through Mr Glyn Jones who is the PSB sponsor for the 'Best Start In Life' priority.

Blaenau Gwent CBC Corporate Leadership Team will have accountability for the funding awarded through this grant as well as other grant decisions and commissioning. Blaenau Gwent Social Services Senior Management Team will hold operational accountability.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

**EIF Maturity Matrix**

<https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/eif-maturity-matrix-maternity-and-early-years>.

# Agenda Item 7

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Climate Mitigation Steering Group**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Daniels**

Report Submitted by: **Michelle Morris (Managing Director, BGCBC)**

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	14.02.21			X			PSB SSG

1. **Purpose of the Report**  
To present the establishment of the Blaenau Gwent Climate Mitigation Steering Group established by the PSB.
2. **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 Climate Change was identified as a priority in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan 2018 to 2203 under the 'look after and protect the environment' well-being objective. In January 2020 the PSB approved the establishment of a Blaenau Gwent Climate Mitigation Steering Group (Steering Group hereafter) as part of the board's on-going work programme.
  - 2.2 Climate mitigation means taking actions that will reduce man-made climate change. This includes both action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. renewable energy) and to absorb greenhouse gases in to the atmosphere (e.g. planting trees). The role of the Steering Group is to develop a borough wide (or area-based) mitigation plan to keep territorial emissions (all emissions produced within Blaenau Gwent) within a science based carbon budget calculated on the basis of Blaenau Gwent's fair contribution to international climate reduction targets.
  - 2.3 The PSB agreed that in the first year the aims should be:
    - Steering Group will be established and operating.
    - Science based carbon budget for Blaenau Gwent set.
    - Agree vision/direction of travel.
    - Identify and outline key issues for public engagement in relation to decarbonising in Blaenau Gwent.
  - 2.4 The Steering Group, which is being led by the Council's Managing Director, includes strategic decision makers from partner organisations. Following a delay due to COVID-19, the first meeting took place in October 2020 (followed by a second meeting in December 2020). It has been agreed that the Steering Group will initially meet every two months.

- 2.5 Membership is expected to evolve as the Steering Group develops, with community representatives from Blaenau Gwent Youth and 50+ forums attending the second meeting, while representatives of other organisations in sectors who have significant influence on carbon emissions in Blaenau Gwent will be invited to attend in the future.
- 2.6 Topics covered in the initial meetings included: draft terms of reference (see Appendix); the development of the Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly; and a Question and Answers session with Professor Andy Gouldson from Leeds University who has been involved with establishing a network of similar climate groups in other local authority areas in the UK.
- 2.7 This year the UK will be hosting the annual COP (Conference of Parties) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); known as the 2015 Paris Agreement, which committed to keep global temperature rises to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with the ambition to limit them to 1.5°C. This target was chosen as an approximate indicator of dangerous levels of climate change. Global average temperatures have already risen by 0.9°C, with further rises inevitable due to carbon already emitted. Therefore, achieving this target requires that emissions peak as soon as possible and reduce rapidly thereafter. This year COP is significant as it is the first five-year review of the Paris Agreement, as part of which, countries are expected to tighten their carbon budgets. The Agreement also encourages local authority areas to set their own carbon budgets.

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

#### 3.1 **Option 1**

For the PSB Scrutiny Committee to consider and accept the overview report and supporting appendix on the establishment of the Steering Group.

#### **Option 2**

For the PSB Scrutiny Committee to consider the overview report and supporting appendix on the establishment of the Steering Group, and make specific recommendations for the PSB to consider.

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

The work of the PSB Climate Mitigation Steering Group delivers on a key high-level action in the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan. The long-term implications of climate change mean that it is also central to our responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. In particular, that in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle public bodies must 'act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. It will also play an important part in our response to the climate emergency.

## 5. Implications Against Each Option

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

There is no specific budget for the Steering Group. The intention is that by co-ordinating partners' actions to reduce carbon emissions, the group will reduce costs in the long-term, for example, through avoiding duplication and achieving economies of scale.

### 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

It is recognised that the Steering Group will not have the resources to be the lead delivery body for borough wide climate mitigation, so emissions reductions will ultimately be reliant on the actions of partner organisations and other key bodies and agencies (both public and private). However, currently there is no organisation monitoring either the cumulative impact of local climate actions or how this impact relates to an overall target for the borough. Without the group putting these mechanisms in place, there is a significant risk that the Council and other partners' climate actions will not realise their maximum potential benefit.

### 5.3 ***Legal***

Emissions reductions in Blaenau Gwent contribute to statutory five-year UK climate budgets required by law under the Climate Change Act 2008. So far five UK carbon budgets have been set up to 2032. The Committee on Climate Change has reported that the first and second carbon budget were met and the UK is on track to meet the third (ending 2023), but is not on track to meet the fourth or fifth budgets. Wales has set its own five-year carbon budgets under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, with the third carbon budget running to 2030.

### 5.4 ***Human Resources***

Running the Steering Group will require officer time from the Council and other partner organisations.

## 6. Supporting Evidence

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

The table below shows the 12-year trend in territorial carbon emissions for Blaenau Gwent as a whole.

<b>Blaenau Gwent</b>	<b>2005 kt CO<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>2017 kt CO<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>Change %</b>
Industry and Commercial	170.7	98.7	-42
Domestic	182.4	107.7	-41
Transport	88.3	79.4	-10
<b>Total</b>	<b>435.7</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>-35</b>

For context, this 35% reduction is greater than the reduction in 70% of UK local authority areas. Emissions per head in Blaenau Gwent are 4.1 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>, the second lowest figure in Wales, well below the Welsh average of 7.9 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>. These figures are based on emissions produced within Blaenau Gwent and partly reflect falling levels of industry.

On an alternative approach of counting emissions on the basis of where they are consumed, Blaenau Gwent emissions per head in 2011 were 10.6 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e, slightly below the Welsh average of 11.1 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. Reflecting both that carbon consumption is much more evenly distributed than production, and the extent to which UK carbon production has been exported overseas.

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

Supporting public well-being by delivering a just transition for Blaenau Gwent. Responding to climate change does not just mean a technological transition but also a social transition. A just transition means ensuring that the benefits of decarbonisation are fairly distributed and supporting those who may lose out in some changes.

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

A number of partners, including the council, have already run public consultation processes about a range of specific projects and actions aimed at reducing carbon emissions (e.g. location of vehicle charging points), and these types of exercise are likely to continue in the future. However, it is also important that the public are involved in deciding the overall approach to reducing emissions across the borough as a whole. The Steering Group is well placed to carry out this type of public engagement and respond to the findings. In this context, it is important that the engagement does not ask the public to answer technical questions (e.g. *how many solar panels will Blaenau Gwent need?*), and focuses on exploring public opinion about the general principles that will inform these technical decisions (e.g. *what factors should inform planning decisions about where solar panels are located?*). The upcoming Blaenau Gwent Climate Assembly in March 2021, which is the first to be held in Wales and is fully funded via the Welsh Government, will provide a good opportunity to start the process of gathering this type of public opinion about climate action in Blaenau Gwent.

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

The work of the Steering Group will facilitate long-term planning by setting a carbon budget for Blaenau Gwent informed by climate science.

**6.5 *Preventative focus***

Decisions about infrastructure made now, can commit us to future carbon emissions for many years. This carbon lock-in can also have financial consequences, as we may become tied into purchasing increasingly expensive carbon based power sources and materials. A clear pathway to decarbonisation can help avoid carbon lock-in and prevent future emissions

**6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working***

The Steering Group will enable partners to co-ordinate their actions to maximise impact in areas such as active travel and renewable energy where they form part of larger networks across the borough. It will also compliment working at regional scale, where climate change has been identified as priority, for example Climate Ready Gwent and the Cardiff Capital Region Energy Strategy.

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

Carbon reduction also compliments other PSB priorities, such as the foundational economy, in areas such as housing and food.

6.8 ***EqlA***

Poorer neighbourhoods tend to be disproportionately exposed to environmental risks. Likewise, at the individual level many people with one or more protected characteristics are likely to be less able to benefit from new low carbon technology due to the up-front costs, even though they tend to have lower carbon footprints already. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out as required on specific future climate adaptation projects.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

- 7.1 Monitoring arrangements for the Steering Group will align to the existing arrangements in place for all PSB related business for updates and exceptions reports being presented via the lead to the PSB. Furthermore, appropriate monitoring will be considered as part of the forward work programme for the PSB Scrutiny Committee.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- *Draft Terms of Reference for the Blaenau Gwent Climate Mitigation Steering Group (Appendix 1)*

## APPENDIX 1 - Blaenau Gwent PSB Mitigation Steering Group Terms of Reference

*Amended Draft following meeting in December 2020*

### Background and Context

In January 2020 Blaenau Gwent PSB agreed to establish a climate mitigation steering group, to develop a long-term plan covering all carbon emissions in Blaenau Gwent. This reflects PSB partners' long-term commitment to Blaenau Gwent playing its full part in taking action to achieve Wales's target for Net Zero emissions by 2050, consistent with climate science and the Paris Agreement target to limit global average temperature increases to 'well below 2°C', aiming for 1.5°C, relative to pre-industrial temperatures.

### Aims of group

- Provide **public leadership** (towards achieving Net Zero) through commitment to a carbon budget for Blaenau Gwent calculated on an agreed methodology reflecting climate science and a fair share of emissions.
- Develop a **plan** to achieve this carbon budget for Blaenau Gwent. Based on identifying common approach to achieving key transitions in Blaenau Gwent, which complement and build upon the planned action within individual organisations and recognising that different emissions sources require action at different levels, from international to local.
- **Provide overview** of how different organisational, sector and regional/national strategies and targets contribute to achieving overall carbon budget for Blaenau Gwent. Enabling partners to understand how their actions contribute to decarbonisation of Blaenau Gwent as a whole. Including, proactively identifying and seeking to address gaps where emissions are not covered by existing strategies.
- **Engage public** in identifying their priorities and preferred approaches to reducing carbon emissions in Blaenau Gwent, and encourage and support action by public to reduce emissions.
- Monitor and **report** on progress of territorial climate emissions reductions in Blaenau Gwent.
- Work towards a **just transition** in Blaenau Gwent by monitoring to ensure benefits of decarbonisation are fairly distributed and identifying how to support those who may lose out from transition.
- To set up supporting arrangements to address key **transitions** as appropriate.

### Membership and Meetings

Group Members will include:

- Representatives from PSB organisations who can contribute to strategic decision making about decarbonisation across Blaenau Gwent as a whole.
- Representatives of other organisations who have a central role in delivering key transitions in Blaenau Gwent (e.g. Energy, Transport).

- Experts from within the borough and beyond, who can inform the work of the group.
- Public and community group representatives, including representatives of Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum and 50+ Network.

The group will initially be chaired by a representative of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as the strategic lead for project, who will appoint a vice-chair.

The group will initially meet every two months.

### **Group Member Roles and Responsibilities**

Key roles and responsibilities will include :

- Represent the views of their organisation, sector or community and engage their organisation, sector or community with climate change and the work of the group.
- Use their experience, knowledge and skills, and commit their time to contribute to the work of the group.
- Actively participate in meetings, preparing in advance and contributing to discussion and sharing ideas.
- Participate in the development and implementation of the group work plan by focusing on the key decisions facing Blaenau Gwent in achieving net zero emissions.

### **Glossary of Key Terms**

**Adaptation** – Action that helps cope with the effects of climate change - for example construction of barriers to protect against rising sea levels, or conversion to crops capable of surviving high temperatures and drought.

**Carbon Budget** – the cumulative amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions an area or organisation can emit over a period of time to keep within a certain temperature threshold.

**Carbon Emissions/Greenhouse Gasses** - Natural and industrial gases that trap heat from the Earth and warm the surface. The Kyoto Protocol restricts emissions of six greenhouse gases: natural (carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane) and industrial (perfluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride).

**Decarbonisation** – Removal of carbon emissions producing processes from a sector or industry. In most areas decarbonisation is known to be technically feasible, but there can be high costs associated with transition to low carbon infrastructure and ways of working.

**Just Transition** - Decarbonisation is not only a technological transition but also a social transition. A just transition means ensuring that the benefits of decarbonisation are fairly distributed; and supporting those who suffer negative impacts.

**Mitigation** - Actions that will reduce man-made climate change. This includes both action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. renewable energy) and to absorb greenhouse gases in the atmosphere (e.g. planting trees).

**Net Zero** – A condition where there is no net release of CO<sub>2</sub>; the amount of carbon taken out of the atmosphere and the amount released are identical.

**Paris Agreement** - A 2015 agreement setting out how countries will meet their obligations under the international treaty on climate change, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Its central aim is to keep global temperature rise this century well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. All countries must set out their contributions to this target, called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and local areas are encouraged to set out their own plans.

**PSB (Public Services Board)** - Brings together public service organisations (including local authority, health board etc.) to improve the well-being of current and future generations in Blaenau Gwent.

**Territorial climate emissions** – All the climate emissions produced in a specific geographical area, e.g. Blaenau Gwent.

**Transition** - System transitions are transformative changes in the methods of producing, selling, transporting and using goods and services. An historical example would be the replacement of horse drawn carriages with cars.

# Agenda Item 8

*Executive Committee and Council only*

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer:

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer:

Committee: **Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

Report Subject: **PSB Sustainable Food Programme progress update**

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

Report Submitted by: **Howard Toplis, Tai Calon Community Housing & David Arnold, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

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	14.02.21			25.02.21			PSB SSG PSB

## 1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present to the Public Services Board (PSB) Scrutiny Committee a progress update regarding the PSB Sustainable Food Programme.

## 2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 A sustainable food programme based on a whole system approach to preventing food poverty was agreed at the PSB meeting in January 2020. It was agreed that the lead PSB sponsor for this programme of work would be Tai Calon Community Housing.
- 2.2 Since that meeting, the programme has suffered some delays and periods where the work was paused whilst partners focussed on responding to the Covid19 pandemic. Some of this work in response to the pandemic is still ongoing but partners are now working together to progress the programme as a sustainable food partnership going forward.
- 2.3 Food poverty is a complex issue and therefore preventing it requires systemic and concerted efforts from a range of public, private and third sectors. The Sustainable Food Partnership programme aims to address a number of wellbeing goals as follows:
  - Healthier wales
  - More equal Wales
  - More globally responsible Wales
  - More cohesive Wales.

- 2.4 The programme takes an integrated view of food that takes into account the social, environmental, cultural, and economic aspects of food and supports the positive aspects of food as well as addressing the needs and challenges.
- 2.5 The PSB also agreed in January 2020 that the sustainable food partnership group would oversee the £23,147 capital spend awarded to Blaenau Gwent Council via the Welsh Government's EU Transition Fund Food Poverty Grant.
- 2.6 The Food Poverty Grant capital funding is to support organisations to access, store and distribute additional supplies of good quality food, including good food surplus, in particular, larger amounts of fresh food, boosting the capacity of organisations to provide good quality, nutritious food to their customers. It can be used in a variety of ways to suit the requirements in each authority, for example but not limited to: purchasing fridges, freezers and cooking equipment.

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

#### **3.1 Option 1**

That Members of the Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee consider and accept the report and appendices as provided prior to it being submitted to the Public Services Board.

#### **Option 2**

That Members of the Public Services Board Scrutiny Committee consider and provide specific recommendations for consideration by the Public Services Board before approval.

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

This report is in-line with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

### **5. Implications Against Each Option**

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

BGCBC is a holder of the EUTF Food Poverty Grant for 2020/2021 and this fund needs to be spent by 31 March 2021.

BGCBC is currently taking applications for Food Poverty Grant from local organisations/institutions to support them by providing funds for purchase of equipment needed to safely store, distribute and deliver food products to those families and individuals who need it the most in a local community.

Tai Calon and partners have recently been awarded funding from NRW for a part-time sustainable food coordinator to be put in post to oversee the development of the Sustainable Food Programme in 2021.

### 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

Due to the impact of COVID 19, people may have become more reliant on Food Banks and Independent Institutions providing emergency food supplies, which can potentially lead to a further issues with food poverty and hunger in local communities going forward.

The remaining balance of the EUTF Food Poverty Grant capital funding needs to be spent by 31 March 2021. Applications for the Grant are still being received and partners are considering how any remaining amount could support the new Sustainable Food Coordinator in developing the plan.

### 5.3 ***Legal***

Project report have been developed with requirements stated in Future Generation Act.

### 5.4 ***Human Resources***

Tai Calon, the Soil Association, PSB partners including Public Health Wales, Natural Resources Wales, BGCBC and GAVO, and a Sustainable Food Programme Coordinator (once appointed by Tai Calon) will work together in partnership to coordinate the development of the programme.

## 6. ***Supporting Evidence***

The approach is intended to prevent food poverty rather than just respond to it. Without this shift in focus there is a risk that food banks become an institutionalised fixture of Blaenau Gwent communities. Food aid should not replace the dignity and choice afforded to those who can afford to buy food.

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

The sustainable food plan will cover all key food issues, including:

- how to tackle food poverty and diet-related ill-health;
- how to build a prosperous and diverse local food economy;
- how to transform catering and procurement;
- positively support tackling the climate and nature emergency; and
- end food waste.

Effective partnership working during the pandemic resulted in a number of expressions of interests for accessing part of the funding from local community groups and food organisations. The Strategic Support Group (SSG) including representatives from the sustainable food partnership considered these applications on 12 November 2020 and 18 February 2021 and approved the awarding of EUTF Food Poverty Grant funding to several local organisations providing services to tackle food insecurity.

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

- Supply of good quality equipment and food, including good food surplus, in particular, larger amounts of fresh food, boosting the capacity of organisations to provide good quality, nutritious food.
- Access to new cooking equipment

- Healthier wales
- More equal Wales
- More globally responsible Wales
- More cohesive Wales.

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

The sustainable food plan will cover all key food issues and will be based on consultation with communities, businesses and anchor institutions.

Local and regional food partners attended a “Working Together to Address Food Inequality” event in Blaina on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020, before the Covid19 pandemic hit and changed the way so many services are provided. Feedback from partners was gathered about strengths of existing local provision, aspirations, and opportunities for future enhancement of services.

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

The plan will lead to the development of an ambitious but realistic plan for changing Blaenau Gwent’s food system for the better, which will form the basis of a bid for two years of funding from the Sustainable Food Places programme to turn that plan into reality.

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

It is hoped that by working together to tackle food poverty and food-related ill-health will help contribute towards a healthier, more prosperous population.

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

Robust partnership networks already in place through PSB, SSG and other delivery groups as well as buy-in and commitment from other local partners to tackle the issue of food poverty in Blaenau Gwent.

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

Tai Calon and partners recently submitted a bid for NRW funding which has been approved to fund a new member of staff for 3 days a week for a 6-month term. Supported by the coordinator, the partnership will oversee the development of a food strategy and action plan for the county borough that integrates to the social, economic, and environmental needs of its residents and community groups.

### 6.8 ***EqlA***

The approach is built on the national principles for public engagement. There are number of established forums which support engagement of people covered by the protected characteristics.

## 7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

The PSB and SSG monitor progress through its strategic work programme performance management arrangements.